



**TRANSCENDENCE**  
THEATRE COMPANY

## Evolution of Broadway in Sonoma

Every day, aspiring performers, Broadway “stars to be,” land in New York City with an eye on “making it” there. Audition after audition, some achieve that dream but most don’t and settle somewhere outside New York knowing they “at least tried.” But since 2011 there has been a quiet but growing migration in another direction—successful working Broadway performers who are leaving the city to create an entirely new model for an arts organization in Sonoma, California — Transcendence Theatre Company.

Following a national research tour in 2010 called *Project Knowledge*, the founding three Transcendence artists arrived, serendipitously at Jack London State Historic Park in Sonoma Valley at the same time the State of California was threatening to close 70 state parks as a result of a devastating state budget crisis. The New York artists were in search of a place to perform and a community where they could set down roots just at the same moment Jack London Park was to be shuttered. As a last ditch effort, the State was looking for innovative ways to keep the Park open. The Transcendence Theatre Company founders offered to stage a concert to save the park, hoping to attract perhaps 200 people. Although these artists knew no one in the community, they, along with 11 other artists who flew in from New York, staged a performance a few weeks later where 900 people showed up to experience the first auspicious “Broadway Under the Stars” event.



In 2012, through an innovative public and private partnership, Transcendence Theatre Company developed a unique and groundbreaking model to present live theater and cultural education and **now, five years later, close to 81,000 people have experienced “Broadway Under the Stars” shows which have raised over \$267,000 for the operation of Jack London State Historic Park**—the Park, now managed by a non profit organization, operates in the black. This theatre company not only helped save this national historic landmark, it now thrives as a cultural epicenter of Sonoma, and has become a significant entertainment destination in California Wine Country.

The vision for Transcendence continues to evolve—these artists didn't leave Broadway just to create a successful and popular entertainment mecca on the other side of the country. The core group of artists who are making Sonoma their home has tripled in those 5 years, as more make a commitment to the guiding principles that distinguish this arts organization. Add to that, the many Broadway performers who take a break each summer from their shows to spend a few weeks as part of the company, and “The Transcendence effect” truly runs both ways. The buzz among New York performers who want to do this is so strong, that performers are considered by referral only.

While the setting of Sonoma Wine Country is intoxicating, it is the experience of being part of the “whole” of this company that is most appealing to the artists. And it's not just to perform in the beautiful ruins of an historic 150-year-old Winery as dusk turns to starlight.



Transcendence Theatre Company is committed to creating extraordinary experiences in people's lives that inspire them to live their best life and make a profound difference in the world. With a deep belief that art is service, Transcendence Theatre Company is committed to bringing art to everyone. Collaborating with community partners, Transcendence identifies a group's individual needs and develops activities, rooted in the artistic process but with the goal to support those needs. It might be creating music and drama workshops for grieving children to explore their feelings and find safe ways to express them or interactive musical performances for Alzheimer's patients who respond to the buried memory of a particular song. This theatre company emphasizes its public outreach, far beyond the entertainment and cultural enrichment their shows provide, and this grows its relationship with the community.

In five short years, Transcendence Theatre Company has entertained tens of thousands of people and inspired many to do things they never could have imagined. In return, these artists who took a chance by leaving New York and LA discovered that you can make it anywhere when your art serves and inspires those closest to home. Better than words, watch [this video](#) for a sense of what this is all about.