

CALLBOARD

racine theatre guild **October 2023**

Seasonal Allergies Opens October 27



**A Note From RTG Director
Doug Instenes**

Holidays and Family

On the stage of the RTG, we have gone from a cemetery to a suburban contemporary home, filled with laughter and good food, for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. The very funny and warm-hearted comedy *Seasonal Allergies* presents family comedy, mixed with some family drama.

Those of us with siblings know how the holidays can cause both laughter and friction in the midst of the traditional celebrations. We think you will be entertained by the comic situations that show up in the Shelby house, and perhaps a few things will remind you of your own family.

We are delighted to welcome as guest director Adrianna Jones, a member of the Carthage College faculty, and a freelance professional director/actor, to our RTG theatrical family. As we produce eight full-scale productions each season, I cannot direct them all. For two decades I have hired guest directors, choreographers, music directors and scenic designers, to support the volunteer actors and technical staff. Each bringing new creative ideas and different approaches. It is exciting for our casts and crews to work with a new person at the helm, and we think it adds variety for the audiences to enjoy, too. The RTG was very lucky that Adrianna had an opening in her busy schedule.

Please come and enjoy *Seasonal Allergies*, and you probably won't sneeze or sniffle your way through, unless you are laughing very hard.

You are invited to the home of Julia and Thomas Shelby to spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve for the delightful family comedy *Seasonal Allergies*, opening October 27 at the Racine Theatre Guild, and running three weekends through November 12. Katherine DiSavino and Kevin Mead wrote this heartfelt comic show in 2013, and it has seen successful regional productions nationwide.

Julia is a professional chef, so it's natural that she would host a holiday that focuses on food. Let others beware if they enter her kitchen and offer to help with the Thanksgiving turkey. Add Charlie Shelby, their 10-year-old daughter, who navigates the family dynamics with her love of karate. J.D. and Alison Cusimano are long-time friends who join the Shelbys for these major holidays. J.D. is a florist, and his wife Alison, a lawyer, is eight months pregnant with her first child.

Pete Dumbowski, Julia's younger brother, shows up and shares with the group all of the agonies he is going through with a long, drawn-out divorce. While Pete seems self-absorbed and overly dramatic during the family holiday celebrations, everyone eventually learns to listen to Pete and give him sympathy and understanding.

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Seasonal Allergies

Written by Katherine DiSavino
and Kevin Mead

CAST

Julia Samantha Sustachek
Thomas Kevin Sustachek
Alison Raquel Wright
J.D. Scott Kovacik
Charlie Lucy Worrell
Pete Dominick Knox
Emily Lynn Bryant

CREW

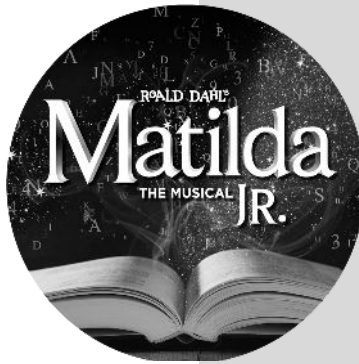
Director Adrianna Jones
Set Design Sarah Hunt-Frank
Technical Director Jane Srnick
PSM Joycelyn Fish
Stage Manager JR Trimark
ASM Kathy Berg, Karen Magee
Sound Design/Tech.. Jonathan Wright
Light Design Timothy James Lewis
Light Tech Addie Rika
Hair/Make-up .. Taylor Anne Stefanski
Costume Design Sheila Simonsen
Wardrobe Penny Geise
Props Design Leo Waite,
Elliott Hoppa Swanson
Props Run Phil Lyden,
Sandy Lyden
Understudies Stephen Fletcher,
Brian Schalk , Avery Sustachek

Oct/Nov - Production Calendar - *Seasonal Allergies*

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12						

FRIDAY, Oct 27	7:30 pm
SATURDAY, Oct 28	7:30 pm
SUNDAY, Oct 29	2:00 pm
THURSDAY, Nov 2	7:00 pm
FRIDAY, Nov 3*	7:30 pm
SATURDAY, Nov 4	2:00 & 7:30 pm
SUNDAY, Nov 5	2:00 pm
THURSDAY, Nov 9	7:00 pm
FRIDAY, Nov 10	7:30 pm
SATURDAY, Nov 11	2:00 & 7:30 pm
SUNDAY, Nov 12	2:00 pm

*ASL Interpreted Performance



Matilda's bravery and brains inspires students to join the rebellion & audiences root for the "revolting children."

NOV 17 - 19

SPONSORED BY SC JOHNSON

COMEDY TONIGHT
LIVE

A hilarious, eye-opening, wise, and compassionate tour into the last frontier, the forbidden zone at the heart of every woman.

SAT, NOV 18
7 PM



Signature SPOTLIGHT
Concert Series

Our Christmas concert will fill your stocking with timeless tunes and modern twists on holiday favorites.

A VERY MERRY GUILD CHRISTMAS

SAT, DEC 23
2 & 7 PM

MAINSTAGE

<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	December 8 - 17, 2023
<i>Dial M for Murder</i>	January 12 - 28, 2024
<i>Now and Then</i>	February 23 - March 10, 2024
<i>Stargirl</i>	April 12 - 21, 2024
<i>Cabaret</i>	May 17 - June 2, 2024

RACINE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

<i>Matilda, Jr.</i>	November 17 - 19, 2023
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	February 2 - 4, 2024
<i>James and the Giant Peach</i>	March 15 - 17, 2024

COMEDY TONIGHT

<i>Vagina Monologues</i>	Saturday, November 18, 2023
<i>Golden Girls Special</i>	Saturday, February 3, 2024
<i>Bible Bingo</i>	Saturday, March 16, 2024

SIGNATURE SPOTLIGHT

<i>Very Merry Guild Christmas</i>	Saturday, Dec 23, 2023
<i>Broadway Blockbusters</i>	Saturday, Feb 10, 2024

UPCOMING AUDITIONS
Dial M for Murder
Mon, Nov 6 & Tues, Nov 7 @ 7 p.m.
Tony creates the perfect crime to murder his wife, but when the would-be-killer ends up dead, the plot unravels into a calculated mystery.

ROLES FOR
1 Woman, early 20s - 40s; 5 Men, early 20s - any age
Production Dates: January 12 - 28, 2023

A diverse group of individuals with all levels of experience are welcome. Scripts are available at the Box Office.
Visit RacineTheatre.org or call 262.633.4218 for more info.

RTG partners with NAMI Racine County during "Seasonal Allergies"

The holidays can be extra stressful for many and when looking through the script and situations in *Seasonal Allergies*, partnering with NAMI Racine County was a way to share resources to help people navigate similar situations.



NAMI Racine County is the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). An independent not for profit organization seeking to improve the quality of life of all individuals by offering no cost mental illness advocacy, education, and sup-

port programs across Racine County.

As the holiday's approach and as you watch *Seasonal Allergies*, NAMI has shared some ways to manage the anxiety and tensions festivities can bring:

- Set boundaries - if hosting an event or buying expensive gifts is too stressful, it's okay to say no. It's also okay to limit time with family you have a complicated dynamic with.
- Take time for you - spend time with people you enjoy being around. Celebrate a holiday tradition, or make a new one that makes you heart feel "warm & fuzzy."
- Give yourself permission to feel all of your feelings. It's okay to feel happy, joyful, as well as sad, espe-

cially if you are missing someone during the holidays. It's okay to feel all of those feelings.

- Maintain healthy habits like going to therapy, getting enough sleep and exercising. They are critical to keeping your mental health on track.

NAMI Racine County's mission is to provide advocacy, education, support, and public awareness so all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives. They will have information table in the lobby at select performances. You can learn more about NAMI by calling (262) 637-0582 or visiting namiracinecounty.org for more details.

Spotlight on Adrianna Jones

A first time Guest Director



"I love theatre," Adrianna Jones says, simply. "I started out as a performer and earned my degree in musical theatre at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri.

I went on to find acting jobs all over the place, from cruise ships to Los Angeles, to the Midwest. Eventually I decided to get a Master's degree."

Adrianna earned her Master's of Music degree in Musical Theatre Vocal Pedagogy in 2022 at Carthage College.

"I moved to Kenosha to pursue this degree, and found that I love the Racine/Kenosha area. It's halfway between Chicago and Milwaukee, where there are lots of professional theatre opportunities. I teach acting classes and voice lessons."

It was at Carthage that Adrianna got to know Kim Instenes and Greg Berg, also on the faculty, and thus met Doug Instenes, as he was putting out a search for guest directors.

"I love the directing world," Adrianna says. "I have directed *A Raisin in the Sun* in Kenosha and directed a production of *Pipeline* with the Black Arts Council of Racine. I'll be directing shows at Carthage this season too. While I do love musicals, I love putting music into straight plays as well. Since

Seasonal Allergies is set at holiday time, we can really play with having background music that backs up the comedy or the emotion."

While Adrianna had not known *Seasonal Allergies* before, once she read the script, she knew she would love to direct it.

"It is a show about real people feeling honest emotions as they are going through the holiday and family celebrations and feelings. I call it a family comedy with a lot of heart. It contains a theme of new beginnings, because of the character of Pete going through a divorce and being torn between heartache and trying to move on."

Adrianna loves the fact that while the show is a comedy, it has doses of heartbreak in the family dynamics.

"Much of the action is comic, but there is also drama in how long it takes for Pete to cope with the collapse of his marriage. I think you really get to know all the characters and really root for them."

This show has some particular props challenges because it is so centered on food.

"Well, you can't have Thanksgiving without food being a very big part of this show!" Adrianna says. "And with the hostess being a professional chef, there is a lot of pressure about things being just right. Actors really eat on stage, so we have to get a lot of food details perfectly organized with the

props crew. And piles of clothes and dirty laundry are another props challenge, and part of the humor."

In her experience of working with the Racine Theatre Guild, Adrianna could not be more impressed. "I don't want to call the actors amateurs," she says. "Their approach is so professional, so dedicated to creating the best possible product. I know that most of the cast and crew work full-time jobs all day and then come to rehearsals at night, prepared and with lines worked on. I am so excited to be here, working with this caliber of facility, volunteers and staff. Doug is so supportive, yet hands-off, to let me do my own thing. Joycelyn is great, not only in her job, but also as production stage manager for this show."

One of the fun things that Adrianna found in her casting was the ability to cast a real-life couple as the Shelbys. Samantha and Kevin Sustachek are portraying the husband and wife, and Adrianna is enjoying working on their interpretations of the host couple.

And then there is the challenge of putting a show on a thrust stage.

"Oh, yes. Working on a three-quarter thrust stage is something I'm not used to. I am walking all over the audience seats, looking at sight lines and planning the blocking and placement of furniture and the Christmas tree. Nothing should block the audience view, even those sitting in the side sections. It is a great challenge, and I'm enjoying it. With these phenomenal actors and crew, and this funny script, I am having a wonderful time getting this heartfelt comedy story onto the RTG stage."

Calling Field Trip Enthusiasts: *Little Mermaid* Outreach Performances

Local school groups, homeschool organizations, and childcare centers have the chance to introduce students to the magic of live theatre at the Racine Theatre Guild with Disney's *The Little Mermaid*! In addition to its performances for the public December 8 – 17, we also offer eight outreach daytime performances for kids of all ages throughout the area.

Making a splashy return after its sold out run, students can experience a tale about love and standing on own

two fins – or feet! Not only will they get to enjoy the lively performance, complete with favorites like "Part of Your World," "Poor Unfortunate Souls," and "Under the Sea," but also engage in a talkback, asking questions of the cast and crew following performances.



Outreach performances are offered at 9:15 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on:

- Weds, December 13
- Thurs, December 14
- Tues, December 19
- Weds, December 20

Thanks to support from SC Johnson, tickets are \$7 per student to attend. Encourage your child or grandchild's teacher or school to sign-up by passing along the details. Those interested in adding the trip into their lesson plans may contact Teri at teri@racinetheatre.org or (262) 633-4218!

The Racine Theatre Guild
2519 Northwestern Avenue, Racine, WI 53404
Box Office (262) 633-4218
www.racinetheatre.org



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Playing with the emotions that these main characters feel is the heart of the comedy. The playwrights know that the holidays can bring out both laughter and friction, and they introduce a neighbor, Emily, who shows Pete that he can have a future after divorce. Oh, and Julia is allergic to pine trees. And possibly also to piles of dirty laundry.

Katherine DiSavino also wrote *Things My Mother Taught Me*, a comedy that appeared on the RTG stage four years ago, Audiences loved the

family humor in that show.

Reviewers have been tickled by *Seasonal Allergies* in its many productions.

"Seasonal Allergies is a funny, heartwarming story about family, friends, and holiday stresses...This is a kinder, gentler comedy, like a Neil Simon family tale." – BroadwayWorld.com

"This is a delightfully funny play about a family dealing with one member in personal turmoil who comes to them seeking comfort, but turns into a monumental pain in the butt. The situation is

real, the humor is real, but so is the sense of a family trying to regain the warmth and love of the season." – Lancaster Intelligence

Suitable for audience members of all ages, *Seasonal Allergies* is a hilarious kickoff to the holiday season. Call the box office at (262) 633-4218 to order tickets or for further information. Or visit the RTG website at racinetheatre.org.

The Callboard is written by
volunteer Nancy Moldenhauer,
a freelance writer