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It's a

Wonderful

Life



THE NEW
West Virginia Public Theatre

HOLIDAY SEASON 2018

WELCOME TO WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF THE HOLIDAY CLASSIC, IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

We are pleased you have joined us for this original stage adaptation of the classic film *It's A Wonderful Life* and are confident that you are in for a great show. Since the film was released in 1946, the heart-warming story of George Bailey continues to inspire its audiences and reminds us of the value of each human life and its contribution to the greater good.

WVPT is proud to have performed to over a million people, many of whom were students seeing live theatre for the very first time. This year we will again perform to thousands of students from 16 counties in West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. We appreciate the support of its patrons who, with their tax-deductible gifts and ticket purchases, help sustain operations and productions and enable us to offer these performances to our school children. We are grateful to our donors and sponsors for their support over the years. Their investments have allowed us to remain West Virginia's premiere theatre company. Thank you to our Board of Trustees, staff and cast for your dedication to making this holiday season a success.

Our mission is to enhance the cultural environment of the state and region by providing quality professional programming and educational outreach experience for all citizens.

Please help support our Core Values:

- Entertain and Inspire Audiences with Quality Professional Theater
- Employ Honorable and Responsible Business Practices with our Community Partners
- Educate the Youth of the State and Region to the Wonders of the Theatre
- Enhance the Economic and Cultural Environment of our Region.

Thank you again for your continued support. Enjoy the show!

Debbie Dunaway, President
Board of Trustees
West Virginia Public Theatre






Business Office Information

PO Box 6082
Morgantown, WV 25606
304-381-2382
wvpublictheatre.org



See the latest with #WVPT2018

-  West Virginia Public Theatre
-  @wvpublictheatre
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Emergencies

In the unlikely event of an emergency, you will be directed by the house management to the best method of exiting the theatre and building. Please notice the illuminated exit signs in the theatre. For your safety and the safety of others, please exit as calmly as possible.

Refunds and Exchanges

All sales are final; however, WVPT will utilize the ticket exchange policy laid out by the Arts & Entertainment Box Office: Exchanges may be made at the Mountainlair or Creative Arts Center Box Office during regular box office hours. Tickets cannot be exchanged at the Creative Arts Center outside of regular business hours. \$5 fee/ticket.

Food and Drink

Please, no food or drink in the theatre.

Late Seating

All performances begin promptly at the show time. House staff will seat latecomers at an appropriate interval during the show. Patrons who must leave during the performance are kindly asked to do so between scenes.

Photography and Recording

No photography or video recording is permitted.

Electronics

Please be courteous to all cast, crew, musicians and fellow patrons by not utilizing electronic devices during the performances.



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SUPPORT WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC THEATRE

In 2016, West Virginia Public Theatre partnered with the West Virginia University College of Creative Arts to give students the opportunity to network and study with professional actors, gaining real-world experience.

The New West Virginia Public Theatre enhances the cultural environment of the state and region by providing quality professional programming and educational outreach experiences for all citizens. All productions are built locally from start to finish making WVPT an important asset to the region both artistically and economically. The annual holiday show alone reaches more than 3,000 children from throughout the region. For many of these children, WVPT provides their first, and in some cases, only, exposure to live professional theatre.

Giving to the WVU College of Creative Arts / New West Virginia Public Theatre partnership changes the lives of fellow Mountaineers, local schoolchildren and enriches the culture of the region. Help us continue to bring live, professional-quality theatre to Morgantown and give WVU students a local venue to put their dreams into practice. Now more than ever, we need your support.

Join us in making an impact on tomorrow.

Donate securely online at wvpublictheatre.org

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The Board of Trustees and Staff at the New West Virginia Public Theatre offer heartfelt thanks and acknowledgment to the organizations and individuals who have provided generous financial support. Your kind contributions are met with the warmest gratitude.

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Scenic Construction.....Brok Decor
Draftsman.....Jacob Bigelow
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Fight Director/Consultant.....Jessica Bishop
Music/Vocal Director.....RJ Nestor
Cellist.....Sara Beattie
Child Wrangler.....Joseph Vasquez
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Paugh, Robbie Stevens, Josh Short, Elise Rucker, Madeline Giambi



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IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

The play is an original adaptation by Jay Malarcher of the Frank Capra movie.

Directed by Jerry McGonigle

Original music composed by R. J. Nestor.

DECEMBER 14-16 AND 19-20

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

CAST

George Bailey.....	Dan Stevens
Clarence Odbody.....	Lee Blair*
Mr. Potter.....	John O'Connor
Mary Bailey.....	Emily Shaffer
Peter Bailey, Martini.....	Joe Olivieri*
Mrs. Bailey, Ensemble.....	Cathy O'Dell
Uncle Billy, Ensemble.....	Andrew H. Lyons
Harry, Ensemble.....	Cameron Khoshgam
Violet, Ensemble.....	Sara Gianola
Gower, Ensemble.....	Troy Snyder
Ernie, Ensemble.....	Mark Combs
Bert, Ensemble.....	Liam Michael Holton
Tilley, Ensemble.....	Nora Perone
Goon, Nick, Ensemble.....	Justin Pesce
Ensemble.....	Jared Munson, Caroline Dawson, Elise Rucker, Josh Short
Young George, Peter, Ensemble.....	Owen Minchau
Zuzu, Young Harry Bailey, Young Mary, Ensemble.....	Avery Garvin
Young Violet, Newsboy, Tommy, Ensemble.....	Grace Allen
Janie, Ensemble.....	Isabel O'Connell

**The actor appears through courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*



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DIRECTORS & DESIGNERS



Jerry McGonigle (Director) is Artistic Director of WVPT. Jerry came to WVU in 1990 from Orange County, CA, where he designed, founded and ran the Professional Actors Conservatory at Rancho Santiago College. Jerry has both acted and directed nationally and internationally at such theatres as E.T.A. Hoffman Theatre, 100 Monkeys Productions, Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Pac Theatre Co., Missouri Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, and the Missouri Shakespeare Festival. He holds a BA from the University of Dallas and an MFA in Acting from The American Conservatory Theatre of San Francisco.



R.J. Nestor (Composer, Music Director) is a musician, writer, and communication coach. He is pleased to be back for a twelfth season with WVPT. R.J. has composed original music for several plays, including the Chicago premiere of *Moon Over Buffalo*. With collaborator David Scoville, R.J. has co-written three original musicals. Their most recent, *Golden Horseshoe*, celebrates West Virginia's history. (www.ghmusical.com). They also write screenplays, including *Out of the Depths*, about the 1968 mine disaster in Farmington, WV. As a communication coach, R.J. helps individuals and businesses master their message and communicate with confidence. WVPT credits include *Carousel*, *My Fair Lady*, and *West Side Story*. Love to Elisha, Daisy, Wes, A.J., and family. www.nestorvoice.com



Nora Perone (Assistant Director/ Cousin Tilly/ Ensemble) is a London-based performer, producer, and acting coach. Originally from Morgantown, she holds a BFA in Acting from West Virginia University and an MA in Music Theatre from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. You may have seen Nora performing alongside Daniel A. Stevens and R.J. Nestor in WVPT's *The Last Five Years* (currently nominated for Best Musical, Best Actor, and Best Actress in the BroadwayWorld Regional Awards - voting open until December 31). If not, make sure to catch the show when it returns to WV in February 2019! Nora would like to thank Jerry again for this wonderful opportunity. www.noraperone.com | @norassic_park



James Raymond (Scenic Designer)

Alan McEwen (Lighting Designer) joined the School of Theatre & Dance in 2008. Previous work experience includes Whitman College, Idaho Repertory Theatre, Mountain State Theatre, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Wyoming Summer Stock Theatre, and The Columbine Players. Alan has taught in higher education for 20 years in various duties and capacities focusing on lighting, sound, stagecraft, and contemporary theatre. Lighting and sound credits include musicals, opera, theatre, dance, and performance art in addition to system consulting, design and installation. Alan received his MFA in Lighting from the University of Oregon and is a member of USITT.



Lauren Brennan (Costume Designer/Costume Shop Manager) graduated from West Virginia University with an MFA in Costume Design & Technology in May 2017. Since then, she has served as a Wig & Makeup Artist at the American Players Theatre in Spring Green, WI for the summers of 2017 and 2018. Lauren has also held the position of Adjunct Professor in Costume Design & Technology at Dickinson College, her alma mater, where she taught an intro to design course while also designing Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*, along with two dance concerts. Lauren currently manages and teaches yoga at Suncrest Yoga in Morgantown, while also pursuing freelance design work and exploring other artistic projects in the area.



Jamie Whoolery, (Sound Designer/Engineer) A native of Spencer, W.Va., Jamie Whoolery is currently serving as Director of Production and Facilities at WVU's Creative Arts Center. Jamie's off-Broadway and regional sound design credits include *Secret Order* at 59E59 and works for the Contemporary American Theater Festival in Shepherdstown, New Rep Theatre (LOA) in Watertown, Mass., Merrimack Repertory Theatre (LORT D) in Lowell, Mass. Jamie received the 2008 Elliot Norton Award (Boston) for Outstanding Design for his projection design for *The Clean House* at New Rep. Jamie is a graduate of West Virginia University with a B.F.A. in design and technical theatre and a B.S.J. in public relations.

WINTER COMPANY



Grace Allen (Young Violet/Ensemble) is a fifth grade student at Mountainview Elementary School and resident of Morgantown West Virginia. This is her debut as an actor but not her first time on stage as she has also been in multiple dance recitals. Grace is a trombonist, a member in the choir at her school, and enjoys reading or coding computer programs in her spare time. She would like to thank the cast for their advice and support, Amanda Garvin for the photo, and her family.



Lee Blair (Clarence Obody) West Virginia Public Theatre: Actor in *A Christmas Carol* and *The Fantasticks*, Director for *Peter and The Starcatcher*, *Young Frankenstein*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. NYC: Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, New York International Fringe Festival. Regional: Emelin Theatre, Alhambra Theatre, Hippodrome State Theatre and Greenbrier Valley Theatre. Professional directing: WVPT, Greenbrier Valley Theatre. WVU: Associate Professor of Acting & Musical Theatre and Head of Performance, School of Theatre & Dance, Director for *The Moors*, *Assassins*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Noises Off*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Seminar*, *Cabaret*, *Lend Me a Tenor* and *Guys and Dolls*. Proud member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA) since 1997. Associate member, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDCS).



Mark Combs (Ernie/Ensemble) is a Chicago-based actor, comedian, and playwright. This is Mark's second show with WV Public Theatre and he is both excited and grateful to have been invited back to work with such a fun and talented cast, crew, and director. He hopes you enjoy the show and would like to remind you to help control the pet population by having your pet spayed or neutered.



Caroline Dawson (Ensemble) is a senior in West Virginia University's School of Theatre and Dance. She is on track to graduate in May of 2019 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. Caroline recently appeared as The Moor-Hen in West Virginia's School of Theatre and Dance's MainStage production of *The Moors* and Alf in West Virginia Public Theatre's production of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. She also previously adapted August Strindberg's play *Miss Julie* into a one woman show titled *Miss Julie: (Not) Guilty* and performed the role of Miss Julie. Other roles that she has played include: Cecilia Johnson in *Fefu and Her Friends*, Amanda in *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, Shirley in *Criminal Genius*, *The Vagina Monologues*, and Sara in *Hush*. Caroline would like to thank Jerry McGonigle for the opportunity to work on such a beautiful show alongside an incredible cast and crew!



Avery Garvin (Zuzu/Young Harry Bailey/Young Mary/Ensemble) is a 3rd grade student at Ridgedale Elementary School. Avery has previously acted in *Annie* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the WVU Children's Theater. She enjoys playing piano and softball. Avery is excited for her first production with WVPT and she would like to thank the cast and crew for their love and kindness in creating a home away from home.



Sara Gianola (Violet/Ensemble) has a BFA in Acting from West Virginia University and an Associates Degree in Acting from The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. She spent five years working in Los Angeles in film, television, and casting, where she was also the Director of Clientele for Extras Management and Kids Management. She played the role of Kit in FOX Studios' film release of *Prison Break: The Final Break*, and "China" on ABC Family's *Bunheads*. Some of her favorite roles at WVU include "Evelyn" in *Shape of Things*, "The Moon" in *Blood Wedding* and "Hotspur" in *Henry IV*. Sara would like to thank her family for their undying love and support.



Liam Michael (Bert/Ensemble) Holton is very excited to be joining WVPT this Christmas. A first year MFA Acting grad here at WVU, Liam was recently seen on stage as Harry Bagley and Gerry in the fall production of *Cloud 9*. A Southern California native, Liam is excited for more of this thing you call “snow.” Love and thanks to Shawn, Angela, and Renee.



Cameron Khoshgam (Harry Bailey/Ensemble) is an MFA Acting student at WVU. He is beyond excited to be working with this amazing company of talented, hardworking people. He was last seen in West Virginia University’s production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. “Strange, isn’t it? Each man’s life touches so many other lives. When he isn’t around he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?”-*It’s a Wonderful Life*



Andrew H. Lyons (Uncle Billy/Ensemble) is a Brooklyn, NY based actor, director, and part-time handyman to the stars. In the 13 years since earning his M.F.A. right here at WVU, Andrew has worked in regional theaters from coast to coast, but he is always thrilled to come back to Morgantown. Many thanks go out to Jerry McGonigle, everyone at WVPT, and the tireless and talented actors in this production! Love to April, Walter, and Omar!



Owen Minchau (Young George/Peter/Ensemble) is an 8th Grader at Mountaineer Middle School in Morgantown, WV. He is active in his school’s drama program and played Knight 2 and Baby Bear in *Shrek the Musical*. He has also been in many church productions over the years. He attended the West Virginia University Teen Acting Academy this summer and enjoyed learning more about acting, improv, costume design, and stage performance. This experience solidified his love for all things “theatre.” Owen plays the drums in his school’s marching band and is also the drummer in the Pop Shop band, *Dark Matter*. Owen enjoys running on his middle school cross country team, and is a roller coaster enthusiast.

THRASHER

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Jared Munson (Ensemble) is a senior BFA Acting student in the School of Theatre and Dance. This is his first production acting with WVPT, and his collegiate credits include *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Bennet House*, *The Pirates Of Penzance*, *Assassins*, *Bug*, *Spring Awakening* and most recently *Cloud 9*. Jared would like to extend his thanks to his friends and family for all their support, to the amazingly talented cast and crew for the wonderful experience, and especially to Jerry McGonigle for the incredible opportunity.



Isabel O'Connell, (Janie/Ensemble) age 11, from Morgantown, WV is excited and grateful to be joining the cast of *It's A Wonderful Life*. Credits : Annie Jr (*Annie*), WVU Youth Theater, *Mary Poppins* (upcoming production, 2019) (*Bert*), WVU Youth Theater. Thanks to all her family and friends for their love and support.



John O'Connor (Mr. Potter) is a Professor/Senior Level: Theatre Arts at Fairmont State University. He has acted professionally in Chicago, Seattle, and West Virginia, and has appeared in numerous FSU Masquers and Town & Gown productions. Favorite roles include Cervantes in *Man of La Mancha*, Fagin in *Oliver!*, Thurston Wheelis, et al in *Greater Tuna*, Joe Keller in *All My Sons*, Senex in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Father in *Children of Eden*, all for FSU; Nick in *The Guys* for Vintage Theatre Company; Lear in *King Lear* and Polonius in *Hamlet* for The Rustic Mechanicals; The Bishop in *Les Miserables*, Marley's Ghost/Christmas Future in *A Christmas Carol*, and Lord Leonard Aster in *Peter and the Starcatcher* for West Virginia

Public Theatre. O'Connor's directing credits include plays by Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Moliere, Ibsen, Chekhov, Miller, Sondheim, Ionesco, Pinter, Handke, Orton, Elizabeth Robins, Caryl Churchill, Wendy Weiner, Brooke Berman, and Lynn Nottage.



Cathy O'Dell (Mrs. Bailey/Ensemble) is an associate professor of theatre at West Virginia University. Her other roles for WVPT include Kate in *Sylvia* and Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*. She has acted professionally at the American Contemporary Theater Festival and The Las Vegas Little Theatre where she won the Best Actress in Nevada for her role of Rose in the stage production of *The Woolgatherer*. Cathy acted in *Not Someone Like Me*, an original play directed by West Virginia Alumnus and Academy Award and Golden Globe nominee, Chris Sarandon. Cathy's television credits include the Cinemax series *Banshee* in the recurring role of Helen Vicks. She was a featured actor in The Learning Channel's production *Night*

Visitors. She was last seen in the second season of WGN's *Outsiders*. Cathy has appeared in national commercials and industrials. She also works as a voice-over artists and can be heard on numerous commercials, industrials, and websites. Cathy's film roles include Academy award nominee Richard Linklater's, *Last Flag Flying*, Madeline Usher in *Edgar*

Alan Poe's Requiem for the Damned and *Woozy in The Baggage Claim* opposite Tom Savini and directed by Academy Award nominated and Golden Globe winner Irene Miracle.



Joe Olivieri (Peter Bailey/Martini) is head of the Undergraduate Acting Program in the Department of Theater at UCLA. Before joining the faculty at UCLA he was head of the MFA and BFA Acting Programs at WVU. Joe is a member of SAG-AFTRA and Actors Equity Association (AEA) and has acted in television and on stage. He recently appeared as Greg in the 2017 WVPT production of A.R. Gurney's *Sylvia*. Other regional theater credits include Denver Center Theater, PCPA Theaterfest, San Jose Repertory Company, Pittsburgh's City Theater, Carnegie Mellon Showcase of New Plays, and the American Conservatory Theater, where he received an MFA in Acting. He is a founding member of Pacific

Resident Theater in Venice, CA where he acts and has directed several award winning productions. Joe is the author of *Shakespeare without Fear: A User-Friendly Guide to Acting Shakespeare*, and *FLIXACTING: Illustrating Acting Skills through Film Performance*, a media-rich e-Book. Joe is the proud father of Luca and Tessa Olivieri.



Elise Rucker (Ensemble) is a senior in the BFA Acting program at WVU. Elise has studied Shakespeare at The American Conservatory Theater, as well as the Academy at the Stratford Festival in Ontario, Canada. Recent WVU credits include *Cloud 9* (Maud/Betty), *Spring Awakening* (Fraulein Knuppeldick, Frau Gabor, Frau Bessell), *Bug* (Agnes White), *Three Sisters* (Olga), and *Dog Sees God* (Tricia). Elise would like to thank her friends and family for their endless support, as well as Jerry McGonigle for the incredible opportunity. A big thank you to everyone who made this show possible!



Justin Pesce (Goon/Nick/Ensemble) is enjoying his first semester as an MFA student at West Virginia University. He is a recent graduate of Western Connecticut State University where he acquired his BA in acting. Pesce was also a production intern for Brown/Trinity Rep this past fall. Pesce is known for his roles as: Danny in *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, Balthazar in *Our Lady of 121st*, Newyt Lee in *Parade* and Shadow in *Bang Bang Your Dead!* Pesce also played Curio in William Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night*. Pesce is also a graduate of Naugatuck Valley Community Colleges acting program, The Neighborhood Playhouse School of Theater and The Michael Chekhov Acting Studio in New York City. Pesce

wishes to thank his family, friends, WVU acting family and West Virginia Public Theater for supporting him and allowing him to accomplish his dream of becoming an actor.



Emily Shaffer (Mary Bailey) is a BFA graduate from West Virginia University. Since her time in Morgantown, she has been living in New York City and has been building a career primarily in television. Some of her credits include: *How to Make It in America* [HBO], *Chicago Fire* [NBC], *Law & Order: SVU* [NBC] and *NCIS: New Orleans* [CBS]. When she's not auditioning or on sets she is enjoying the city with her wonderful husband, Vance and perfect pooch, Margot. Emily is thrilled to be back on this stage being directed by her favorite director and getting to play with actors that she adores.



Joshua Short (Ensemble) is a BFA Acting major at West Virginia University. This is his first performance with WVPT. He recently appeared in WVU productions of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Three Sisters*. He plans to graduate in the spring and continue pursuing a career in film and on stage. He is so thankful for all of the love and support from his friends and family along this journey.



Troy Snyder (Mr. Gower/Ensemble) is a Professor of Theatre and the Technical Director in Fairmont State University's Department of Communication and Theatre Arts. He also taught at WVU in the Division of Theatre from 2001 to 2004. At FSU, Troy teaches courses in Theatrical Production and Stage Design, Props Making, Scene Painting and other courses related to technical theatre. Although his primary responsibility is supervising the technical aspects of the productions at FSU, he has directed several plays. For FSU's Town and Gown Theatre at Prickett's Fort he has directed *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Music Man*, *Always...Patsy Cline*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. He has also acted in

several plays at FSU: *1776* (John Adams), *Oklahoma* (Andres Carnes), *ANNIE GET YOUR GUN* (Charlie Davenport), *South Pacific* (Luther Billis) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Ageus/ Robin Starveling). On the stage at FSU's Wallman Hall he has directed *CABARET*, *THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE*, *Rocket Boys the Musical*, *Children of Eden*, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. He has a BFA from WVU, and an MFA in Stage Scenography from UNC Greensboro. Troy has a long association with West Virginia Public Theatre as a designer, technical director, scenic artist and prop master, but this is his first resume credit with WVPT as an actor.



Dan Stevens (George Bailey) This is Daniel's second opportunity to work with WVPT, leaping at the chance to play 'Jaime' in a production of *The Last Five Years* produced in conjunction with WVPT earlier this year. Daniel has worked worked with such companies as The American Shakespeare Center, The SITI Company, The Texas Shakespeare Festival, The Nebraska Theatre Caravan, Dollywood, Theatrcum Botanicum, NewGuard Theatre Company, and The Southland Theatre Company; the final two of which he is a founding member. Daniel graduated with a BFA in Theater from WVU in 2009. In 2017, he completed in UCLA'S MFA Acting program. Daniel owes his love of this story to his parents,

Jonathan and Amani, who raised him on classics like this from a tender, impressionable age. Thank you both for giving me a life as Wonderful as this. Connor: "You want the moon? Just say the word and I'll throw a lasso around it and pull it down." @OtherDanStevens | www.TheOtherDanStevens.com



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