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presents

Neil Simon's
**Barefoot
in the Park**



June 12-23, 2024

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A Message from the Director

"Write what you know."

That's the advice most often given to young writers. Neil Simon, American playwright, screenwriter, television writer, librettist and one of the most popular playwrights in the history of American theater obviously took that advice to heart. Throughout his career he wrote over 30 plays, and screenplays for as many films. Many of which are generally semi-autobiographical, including important aspects of his troubled childhood and first marriages. He has said, "I suppose you could practically trace my life through my plays."

Many of Simon's plays are set in New York City, with a resulting urban flavor. Within that setting, his themes include marital conflict, infidelity, sibling rivalry, adolescence, and fear of aging. Despite the serious nature of these ideas, Simon always managed to tell the stories with humor, embracing both realism and comedy. He would tell aspiring comedy writers, "not to try to make it funny ... try and make it real and then the comedy will come. When I was writing plays", he said, "I was almost always writing a drama that was funny ... I wanted to tell a story about real people." His comedy often portrayed struggles with marital difficulties or fading love, sometimes leading to separation and divorce. After many twists in the plot, the endings typically showed renewal of the relationships.

Barefoot in the Park premiered on Broadway over 63 years ago. In the late 1960s it was one of four Simon plays to be running simultaneously in the Big Apple. Sadly, interest in his early works seemed to have waned around the turn of the century. But in the last decade, there has been a renewal of relationships with theatergoers. I'm delighted that Main Street can be part of that, and introduce this delightful comedy to a new audience. With a young cast, and a fresh take I hope we have made it "real" and let the comedy come.

BJ Hughes

Director and Resident Scenic Designer

Neil Simon's
**Barefoot
in the Park**

Director BJ Hughes
Stage Manager Keith Potter
Scenic Designer BJ Hughes
Master Carpenter..... Frank Dansby
Costume DesignNorma Richardson
Lighting Design and Tehnician.....Nate Barnes
Sound Marian Sorensen
Production Assistant..... Janice Aiken and Karen Stanford
Set ConstructionBridget Burpee, Frank Dansby,
Sue Gilpin, Bobbie Jean Hannon, BJ Hughes,
Dan Jennings, Alan Manno, and Keith Potter
PublicityNorma Richardson
and Marian Sorensen
Box OfficeShirley Beall
and Phyllis Waldrep



SETTING

The top floor of a brownstone on East 48th Street,
New York City-1963

Act I

About 5:30 p.m. on a cold February afternoon

15-Minute Intermission

Act II

Scene 1: Four days later-about 7:00 p.m.

Scene 2: Later that night-about 2:00 a.m.

10-Minute Intermission

Act III

The following day-about 5:00 p.m.

The Players

Corrie Bratter Elise Wright
Telephone Repair Man Isaac Melton
Delivery Man..... Keith Potter
Paul Bratter..... Will Pitts
Mother Karen Beyer
Victor Velasco.....Brad Jester

Shattered Vision
Operators Grant
Program



115 North Hill St. Griffin, GA. 30223

THE INGRAM
FOUNDATION

G Griffin Area
Arts Alliance

THE GRIFFIN DAILY NEWS



The Players



KAREN BEYER (Mother) has worked in theatre for 40+ years and is delighted to make her first appearance at MSP. On stage credits include: The Alliance Theatre, ART Station, Peachtree Playhouse, Stage Door and Theatrical Outfit as well as theatres in N.J. and N.Y. Karen has over 50 film and television credits including: *Poms*, *The First Lady*, *The Resident*, *Queen Sugar*, *Acrimony*, *Sleepy Hollow* and *Army Wives*. She has an extensive dance background and has performed with multiple ballet companies as well as

instruction and competition in ballroom and disco. Karen has directed and/or choreographed over 50 theatrical productions throughout Georgia. Her first choreography job at Theatre in the Square was *The 1940's Radio Hour* under Marian's direction. Karen served as ART Station's Guest Director/Resident Choreographer from 2001-2022. She and her husband, Bob, live in Sun City and are grateful to the community for their love and support. Many thanks to Norma, Marian and BJ, (her first acting teacher at the Alliance), for the opportunity to reconnect and become part of the MSP family!



BRAD JESTER (Victor Velasco) was Lou Cohen in *The 1940's Radio Hour* and Vinnie in *The Odd Couple* and is delighted to be performing with the Main Street Players again! Brad is a speech communication and humanities instructor at Southern Crescent Technical College and lives in Griffin with his wife Liz, their eleven-year-old son Lincoln, and their two dogs, Juno and Linus.



ISAAC MELTON (Telephone Man) appeared as Reverend Duncan Wooley in the Main Street Player's production of *Leading Ladies*. He has been in local productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* as Leonato, Adolfo Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd* and Doc Tann in *Little House on the Prairie*. He is thankful to his wife Shelly and his three sons for all their support.



WILL PITTS (Paul Bratter) appeared as Butch Meyers in *Leading Ladies*. He is a Theater Major at Gordon State College. He has had many lead roles throughout his career. Favorites include Jesus (*Cotton Patch Gospel*), Trinculo (*The Tempest*), The Ghost of Christmas Present (*A Christmas Carol*), and Vlad Popov (*Anastasia*). He received his theatrical training with Richard A. Wright, Jeff Holbrook, and Lori Bush. Will has won many awards for his acting, singing, and pianist work. Some of his awards include 1st place at

regional literary for Duo-Interpretation, 2nd place at regional literary for Male Quartet, and 6 years of superior ratings from the National Federation of Music Clubs.



KEITH POTTER (Delivery Man/Stage Manager) was a musician (guitar) in *Cotton Patch Gospel*. He has been involved with MSP for two seasons, serving as a volunteer in set construction, sound tech, stage management and stagehand work. He has been involved at MSP for the productions of *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*, *Tin Woman*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Miracle on South Division Street*, *Leading Ladies* and *Driving Ms. Daisy*. Prior to this, he had been involved in theater for many years while serving in the US Army in Korea and Germany where he was involved

in productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Greater Tuna*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Annie*, *Cyrano De Bergerac* and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. He loves working with the staff and actors at MSP and is blessed to be able to take part in the magic that is The Main Street Players.



ELISE WRIGHT (Corie Bratter) choreographed the show stopping number in *Leading Ladies* and was seen earlier this season as Beverly Nowak in *Miracle on South Division Street* and Shelby in *Steel Magnolias*. Previous roles at MSP include Helsa Wensel in *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*, Holly Burrell in *Foxfire*, Karol in *Another Night Before Christmas*, and Abby in *Now and Then*.

Some of her other credits include *The Little Mermaid* (Sea Witch), *Alice in Wonderland* (Queen of Arts), *Cinderella* (Stepsister), and *Silent Sky* (Annie Jump Cannon). Elise

graduated from Lees-McRae College with a theatre arts degree. She is also grateful for everyone coming to support the arts!

Artistic Staff and Crew



JANICE AIKEN (Production Assistant) has helped behind the scenes on many MSP productions. Onstage performances include *War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast*, *A Trip to Bountiful*, *Inherit the Wind* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She was recognized by the GAAA Heart for the Arts as Main Street Player's Most Valuable Volunteer for the 2016-2017 season. Janice serves on our board and has been volunteering for Main Street Players since the fall of 2012. She has been invaluable to our organization

and has worked the Box Office, sold concessions, ushered, trained others to usher, answered the phones, helped clean the theatre prior to openings, worked set construction, and repaired props.



NATE BARNES (Lighting Designer/Lighting Technician) has been the Griffin Spalding County School System's Auditorium manager for the past ten years. During this time, he has worked in both audio and lighting. Nate has experience in lighting and audio for several theatrical, ballet, and concert organizations. Nate also volunteers on the audio and visual team at Oak Hill Baptist. He is honored to work with MSP again and for the opportunities he has been given.



FRANK DANSBY (Master Carpenter) was Main Street's most valuable volunteer for the 2018-2019 season. He and his wife, Martha, are lifelong supporters of the arts and in particular theatre. Five years ago, Frank joined Resident Scenic Designer BJ Hughes backstage at Main Street Players and quickly became a tremendous asset to the production team. With his background as an airplane mechanic and his vast knowledge of DIY (do it yourself), he quickly picked up on the construction techniques specific to theatre. Frank has worked on twelve productions for Main Street. With his construction and carpentry skills, he has allowed BJ to expand his vision of what our productions can look like, resulting in even more professional looking sets and scenery. Thank you, Frank, for being part of the Main Street family!



CHRISTOPHER GANSEL (Production Assistant) played Matthew in *Cotton Patch Gospel* and Leo Clark in *Leading Ladies*. Other roles at MSP include Ken de la Maze in *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*, Vanya in *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike*, the Man in *Now and Then*, Kris Kringle in *Another Night Before Christmas*, Watson in *Holmes and Watson* and C.C. Showers in *The Diviners*. Griffin audiences may also remember him as Gomez in Griffin Ballet Theatre's production of *The Addams Family*. Chris wants to thank his lovely wife, Beth, who found out she married a theater kid after it was already too late.



BJ HUGHES (Director/Resident Designer) is enjoying his thirteenth season with Main Street Players. He is even more delighted to be celebrating his 52nd anniversary in professional theatre during which he has worked as an actor, teacher, director, and designer. During his career he has produced, directed, and designed over 150 productions. BJ is originally from New Jersey. After obtaining a degree in theatre, he spent four years touring America in classical repertory before settling in Atlanta where for the next 30 years he acted, taught and directed at the Alliance Theatre. He extends special thanks to Norma and Marian for inviting him to Griffin and providing a home with this creative theatre company.



NORMA RICHARDSON (Artistic Director/Costume Design) has been involved with theatre for most of her life and has appeared on several Atlanta stages among others. As a director her credits include: *Cotton Patch Gospel*, *Miracle on South Division Street*, *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*, *Another Night Before Christmas*, *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*, *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Honky Tonk Highway*, *Nunset Boulevard*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Titanic, the Musical*, *Tuesday's With Morrie*, *Every Christmas Story Ever Told (and Then Some!)*, *Mama Won't Fly*, and *Our Town*. On stage performances include *Foxfire*, *Now and Then*, *The Wild*

Women of Winedale, Fireflies, The Lion in Winter, The Sweet Delilah Swim Club, Southern Comforts, Driving Miss Daisy, Love Letters, The Little Foxes, The Guys, Steel Magnolias, Grace & Glorie, and Same Time Next Year. Her career in television began with Turner Broadcasting/CNN. After leaving Turner, she was an Executive Vice President with Primerica and General Manager for their corporate television production department for over 20 years. She is a native of Griffin, Georgia and is the Founding Artistic Director of Main Street Players.



MARIAN SORENSEN (Associate Artistic Director)

began her journey in theatre 53 years ago in a summer stock production of *Man of La Mancha*. She received a minor in Speech and Drama from LaGrange College but received most of her theatrical training at the Alliance Theatre School at the Woodruff Arts Center. While there, she was contracted as a teacher (her other passion) for both their youth and adult programs. She served as the Assistant Director of the School from 1981-1986. Marian

has performed and/or directed on the stages at The Alliance Theatre, Studio Theatre, Theatrical Outfit, Open City Theatre and Theatre in the Square. For MSP she has directed *Steel Magnolias, The Tin Woman, Foxfire, Now and Then, The Lion in Winter, The 1940's Radio Hour, A Tuna Christmas, War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast, The Dinning Room, Driving Miss Daisy (2011), Grace and Glorie, and The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.*



KAREN STANFORD (Production Assistant)

has proved to be a versatile asset both on and off the stage at MSP. She was last seen as Luella Bennett in *The Diviners*. Other productions at MSP include multiple roles in *War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast, Charlotte's Web* as the Goose and Mrs. Dunlap in *Inherit the Wind*. She was honored as Main Street's Volunteer of the Year for the 2015-2016 season. As a young lady, Karen was an avid participant in her high school's Thespian Club, as well as, performing in *Swingin' High* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. She would also like to give a special thanks to her two children for their love and support.

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2024-2025 Show Dates

- Show 1: September 18-29, 2024
- Show 2: November 13-24, 2024
- Show 3: February 12-23, 2025
- Show 4: April 2-13, 2025
- Show 5: June 11-22, 2025



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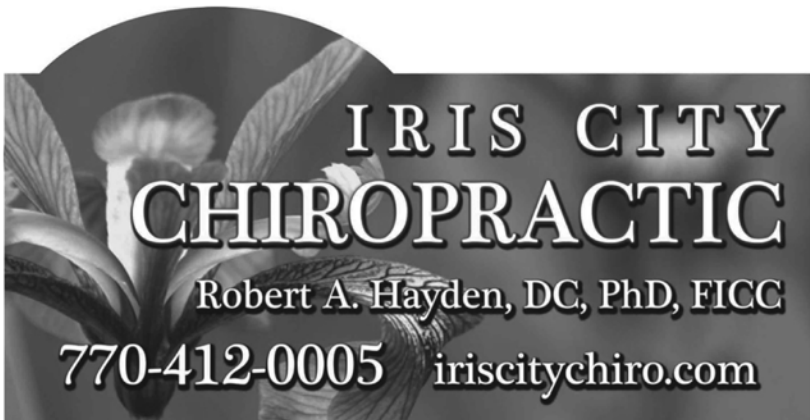
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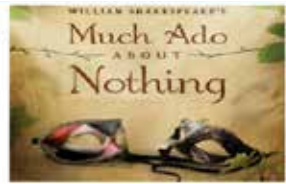
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