NOVEMBER THEATRE ARENSTEIN STAGE

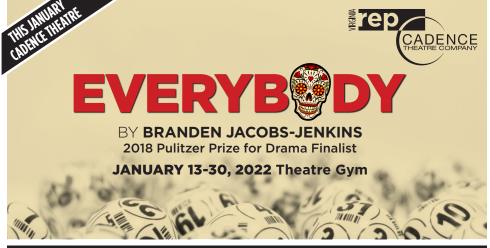


It's a **Wonderful Wonderful Life** A LIVE RADIO PLAY

Adapted by Joe Landry







TICKETS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS AT VIRGINIAREP.ORG OR 804-282-2620



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY

Adapted by Joe Landry

"It's a Wonderful Life" is based on the story, "The Greatest Gift" by Phillip Van Doren Stern from the screenplay by Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, Frank Capra, and Jo Swerling

Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc. (www.playscripts.com)

SCENIC DESIGN Mercedes Schaum COSTUME DESIGN

LIGHTING DESIGN **BJ Wilkinson** SOUND DESIGN Jacob Mishler

STAGE MANAGEMENT Justin Janke*

DIRECTION

Chelsea Burke



SARA BELLE AND NEIL NOVEMBER THEATRE / MARJORIE ARENSTEIN STAGE

CAST

Jake Laurents	Kurt Benjamin Smith*
Sally Applewhite	Anna da Costa*
Lana Sherwood	Maggie Bavolack
Harry Heywood	Joshua Mullins
Freddie Filmore	William Anderson
Oliver Johnston	Bo Wilson*
Cover	Nora Ogunleye
Cover	Alvan Bolling II

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Assistant Director	Nora Ogunleye
Assistant Stage Manager	Courtney Holmes
COVID Safety Manager	Lydia Hundley
Voice and Dialect Coach	Karen Kopryanski
Deck Crew	Jason Winebarger
Wardrobe Supervisor	Sheridan Parkinson
Wig Designer	
Audio Engineer	Jacob Mishler
Light Board Operator	Griffin Hardy
House ManagersJo	oel Kimling, Aubrey Mitten
Photographer	
Videographer	

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



*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the U.S.A.

TIME AND PLACE

The stage and auditorium of Studio A at WBFR in Manhattan, New York. Christmas Eve, 1946.

There will be no intermission.

SPECIAL THANKS

SPARC, Tom Width and Swift Creek Mill Theatre

DEDICATION

Lou DiLalla

With great respect and affection, we dedicate this production to the memory of Lou DiLalla. In an era when we cherished our forebears, three men emerged as grandfatherly figures for the three buildings we grew to call home. Tom Bass at Hanover Tavern, Tom McGranahan at Willow lawn, and Lou DiLalla at our historic November (Empire) Theatre. Like trusty, hand-forged



keys, our two Toms more or less came with the buildings. Lou simply showed up at the same time we purchased the Empire. Here he played the crusty Captain in *Mister Roberts* (Lou himself was a Navy veteran of World War II), Herr Schultz in *Cabaret*, and Uncle Henry in multiple productions of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Our three grandpas were talented, to be sure. But to an even greater extent, they were steadfast, relentlessly kind, and irreplaceable. We lost Lou during the dark days of COVID. Even with our stages silent, we heard his bell ring.





Kurt Benjamin Smith, he/him. (Jake Laurents) Kurt is excited to be back in Richmond working with such a talented cast and crew. Memorable credits include plays with Obie Award winners, Drama Desk Award winners, Pulitzer Finalists, and a lead role in an Emmy award winning TV series.

He has been seen in Richmond as Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, Bottom in *The Bottom Show*, and as Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night*. Kurt couldn't be more happy to conclude his debut season in Richmond as George Bailey. He lives in Williamsburg portraying Thomas Jefferson. Much love to mom and dad. Michelle, with Everything.



Anna da Costa, she/her. (Sally Applewhite) Anna is thrilled to be making her Virginia Rep debut! Originally from Michigan, Anna holds her B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from Coastal Carolina University. She spent the last few years calling Central Florida home, where she could be seen performing at

Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando Resort in Entertainment. She would like to dedicate this show to those who can't make it home for the holidays. Much love to her family, friends, and husband Artur for their constant support. annadacosta.net



Maggie Bavolack (Lana Sherwood) is so happy to spend the holidays on stage! Some of her favorite credits include Marie Antoinette in *The Revolutionists* (RTCC Best Actress in a Supporting Role - Play award, The Conciliation Lab), Gremio in *Taming of the Shrew* (Quill Theatre), Chick Boyle

in *Crimes of the Heart* (Virginia Rep), Kleonike in *Lysistrata* (RTCC Best Supporting Actress - Play nominee, Quill Theatre) and Liza in *Riding the Bull* (RTCC Best Actress in a Leading Role - Play award, The Conciliation Lab). When not on stage, you can find her crafting the best Instagram selfies in RVA (@maggersyeah).



Joshua Mullins (Harry Heywood) is a graduate of Radford University where he obtained a B.A. in Theatre. Notable works include Juliet, et al. in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* [abridged] (Quill Theatre); Mole, et al. in *Thumbelina*, Jacob in *Hugs and Kisses* (Virginia

Rep On Tour); and Jan in *The Unexpected Guest* (Chamberlayne Actors Theatre). He also teaches Theatre III for Henrico County's Center for the Arts and seasonal lessons with the local children's theatre company CharacterWorks. He would like to thank all of his friends and family for their undying love and support.



William Anderson (Freddie Filmore) is originally from Bowling Green, KY and is now a Richmondbased teacher/singer/actor/director. He is blessed to be on the stage again. He attended Western Kentucky University and The University of Kentucky where he received a B.M. in Vocal

Performance. Favorite shows at Riverside Center include *Grumpy Old Men the Musical* (Chuck Barrels), *The Color Purple* (Preacher/Ole Mister), and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (Monsieur D'Arque). For Virginia Rep, he was in *The Wiz* (Gatekeeper), *Akeelah and the Bee* (Dr. Larabee), *The Color Purple* (ensemble)(RTCC Best Musical award), *South Pacific* (Henry); for TheatreLAB, *Sweeney Todd* (Judge Turpin)(RTCC Best Musical award); for Cadence/Virginia Rep, *Caroline or Change* (Dryer/Bus)(RTCC Best Musical award); and for 5th Wall, *The Toxic Avenger* (Black Dude)(RTCC Best Supporting Actor in a Musical nominee). Sending much love to each and every one of you for your support.



Bo Wilson (Oliver Johnston) studied at the National Theatre Institute and at Virginia Tech. Notable local roles include Friar Lawrence for Richmond Shakespeare Festival's *Romeo and Juliet*, Uncle John in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Beaudricourt in *The Lark*, and Lindy in *Melissa*

Arctic (all for Virginia Rep,) and Williamson in *Glengarry Glen Ross* for the Firehouse. Bo is also a professional voice talent, having done several hundred radio and TV spots, as well as the *Fallout*

video game series. He's also a playwright, with five titles published (including the "Charitable Sisterhood" plays which premiered right here at Virginia Rep.) He's thrilled to be part of one of his favorite Christmas stories.



Nora Ogunleye, she/her. (Understudy, Assistant Director) Nora is ecstatic to make her debut here at Virginia Repertory Theatre! After interning in the Virginia Rep tour office from 2016-2017, Nora then went on to perform both locally and nationally with Virginia Rep On Tour for two

amazing years. Nora would like to thank her friends and family, especially Chelsea Burke who has always offered her a seat at the table. She would also like to thank the amazing designers and production team whose hard work and dedication have shone throughout this process. Enjoy the show!



Alvan Bolling II (Understudy) graduated in Spring 2021 from Virginia Commonwealth University with his B.A. in Theatre Performance. Along with acting on the stage, Alvan is also a voice actor who can regularly be heard playing various roles on the SCP Archives podcast, as well as his own Horror

podcast that he produces and edits himself, *The Ghost Light Theater*, which can be found anywhere podcasts are heard! He has also performed on stages across Virginia, in productions such as: *Monty Python's Spamalot* as Sir Galahad (Little Theatre of VA Beach), *Jekyll & Hyde* as Gabriel John Utterson (Williamsburg Players), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* as Throttle/Ensemble (Swift Creek Mill Theatre), and the touring company of *Buffalo Soldier* (Virginia Rep). Most recently, Alvan appeared part of the Ensemble for *War in Pieces* at Firehouse Theatre; he will be returning to that same stage in the premiere musical, *Gabriel*, opening at the end of January! Lastly, he wishes to send Love to his parents, best friends, dog, and especially those currently struggling through any kind of personal hardship – I sincerely hope this performance will provide a few hours of needed escape. alvanthe2nd.com

Chelsea Burke (Director) is a theatre artist originally from Cleveland, Ohio. Favorite directing credits include: *The Revolutionists* (RTCC Best Play nominee), Grand Concourse (RTCC Best Play and Best Director of a Play awards), *Level 4* (World Premiere), *The Last Five Years, When Last We Flew* (TheatreLAB); *Molly House* (World Premiere), *Girlfriend, Hand Grenades* (Richmond Triangle Players); *The Taming of the Shrew* (RTCC Best Direction nominee, Quill Theatre); *I and You* (Theatre VCU); *Dido and Aeneas* (Capital Opera Richmond); *The Verge* (World Premiere, Firehouse Theatre); *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Associate Direction, Virginia Rep); and *In Love and Warcraft* (Assistant Direction, Kennedy Center MFA Workshop). Chelsea is currently co-directing her first feature-length movie, *Shanidar*, to be released next year. Love and gratitude to the cast and crew, Steve & Ruth, the pups, and mom for being her angels; you all deserve your wings!

Karen Kopryanski (Voice and Dialect Coach) is the Head of Voice & Speech at TheatreVCU. She has coached more than 50 professional and collegiate productions on the East Coast, including *The 39 Steps, A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, and *River Ditty* (all for Virginia Rep), *Milk Like Sugar* (Huntington Theatre), *Cabaret* (American Repertory Theatre), and *The Sugar Syndrome* (Williamstown Theatre festival). In Virginia, she has been seen onstage as Carol in *Anne Page Hates Fun* (American Shakespeare Center) and Soccer Mom in *The Wolves* (Cadence/ TheatreVCU). She received her MFA from the ART/MXAT Institute at Harvard University, and is a member of Actor's Equity Association and an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework.

Mercedes Schaum (Scenic Design) is thrilled to be back designing for Virginia Rep and working on her first show since the start of the pandemic. She's been designing and painting in Richmond for 20 years. Her credits include *Annie, Honk!, A Christmas Story, Mame, The BFG, Song of Mulan, Into the Woods, Hay Fever, The Drawer Boy, The Magic Flute* and so many more for Virginia Rep. *The Marriage of Figaro, The Magic Flute, The Merry Widow* and others for VCU Opera. Most recently *Peter and The Starcatcher* and *Little Shop of Horrors* for SPARC, *Times Square Angel* for Richmond Triangle players, and *Daddy Long Legs* for Swift Creek

Mill Theatre She has a B.F.A. from JMU in theatre and an M.F.A. in set design from University of Illinois. When she's not working in the theatre, Mercedes is raising four kids, helping design restaurants with her husband, Jason Alley, and looking for new challenges.

Sue Griffin (Costume Design) has headed up the Virginia Rep costume department for the last eighteen years. Over this time, the shop has produced costumes for more than 300 shows, from traveling fairy tales to major musicals. With the help of the full time shop, hundreds of costumes, wigs, shoes and hats are sent out on a stage or packed up on tour. Some of the most memorable shows include 1776, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, The Color Purple, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, and A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder.

Kevin S. Foster (Wig Design) is excited to be making his wig design debut at Virginia Rep. His regional design credits include *I Hate Hamlet* at The Maltz Jupiter Theatre; Rodger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* at The Fulton Theatre; *Shrek Jr.* and *Jersey Boys* at Maine State Music Theatre; *Cindy Reilly* and *Pippi Longstockings* at The Peterborough Players; *Our Town* at Virginia Stage Company; *Biloxi Blues, Hello Dolly!*, and *9to5* at The Fort Lee Theatre Company. Other design credits include *Pippin, The Wolves, Balm in Gilead, As You Like It, The Foreigner, Angels in America Part 1, The Importance of Being Earnest, Fun Home, Nosferatu,* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* at Virginia Tech. Instagram and TikTok: @wigsbykevin. www.kevinsfosterii.com

BJ Wilkinson (Lighting Design) received his B.A. from the University of Northern Colorado, and his MFA from the University of Cincinnati - College Conservatory of Music. He serves as Resident Lighting Designer and Master Electrician for Virginia Repertory Theatre where his recent designs include *Atlantis, Sister Act, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, West Side Story, Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End, Miracle on South Division Street, Mary Poppins, Shakespeare in Love, Da, The End of War, Dancing Lessons, 1776, Summer and Smoke, Croaker, Peter and the Starcatcher, Whipping Man,* and *Equivocation.* Recent designs

for Quill Theatre include *Twelfth Night, Merchant of Venice, King Lear, Hamlet, Sam & Carol, Richard III, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Comedy of Errors, Othello, The Tempest,* and *Macbeth.* He would like to thank Samm, Molly and Jameson.

Jacob Mishler (Sound Design) is thrilled to join this incredible team of storytellers. Jacob has been involved in live production for 25 years, moving into theatrical sound design in 2004. His work has been heard all over the country, earning him several Broadway World awards and a Henry award. He is very happy to have recently taken the full time position of Audio Visual Supervisor at Virginia Rep. Selected favorites: *Cabaret* (Dutch Apple), *Woman in Black* (Fulton Theatre), *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Fine Arts Center). Love to Julie. Welcome back to live theatre!

Justin Janke (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be spending this holiday season in the November Theatre with the cast and crew of *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play.* Justin is a 2018 graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University. He has stage managed many of Virginia Rep's productions over the past five years throughout all of our venues, including the recent production of *Pipeline*. He sends his love to his husband, dog, and family for always being a source of constant support. Happy holidays everyone.

Courtney Holmes (Assistant Stage Manager) is just a country girl living in a big city. Raised in Emporia, Virginia, she moved to the quiet county of Glen Allen, Virginia for middle and high school. During her time at Hermitage High, she was a member of the Center for Humanities and followed the arts in all forms from visual arts to playing the violin. After high school, she started to work full time at Capital One to fund her way through higher education in pursuit of a Medical Degree. She is currently studying at VCU to achieve her dreams of starting a small practice to help the under privileged who need medical assistance.

Joe Landry (Adaptation) Joe Landry's plays have been produced across the country and internationally, and include *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play, Reefer Madness, Vintage Hitchcock: A Live Radio Play, Eve & Co., Beautiful, Hollywood Babylon,* and *Numb.* Mr. Landry attended Playwright's Horizons/NYU, founded Second Guess Theatre Company in Connecticut and is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America. He is currently developing new projects for the stage and screen.

Playscripts, Inc. was formed in 1998 by playwrights Doug and Jonathan Rand as an independent theatrical agency to represent a great diversity of playwrights, composers and lyricists. Our commitment to representing artists through innovative channels with a specific focus on creating opportunities for audiences to connect with their great work has spanned two decades and has expanded into representing over 1000 of the live theatre industries most notable contributors.



LEADERSHIP



DESIRÉE ROOTS

Co-Artistic Director - 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@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 *Co-Artistic Director - Community* — "working with the theatre company I love to serve the community I love."

LEADERSHIP



PHIL WHITEWAY

Managing Director

Phil is a key leader in Virginia's nonprofit arts management community. He co-founded Theatre IV in 1975 as Virginia's first professional theatre for young audiences. In 2001, he assumed the role of Managing Director of Barksdale Theatre. In 2012, he provided staff leadership as Theatre IV and

Barksdale merged to form Virginia Rep, Central Virginia's flagship professional theatre. Under his management, Phil's companies have received the first *Excellence in Instruction Award* from the Virginia Board of Education, the *Dominion Shining Star Award* from Virginians for the Arts, and the *50 for 50 Arts Inspiration Award* from the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Phil was a founding member of the boards of the Richmond Arts Consortium and the Broad Street Association. Under his staff leadership, Theatre IV purchased and renovated our historic November Theatre, receiving the *Community Builders Award* from the Central Richmond Association for its contribution to downtown revitalization. Phil is a graduate and past board member of Leadership Metro Richmond. He has served on the Governance Board of Partners in the Arts and as treasurer of Virginians for the Arts.

Phil has received the *Voice of the University Award* from his alma mater (University of Richmond), the *Theresa Pollak Lifetime Achievement Award* from *Richmond Magazine*, and the *Governor's Award for the Arts* from Tim Kaine. In 2000, Phil was included by *Style Weekly* among the "100 Most Influential Richmonders of the 20th Century."

Phil consults on arts management both locally and nationally. He is forever grateful for the love and support of his wife, Donna, and their four adult children—PJ, Jennings, Alex, and Gordon.

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Our Mission: To entertain, challenge and uplift our communities through the power of live theatre.

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Virginia Repertory Theatre's Anti-Racism Commitment & Accountability Statement

Virginia Repertory Theatre aspires to become an artistic home that is multicultural in representation and where everyone is welcomed and included. We acknowledge that white supremacy and racism have permeated our national culture and are pervasive in our society. It is systemic. We stand against this and commit to doing our part to dismantle systems of oppression, not only in the theater community, but everywhere it is present.

As we look inward, we examine our own conscious and unconscious biases. We hold ourselves accountable for the ways in which our organization has caused harm to our artists and to the theater community. By not acknowledging this and the national reckoning, we caused further pain. Following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others, there has been a call for social justice. We at Virginia Repertory Theatre acknowledge this, we accept the call for social justice, and understand how and where we need to change as an organization as we move forward.

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 theater community and to the c ommunity 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.



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