



**News Release**  
**Virginia Repertory Theatre**

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**Sept. 25, 2023**

Virginia Repertory Theatre Presents  
***Martha Mitchell Calling***

**Richmond, VA** -- Virginia Repertory Theatre presents ***Martha Mitchell Calling***, directed by Artistic Director of Programming, Rick Hammerly, at Hanover Tavern Sept. 29 – Oct 29, 2023.

A humorous, yet poignant, exploration of Martha Mitchell (Debra Wagoner), legendary wife of Watergate conspirator and Attorney General John Mitchell (Joe Pabst). Flamboyant, formidable and often misunderstood, Mitchell demanded the truth even when no one believed her. Though ostracized as a traitor and abandoned by her family, she never lost her spirit, even as she called for Nixon's resignation.

As Nixon himself told David Frost during their famous 1977 interview, "If it hadn't been for Martha Mitchell, there'd have been no Watergate."

Recently, the cast & director of the upcoming ***Martha Mitchell Calling*** sat down with Virginia Rep to talk about the show, the creative process, and what it's been like to tackle this great political story of humility and humanity.

**Virginia Rep: What got you interested in the story of Martha Mitchell?**

**Rick Hammerly:** *The reason we ended up with two politically themed plays this season is completely by accident! I was looking at women-centric plays, and I thought if we had one that was a little naughty (POTUS), then we should have one that's a little nice (Martha Mitchell)!*

**Virginia Rep: How do you most identify with the historical character of Martha Mitchell?**

**Debra Wagoner:** *Well, I'm a southern lady. I was born into a poor family. She didn't start out with much, and I certainly didn't, either. I'm probably more of an introvert than she was. But I like her - I like her a lot!*

**Virginia Rep:** **You and Joe are married - what's it like working together? Any joys or challenges?**

**Joe Pabst:** *I think what makes this fun for us is that we know each other very, very well. We know how to work with each other. I think the challenging thing about working together is that we're never home to attend to home things - like our fur family that probably miss us terribly!*

**Virginia Rep:** **What do you hope audiences will take away from Martha's story?**

**Debra Wagoner:** *There's so much going on right now in this world, politically. People don't even seem to understand what the truth is anymore. I don't want Martha Mitchell to ever be forgotten.*

**Joe Pabst:** *She had nothing to gain by standing up and saying "This is not right for this country." She destroyed everything - her relationship, her stature, her reputation.*

**Rick Hammerly:** *Women did not have the voice back then that they have now. It's important that we see her story and it resonates today, especially when women are finding difficulties again in keeping their agency and having their voices squelched.*

Experience this incredible story as told by playwright **Jodi Rothe** in [Martha Mitchell Calling](#).

The full artistic/production team and cast list is below:

### **Direction & Design**

Direction	Rick Hammerly
Scenic and Production Design	Dasia Gregg
Costume Design	Sue Griffin
Lighting Design	Matthew Landwehr
Sound Design	Kelsey Cordrey
Stage Management	Crimson Piazza

### **Cast**

Martha Mitchell- Debra Wagoner

John Mitchell-Joe Pabst

### **BIOS:**

**Debra Wagoner**, she/her, (Martha Mitchell) is thrilled to be back at the Tavern once more, having just finished a successful run of *Honky Tonk Laundry*. She has received critical praise for her body of work, including RTCC awards for playing dual roles in *The Toxic Avenger* (5th Wall Theatre) and Penelope Pennywise in *Urinetown* (Swift Creek Mill Theatre). Previous Virginia Rep credits include Sister Mary Amnesia in *Nunsense*, Florence Foster Jenkins in *Souvenir*, the title role in *Always, Patsy Cline*, Miss Andrew in *Mary Poppins*, and Miss Shingle in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*. She sends her love to her husband Joe, who she is

honored to share the stage with in this production. They share a home in Richmond with their fur family of 2 cats and 2 dogs.

**Joe Pabst** (John Mitchell) is excited to return to the Tavern stage to perform with his lovely wife once again! His last appearance here was as Victor Velasco in *Barefoot in the Park*. He has also directed a number of shows on this stage including *Always, Patsy Cline; The Odd Couple; Driving Miss Daisy*, and more. He and Debra have performed together many times, most recently in *Gaslight* at the Swift Creek Mill Theatre. The two have been married for 28 years, happily sharing their home with their fur family

### **Ticket Information**

**Box Office:** 804-282-2620

[www.virginiarep.org](http://www.virginiarep.org)

Full Price Tickets: \$52.00

Discounted Group Rates and Rush tickets available.

Run Time: 2 hours including a 15 minute intermission

### **Press**

Press Kits will be available at <http://va-rep.org/press.html>

Pass code accessible Hi Res photos available to the media.

username = press

password = HiRes121

### **About Virginia Repertory Theatre**

Virginia Repertory Theatre is a regional professional theater headquartered in downtown Richmond, and is one of the largest performing arts organizations in Central Virginia. Virginia Rep stages three primary seasons – the Signature Season at the Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre, the Barksdale Season at Hanover Tavern and the Children’s Season at Virginia Rep Center for Arts and Education. Virginia Rep also tours children’s shows, both virtual and live, and provides educational programming to schools throughout Virginia and to major performing arts centers throughout 32 states.

### **Season Sponsors**

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