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Tony Award-Winning Star Sutton Foster to Headline Starlight's 39th Annual Gala



The beloved Broadway performer will take the stage for an unforgettable evening benefiting the historic theatre under the stars in Swope Park.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Starlight Theatre is thrilled to announce that two-time Tony Award winner Sutton Foster will headline Starlight's 39th Annual Gala Saturday, October 17, 2026, at Starlight Theatre. The annual fundraising event brings together supporters, community leaders, and arts advocates for a memorable evening celebrating the power of the performing arts while raising critical funds to sustain Starlight as a cultural landmark for years to come.

One of Broadway's most celebrated performers, Foster is renowned for her acclaimed work on stage and screen. Her Broadway performances in productions including *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Anything Goes*, *The Music Man*, *Little Women*, and *Shrek the Musical* have earned her widespread recognition and multiple awards, making her one of the most beloved stars in American theatre.

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“We are thrilled to welcome Sutton Foster to Starlight for our 39th Annual Gala,” said Lindsey Rood-Clifford, Starlight’s President + C.E.O. “Sutton is one of those rare artists whose talent is matched by her warmth, generosity and deep love for this art form. We can’t imagine a better person to help us celebrate the power of live performance and the role Starlight plays in connecting this community. It will be a special night — and, even more importantly, one that helps make it possible for Starlight to serve audiences, students and artists across the Kansas City region for years to come.”

Guests will enjoy an evening with a red-carpet reception, leading into a dinner and program, and culminating in a special performance by Foster. Proceeds from the gala will directly benefit Starlight's nonprofit mission, including arts education programs, accessibility initiatives, scholarships, and community engagement efforts that connect thousands of individuals to the performing arts each year.

About Sutton Foster:

Sutton Foster is a two-time Tony Award–winning actress, singer, and dancer who most recently starred as Princess Winnifred in the Broadway revival of *Once Upon a Mattress* at the Hudson Theatre, following its debut at New York City Center Encores! and a run at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. She also recently appeared on stage as Mrs. Lovett in the Tony Award–winning revival of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* opposite Aaron Tveit.

Foster earned her seventh Tony nomination and the 2022 Drama League Distinguished Performance Award for her role as Marian Paroo in *The Music Man*. She won Tony Awards for *Anything Goes* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and has originated iconic roles including Princess Fiona in *Shrek the Musical*. Additional Broadway credits include *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Sweet Charity*, *Violet*, and *Young Frankenstein*. In 2021, Sutton reprised one of her most notable roles as Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes* at the Barbican Theatre in London in which she earned an Oliver Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical.

On screen, Foster is best known for her starring role in the critically acclaimed series “Younger.” Her additional television credits include “Bunheads,” “Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life,” and “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.”

She is also a bestselling author of the memoir *Hooked: How Crafting Saved My Life* and has performed as a solo artist at venues including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Recently, Sutton has teamed up with Kelli O'Hara for a special touring concert series, *An Evening with Sutton Foster & Kelli O'Hara*. Foster holds an honorary doctorate from Ball State University, where she also teaches.

How to Support:

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Additional event details, including schedule information and sponsorship benefits, can be found online at kcstarlight.com/gala. Sponsorship opportunities start at \$2,000 for Starlight's 39th Annual Gala and are available by contacting Kara Setari at (816) 997-1175 or kara.setari@kcstarlight.com.

About Starlight:

Opened as a theatre in 1950 and a nonprofit organization in 1951, Starlight is the largest and oldest continually operating performing arts organization in Kansas City, Missouri, and connects our community through live arts experiences that entertain, inspire, and engage audiences of all ages. Offering diverse programming year-round, Starlight presents Broadway musicals, concert events, and extensive community engagement programming, including arts access initiatives, scholarships, school partnerships, and one of the most well-regarded high school musical theatre award programs in the nation. Located on 16 acres in Swope Park, the historic, city-owned venue is the second-largest outdoor producing theatre in the country with almost 8,000 seats.

Follow Starlight on social media @kcstarlight and visit kcstarlight.com for more information.

Starlight is supported in part by the City of Kansas City, Missouri Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund.

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