

191



silver beles

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January 27, 2024 6:00 pm The Jefferson Hotel

ANIGHT IN NEW ()RLEANS 2024 ANYTHING GOES GALA

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BOOK BY **ALLYSON CURRIN** MUSIC BY **MATT CONNER** LYRICS BY **STEPHEN GREGORY SMITH**

BASED ON AN IDEA BY CATHY ALTER & SANDRA JOHNSON

The Silver Belles is presented through arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC (www.broadwaylicensing.com)

SCENIC DESIGN Mercedes Schaum

LIGHTING DESIGN Joe Doran⁺

MUSIC DIRECTION Jason Marks COSTUME DESIGN
Jeanne Nugent

SOUND DESIGN Jacob Mishler

STAGE MANAGEMENT Justin Janke*

DIRECTION
Susan Sanford





SHUBERT FOUNDATION INC



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SARA BELLE AND NEIL NOVEMBER THEATRE | MARJORIE ARENSTEIN STAGE



CAST (in alpha order)

Ruth Ann	Rut
Oralene Jan Guarino*	Ora
Gloria Kimberly Fox Knight	Glo
Berneice Robyn O'Neill	Ber
Earl Joe Pabst	Ear
Bo Jack Catherine Shaffner*	Во

BAND

Piano/Conductor	Leilani Fenick
Guitar	Forrest Link, Jeremiah Martin°
Bass	Matt Hall, Bea Kelly°
Violin	Marissa Resmini, Kristin Presley°
Drums	Austin Martin

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Assistant Stage Manager	Dennis Cheeks
Fly Crew	Hunter Mass
Deck/Fly Crew	Tavares Centeio
Wardrobe Supervisor	Tajma Graham
Audio Engineer	Jonathan Pratt
Light Board Operator	Dennis Cheeks, Griffin Hardy°
Follow Spot Operators	Terra Comer, Jason Winebarger
Photographer	Aaron Sutten
Videographer	Austin Lewis

°Substituting at select performances

SPECIAL THANKS

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Judy Fiske

Pound cake provided by Gimme Pound, Fresh Homemade Pound Cakes www.gimmepound.com

The video or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.





MUSICAL NUMBERS

The Funeral (Don't She Look Good) Strike Me, Lord	
Christmas Everywhere	. Berneice, Ruth Ann, Gloria, Oralene
We Three Belles	Bo Jack, Ruth Ann, Gloria
Carol of the Belles	. Oralene, Ruth Ann, Berneice, Gloria
Christmas Cookies	Ruth Ann, Oralene
The Friendly Beasts	
Mistletoe	Gloria, Oralene
I Don't Know What to Say	Earl, Oralene
The Rehearsal	Berneice, Gloria
I Don't Know What to Say (Reprise)	Ruth Ann, Gloria, Berneice
Moonshine	Bo Jack, Earl
While the Getting is Good	Entire Company
Silver Belles Finale	Entire Company

The Silver Belles is performed as one act with no intermission.

DEDICATION

Wayne Shields

With great affection and respect, we dedicate this production to the memory of Wayne Shields. As owner of Shields Collectibles, Wayne contributed to Richmond theatre for decades by being the go-to guy who always seemed to have that impossible-to-find prop. And when he didn't have it, he somehow always knew someone else who might.

Shields Collectibles was destroyed in 2003 by smoke damage from an adjacent VCU dorm fire. Even thereafter, Wayne remained committed to helping Richmond theatre.



Virginia Rep and all of Richmond theatre benefits, to this day, by having props and costumes that were originally sourced from Wayne's store.

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Julie Fulcher-Davis (Ruth Ann) received her education at Shenandoah University then furthered her training in NYC before making Richmond home. Julie is an accomplished actor, director, playwright, composer, drummer and voice over talent. She is thrilled to return to the stage at Virginia Rep with some of her most treasured friends and colleagues. Favorite roles include the one-woman show *The Search for*

Signs of Intelligent Life in The Universe, Amanda Wingfield in The Glass Menagerie, The Witch in Into the Woods, and her Richmond debut — on this very stage — Delores in Olympus on My Mind. Julie thanks you for supporting live theatre.



Jan Guarino (Oralene) is so excited to be a part of this amazing cast for the holiday season! She was last seen on stage as Genie Klein in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* and before that at Hanover Tavern as Clairee in *Steel Magnolias*. She had the privilege to most recently direct *The Emperor's New Clothes* at the Virginia Rep Center. She has also directed (among others) *Where's Charley?*,

The Wizard of Oz, and They're Playing Our Song for Virginia Rep. A familiar face and voice in Richmond-area advertising, Jan is perhaps best known as spokesperson for Haynes Furniture. She would like to thank Susan for giving her the chance to work with this incredible dream cast!



Kimberly Fox Knight, she/her, (Gloria) A graduate of VCU Bachelor's of Music, this is Kimberly's first appearance with Virginia Rep. Knight recently performed with Imani productions in *Hypocrite The Musical* (Tanya) directed by Glennis Crosby, showcased at the Dominion Theater. Knight's theater credits from Riverside Dinner Theater in Fredericksburg, VA include: *Hairspray*(Motormouth Maybell). *Ain't Misbehavin'*

(Charlene), *Anything Goes* (Bonnie), and *The Best Little Whore House In Texas* (Jewel). Off stage she's a full-time entrepreneur of "Gimme Pound Cakes." A loving wife and mother of two, Knight is honored to finally set her mark on the Virginia Rep stage.



Robyn O'Neill, she/her, (Berneice) a Shenandoah Conservatory grad, has performed in more than 60 musicals since moving to Richmond in 1987. Favorite roles include Rose in *Gypsy*, Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes*, Annie Oakley in *Annie Get Your Gun* (Virginia Rep), The Witch and Little Red Ridinghood in *Into the Woods* (Virginia Rep and Swift Creek Mill, respectively), Dot in *Sunday in the Park with*

George (Dogwood Dell), Eve/Mama Noah in *Children of Eden*, and The Narrator in *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Swift Creek Mill). She was the 2005 recipient of the Theresa Pollak Prize for Theatre, and had the privilege of performing as a soloist with the Richmond Symphony.



Joe Pabst (Earl) is so honored to be spending the holidays with this amazing team of talented women! He just finished the run of *Martha Mitchell Calling* at the Hanover Tavern starring his wonderful wife Debra Wagoner. Other Virginia Rep credits include *Barefoot in the Park* (Victor Velasco), *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Father), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Inspector Andre), and more. Joyful

greetings of the Season to all!



Catherine Shaffner (Bo Jack) is happy and grateful to reunite on stage with her fellow fabulous castmates (some of whom she has known over a century!) Most recently she appeared as Bernadette in Virginia Rep's hysterical production of *POTUS*. This past spring, she played Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals* at University of Richmond. Catherine was lucky enough to be a cast member in the reimagined version of Tom Jones'

The Fantastics at Flint Repertory Theatre. She is the 2014 RTCC winner for Best Actress for her performance in *'night Mother* at Firehouse Theatre and the 2022 RTCC winner for her role in *A Doll's House, Part Two* produced right here at Virginia Rep!

Susan Sanford (Director) is thrilled to return to the November stage as a director. Previous directorial credits at Virginia Rep include *Elephant and Piggie: We are in a Play!; Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical; Goodnight Moon; You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown; The Magic Flute;* and *The Song of Mulan.* Susan's play, *Home Sweet Homer,* has been seen all across the country as part of *Virginia Rep on Tour.* She is also an accomplished actor, having appeared in such shows as *After December, Cinderella, Sister Act, A Christmas Story,* and *Gypsy.* Susan has received four Richmond Theatre Critic's Circle Awards for her acting work in various plays and musicals. By day, Susan works as the Middle School Theatre and Upper School Public Speaking teacher at The Steward School. All love and thanks to Foster, Willow and Jordan for their support.

Jason Marks (Music Director) is delighted to be spending the holidays with some of Richmond's most celebrated talents. He recently won the Richmond Theatre Community Circle award for his music direction of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical.* Other music direction credits include Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, *Seussical, They're Playing Our Song, Olympus on My Mind, Tuck Everlasting, Mr. Poppers Penguins, Elephant and Piggie: We Are in a Play,* and many others. Jason is best known for his stage work in *The Producers, 1776, Shrek, Guys & Dolls, My Fair Lady,* and more. This coming spring, he'll be reprising his celebrated role as Zero Mostel in *Zero Hour,* here at the November in the Theatre Gym. A joyous, healthy, and happy holiday season to all!

Mercedes Schaum (Scenic Designer) is so excited be collaborating with one of her dearest friends, Susan Sanford. Mercedes has been designing and painting in Richmond for 20 years. She has had quite a busy year designing for *Miss Bennett: Christmas at Pemberley, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, She Persisted, Elephant and Piggie: We are in a Play!*, and *GOLD: The Midas Musical* for Virginia Rep; *A Soldier's Play* for Swift Creek Mill Theatre; and *The Magic Flute* for VCU Opera. Favorite past designs include *Annie, Honk!, A Christmas Story, Mame, The BFG, Song of Mulan, Into the Woods, Bunnicula, The Magic Flute*, and *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* for Virginia Rep. *Peter and The Starcatcher* and *Little Shop of Horrors,* and many more for SPARC. She has a BFA from JMU in theatre and an MFA in set design from the University of Illinois. When she's not working in the theatre, Mercedes is raising four kids with her husband, Jason Alley, and looking for new challenges and prepping for crazy family adventures!

Jeanne Nugent (Costume Designer) hails from Chicago and is a graduate of Northern Illinois University. Jeanne has recently returned to Richmond after working in film/tv for the past few years. Credits include Asst. Costume Designer on HBO's *White House Plumbers* and *Walking Dead World Beyond Season 2*. Most recently she was Principal Set Costumer on Paramount Plus *Lioness*. She has designed over 30 major musical productions. Some of her favorite credits include *Shrek the Musical, Croaker: The Frog Prince Musical, Peter and the Starcatcher,* and *The Wiz.* Jeanne is very excited for the opportunity to be working on *The Silver Belles* with such a talented artistic team.

Joe Doran (Lighting Designer) Virginia Rep: Beautiful: The Carole King Musical; Mamma Mial; Once, Fun Home (Cadence/Virginia Rep); In the Heights; A Christmas Story; Dreamgirls; South Pacific; The Color Purple; A Year With Frog and Toad. Broadway (Asst. LD): Summer, The Donna Summer Musical; Prince of Broadway; Doctor Zhivago; Magic/Bird. National Tours: Hamilton; Joseph... Dreamcoat; Anything Goes; West Side Story; Flashdance the Musical; In the Heights. Off Broadway: Chanteuse, H4, and Shakespeare's Slave. NYC Dance: Sean Curran Company, Armitage Gone! Dance, Stephen Petronio Company, Shen Wei Dance Arts, and Martha Graham Dance Company, among others. Regional Credits: Red Mountain Theatre, Bristol Riverside Theatre, The Fulton Theatre, Alpine Theatre Project, The Richmond Ballet, The Atlanta Ballet, and Swift Creek Mill Theatre. 2008, 2009, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2020, 2022 and 2023 recipient of Richmond's "Artsies" Award. Graduate of NC School of the Arts and member of USA Local 829. www.joedorandesign.com

Jacob Mishler (Sound Designer) has been involved in live production for 25 years, moving into theatrical sound design in 2004. Most recently, Jacob's work was heard in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. He also designed for Virginia Rep's productions of *Mamma Mia!* (winning the Artsie Award for Outstanding Sound Design of a musical) and *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*. Other selected credits include: *42nd Street* - Palace Theatre New Hampshire; *Cabaret, Rent, The Drowsy Chaperone* - Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre; *Gypsy* (Broadway World Award Central PA), *Woman in Black, Ghost* (World Premiere), *Million Dollar Quartet* - Fulton Theatre; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, and *The Bridges of Madison County* (Henry Award) - Fine Arts Center at Colorado College. All my love and gratitude to Julie and Amelia!

Justin Janke^{*} (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be spending another Holiday season with Virginia Rep. He holds a BFA in Theatre; Stage Management and Technical Production from VCU. He has worked regularly with Virginia Rep since 2016, most recently on *After December, Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, and *Mamma Mia!* Help Justin and his husband receive their Christmas miracle by visiting and sharing www.AustinandJustinAdopt.com.

Leica Long (Assistant Stage Manager) is excited to be returning to Virginia Rep to work on *The Silver Belles*. She recently graduated from VCUarts, where she got a BFA in Theatre Stage Management. Leica's PSM credits include *Annabelle* (Firehouse), and *Men on Boats* (VCU). She also worked as an ASM on *POTUS* and *After December* (Virginia Rep), *Vanessa* (Spoleto Festival), and *How I Learned to Drive* (The Conciliation Lab).

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LEADERSHIP



RICK HAMMERLY

Artistic Director of Programming

Rick has worked as an award-winning, DC-based actor, director, filmmaker, and arts manager for over

three decades. Since moving to Richmond and joining Virginia Repertory Theatre's artistic team, he has directed Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, for which he received an RTCC Award for Best Direction of a Musical. Martha Mitchell Calling, and After December. In addition, he received a 2018 Helen Haves Award for his direction of Lela & Co. and a 2020 Helen Hayes Award nomination for his direction of Agnes of God, both for Factory 449. Other directing credits include Dizzv Miss Lizzie's Roadside Revue's The Brontes (New York Musical Theatre Festival), Reykjavik (Rorschach Theatre), Emilie: La Marquise du Châtelet Defends Her Life Tonight (WSC Avant Bard), Driving Miss Daisy featuring Karen Grassle (Riverside Center for the Performing Arts). Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook (Adventure Theatre MTC), Dead Man Walking (American University), and Closet Land (Factory 449).

TODD D. NORRIS

Artistic Director of Education

Todd is an American theatre director, educator, writer, and actor. He recently served as president of the

International Museum Theatre Alliance and continues to act as an advisor.

Todd comes to Virginia Rep from the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, IN — the world's largest children's museum — where he worked since 2013, serving as Director of Interpretation and then Associate Vice President of Interpretation and Family Programs. In these roles, he was responsible for fiscal management, artistic direction for its professional children's theatre seasons, coordinating holistic approaches to gallery performances, and overseeing quality for hundreds of daily programs.

From 2003-2013, Todd worked at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, eventually becoming Senior Manager of Performance Interpretation. While at Colonial Williamsburg, he also acted in several episodes of their Emmy-Award winning As an actor, he has performed Off-Broadway and regionally, receiving a Helen Hayes Award for his turn as Hedwig in Signature Theatre's production of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, as well as nominations for his work in *Angels in America* (Signature Theatre), *Me and Jezebel* (MetroStage) and *Oliver!* (Adventure Theatre MTC). For ten years, he played Mr. Fezziwig in Ford's Theatre's annual production of *A Christmas Carol* and was most recently seen as Miss Tracy Mills in Round House Theatre's *The Legend of Georgia McBride*.

He is a founder and the current Producing Artistic Director of Factory 449, the recipient of multiple Helen Hayes Awards, including the John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company, and the Executive Director of the Washington Area Performing Arts Video Archive (WAPAVA).

Rick is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC) and Actors' Equity Association (AEA). He received a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Virginia, an M.A. in Film & Video Production from American University, and has completed the coursework for an M.A. in Arts Management, also from AU.

Electronic Field Trips and directed and performed in many evening programs and special events.

Favorite previous directing assignments include Humble Boy, Tales of Olympus, Eleemosynary, and The Santa Clues.

He has taught and directed at several schools including The College of William and Mary, Christopher Newport University, Alice Lloyd College, and Wright State University.

He was born in Columbus, OH, and received his M.F.A. in Acting from University of Louisville and his B.A. in Theatre Performance, with a minor in music, from the University of Findlay. He is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

Todd will focus on programs for children, families, and schools including touring programs and arts in education. He and Desirée Roots will co-lead Virginia Rep's award-winning Community Health + Wellness program, which creates, implements and assesses model projects that demonstrate how theatre can be used as an effective tool in addressing critical educational and societal challenges.



DESIRÉE ROOTS

Artistic Director of Community

Desirée has showcased her triple threat talent for over 35 years as an active member of the Gospel,

Jazz, and Theatre scenes regionally, nationally, internationally, and in Richmond, VA where she grew up. She started singing in church when she was four, and started her professional theatrical career at age 13. Growing up in a musical family, it was only natural that she follow in her performing parents' footsteps.

Desirée has performed throughout the East Coast with orchestras, jazz ensembles, and as leader of her own ensembles. She's been the opening act for internationally renowned artists including Boney James, Brian McKnight, the late Phyllis Hyman, and B. B. King. She is a Grammy nominated recording artist and has produced shows she wrote including *Ella at 100* in honor of the First Lady of Jazz, Ms. Ella Fitzgerald's 100th birthday. She received the Theresa Pollak award for "Vocal Excellence" in 2014. Along with performing, Desirée has had a long standing career in the corporate and nonprofit sectors. Upon receiving her B.A. from Virginia Union University, she initially embarked on a teaching path. This quickly evolved into other opportunities such as a Programming Manager for Richmond Jazz Society, Inc., Booking Manager for Downtown Presents (now Venture Richmond), and client liaison for Drake Beam & Morin, a Fortune 500 corporation. She has also been an educator and music facilitator privately and within the Henrico and Richmond Public school systems for over 20 years.

Desirée began her association with Virginia Rep as a high school intern when the company was Theatre IV with the unique mission "to seek national-caliber excellence equally in four areas: the arts, education, children's health, and community leadership."

These four pillars of service are what drew her to become *Artistic Director of Community* — "working with the theatre company I love to serve the community I love."



AMY WRATCHFORD

Interim Managing Director

After more than a decade as Managing Director for the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA,

Amy Wratchford pivoted in early 2021 to launch The Wratchford Group, a nationally known arts management consultancy with regional theater clients throughout Virginia as well as Florida, California and Chicago

As the chief administrative and financial officer at the American Shakespeare Center, Amy oversaw finance, marketing, development, and other business management functions for ASC.

Before joining ASC, Amy served as Managing Director of Synchronicity Theatre in Atlanta. Previously, she worked for 13 years in a number of capacities in theatre in New York City including producer, director, and actor. Amy regularly serves on grant panels, including the National Endowment for the Arts and Virginia Commission for the Arts, as well as adjudicating panels, including EdTA China's 2019 National Young Thespian Festival in Shanghai as well as state and regional community theatre festivals.

Amy is an elected member of the Staunton City School Board and serves on the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center's Community Advisory Board. She teaches a dual-enrollment Intro to Theatre course at the Shenandoah Valley Governor's School and routinely lectures on finance, budgeting, and nonprofit governance for Mary Baldwin University's MFA program in Shakespeare and Performance and others. Amy holds a bachelor's degree in Acting from the Tisch School of the Arts of New York University and a master's in fine arts degree in Performing Arts Management from Brooklyn College.

Amy has been immersed in the Virginia theater scene for 13 years and has a history with Virginia Rep, having participated in several of our strategic planning processes. She has an incredible passion for the arts, deep compassion for the people who make a theater run, and a keen understanding of the role we play within our community. Her expertise in interim theater leadership, financial analysis and organizational structure assessment and reorganization is precisely what we need right now as we chart an exciting future and launch a national search for our next managing director.

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Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Accountability Statement

Since 2020, Virginia Repertory Theatre has been intentional in our efforts to become an artistic home that is multicultural in representation and where everyone is welcomed and included. We still have much work to do and continue to commit to doing our part to dismantle systems of oppression, not only in the theatre community, but everywhere it is present.

Our Commitment

We commit to examining our organizational culture to assure that we are an artistic home centered on anti-racist and anti-oppression practices. We will actively pursue and embrace inclusion, diversity, equity, and access in all aspects of art, business, and life in our community.

We will intentionally make space for the diverse voices of our board, staff, artists, and theatre community.

We will seek to include and reflect on the varied experiences of our community to ensure everyone has access to live theatre that entertains, inspires, and challenges. We will be mindful of Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC); Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI); People with Disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ (LGBTQ+), and other marginalized communities in our efforts and we will actively seek to learn from them.

We make these commitments to the theatre community and to the community at large and we ask that they take this journey with us and hold us accountable.

We will commit to implement our action plan so that we can honestly say:

At Virginia Repertory Theatre, everyone has a voice.

At our theatre, everyone is welcomed and included.

Please refer to the Social Justice section of our website for our full Anti-Racism Commitment & Accountability Statement and our history in support of racial equity.

OUR MISSION

Our Mission: To entertain, challenge and uplift our communities through the power of live theatre. To that end, we seek national caliber excellence in the arts, education, and community health and leadership.

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