

FROM A MINOR WALTZ CAME A

Classical Music Masterpiece

Anton Diabelli was a prolific 19th-century composer who would be a forgotten man in the 21st century if not for his patriotic little waltz that inspired the creation of a masterpiece of classical music composition by Ludwig van Beethoven. Diabelli, a choirboy in the Salzburg Cathedral, turned to music composition at an early age; he wrote notable works, including six masses, before his 20th birthday, but never ascended to the top ranks of composers of his time. He later moved to Vienna, where he taught piano, continued to compose, and went into the music publishing business.

In 1819, Diabelli came up with a promotional idea for his company; he would invite every important Austrian composer, as well as others from outside the country, to contribute compositional variations on his waltz, which he would then compile into an anthology. The result was what we today might call an all-star lineup. Fifty-one composers responded to his request, among them Franz Schubert, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and 11-year-old Franz Liszt. Beethoven at first resisted getting involved in a project involving a piece of music that, according to contemporaneous accounts now viewed with some skepticism, he dismissively labeled as *schusterfleck*, or “cobblers’ patch.”

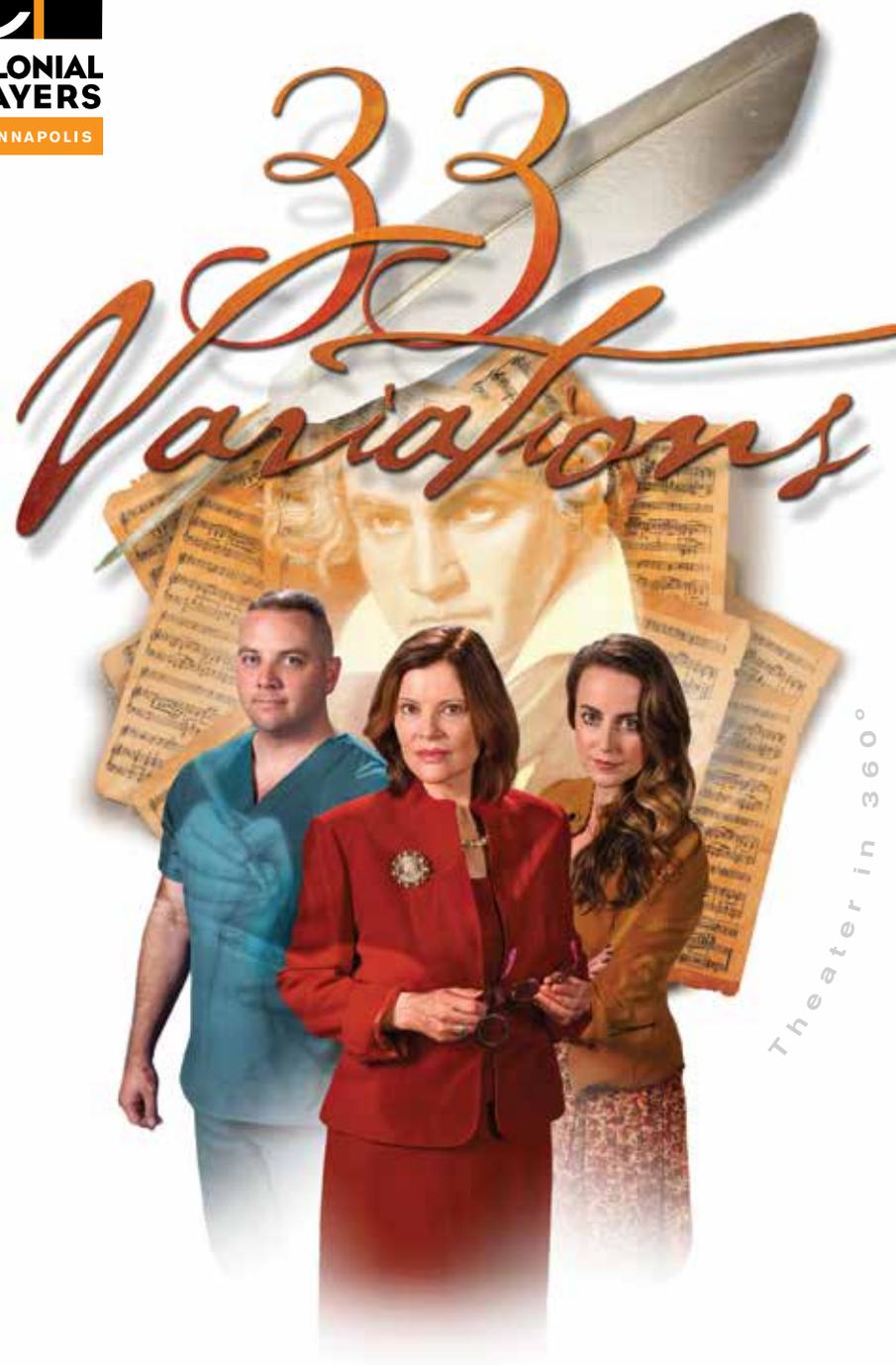
Then, between 1819 and 1823, he wrote what many experts believe is his greatest work for the piano -- 33 separate variations based on Diabelli’s waltz. Music writer Donald Tovey described it as the greatest set of variations ever written, while pianist Alfred Brendel went even further, calling it “the greatest of all piano works.” And in *Beethoven: The Last Decade 1817–1827*, Martin Cooper wrote: “The variety of treatment is almost without parallel, so that the work represents a book of advanced studies in Beethoven’s manner of expression and his use of the keyboard, as well as a monumental work in its own right.”

What caused Beethoven to devote so much time and creative effort writing different versions of such a simple waltz?

The question has been examined and debated by musicologists for decades, and there are no ready answers. One simple possibility is money. In the autumn of 1822, Beethoven wrote to Diabelli: “The fee for the Variat should be 40 ducats (a gold coin) at the most if they are worked out on as large a scale as planned, but if this should *not take place*, it would be set for *less*.” The two men also had a personal connection; Diabelli worked as a copyist and corrector of some of Beethoven’s works for a publishing house, and the composer liked Diabelli and had confidence in his skills. Perhaps it was the influence of the Archduke Rudolph, who, in the previous year, had composed a huge set of 40 variations on a theme by Beethoven. He might have been trying to outdo himself after composing his *32 Variations in C minor*, or trying to outdo Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* with its total of 32 pieces. According to another story, Diabelli was pressing Beethoven for his contribution because he had 32 pieces from other composers. “Go ahead and publish them,” the composer is purported to have replied, “I shall write thirty-three all by myself.”

Beethoven wrote most of the variations in 1819, but set the project aside to work on other pieces of music and did not finish until the spring of 1823. Diabelli published the Beethoven variations quickly in June of the same year, adding the following introductory note: “We present here to the world Variations of no ordinary type, but a great and important masterpiece worthy to be ranked with the imperishable creations of the old Classics—such a work as only Beethoven, the greatest living representative of true art—only Beethoven, and no other, can produce.”

Sources: *The New Yorker*, *Wikipedia*, www.lvbeethoven.com



OCTOBER 20 – NOVEMBER 12, 2017 2017/2018 season



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As co-producer and assistant director of *33 Variations*, I have been thinking lately how the past and present seem to overlap not only in make-believe, but in real life as well.

Here at Colonial Players we endeavor to bring to our audiences the classics ("fine old chestnuts" as a longtime member lovingly refers to them) as well as more avant-garde shows. We want to continue to expand our reach as well as challenge our actors, production teams, and audiences to broaden their idea of what theater is.

I often talk about our members and volunteers in this space – possibly, because prior to my current role I was HR Director. We have a wonderful group of longtime volunteers, and we have new volunteers who have jumped in and become just as passionate about our theater and its family. What makes this so special is we have new energy, new perspectives, and new ideas blending seamlessly with long-held traditions. I'm glad to know we have people who are working to make sure Colonial Players is part of the community for many, many more years to come.

Thanks for being here, and enjoy the show!

– SHIRLEY PANEK

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Jonathan Berthon, France; for help in moving a set piece
Charlotte Robinson • Tim Brown

The grand piano used on the stage for *33 Variations* will be for sale after the show closes November 12. For information, contact Judi Wobensmith, 443-254-7447.

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Colonial Players gratefully acknowledges the generous bequest from Roland Riley, a longtime patron whose gift helps ensure the future economic viability of our theater.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Time and Transcendence. These are the threads woven into the fabric of *33 Variations*.

Time. There is never enough to achieve what we set out to do in life. That is true whether we are a brilliant composer or a renowned musicologist, a costumer or a nurse. Life is short. Time is scarce. What is to be done?

We must take the world as it is, not as we expect it to be. Assume nothing. Question the history books, dogmatic beliefs, anything that prevents us from seeing the world with the wonder of a child, a child who can "see God" in her mother's face as she listens to Beethoven's music. What we all want is to be enlightened, to be inspired, to know and be loved. By doing so we transcend our day-to-day existence.

Beethoven did just this. He defied all rules, ignored societal norms, and "cleared the stench of Vienna" from his mind in order to truly hear and absorb Diabelli's waltz. It was on Beethoven's mind for four years. Its simple beauty haunted him, as it may you as you hear it throughout our production. Anton Schindler, Beethoven's personal assistant and later biographer, referred to the work as a

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



TERRY AVERILL has been active both on and off the stage at Colonial Players as a director, actor, set designer, and president of the Board of Directors for four years. He appeared at CP as the owner of the donut shop in *Superior Donuts*, as James Wilson in *1776*, and as George in *Of Mice and Men*. Directing credits

schusterfleck (cobble's patch), and though he meant it in a derogatory way, he was not wrong. Beethoven built a musical world upon this simple, and purportedly mediocre, idea. He recognized the work for what it was, a simple beer hall waltz. And from this 50 second piece of music, he created a 50 minute masterpiece that would impact music theory forever.

So why do we have a play about this piece of music? Why do we care about the sketches of the variations that Beethoven spent his last years obsessing over? Because discovering the origins of things, essential truths, understanding the primary cause of things is what concerned Moisés Kaufman as it does me. Kaufman created his own "cobble's patch," a simple theme about the search for the origin of Beethoven's masterwork. He explored this theme with 33 vignettes or variations that form a pattern, an expansive story mirroring Beethoven's enigmatic history. In it we find multiple perspectives about love, about work and obsession, about yearning, and the struggle to live with dignity, about death and suffering. But just as in Beethoven's final variation, ours is one of hope and transcendence.

– **TERRY AVERILL**

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

MOISÉS KAUFMAN was born in Venezuela, is of Romanian and Ukrainian descent, and moved to New York City in 1987. He described himself this way in one interview: "I am Venezuelan, I am Jewish, I am gay, I live in New York. I am the sum of all my cultures. I couldn't write anything that didn't incorporate all that I am." He is a playwright and director and is best known for writing *The Laramie Project*, which was based on the story of Matthew Shepard, a young man

who was killed in a vicious gay hate crime in Wyoming. Kaufman is also the author of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*. Kaufman received a Tony Award nomination for best director for the 2004 production of *I Am My Own Wife*. Winner of numerous awards, including a 2002 Guggenheim Fellowship, he was the first Venezuelan to win the National Medal of Arts, which was presented to him last year by President Obama.



THE CAST



DANN ALAGNA (Anton Schindler)

Originally from New York but raised in South Florida, Dann first found the stage at age 12-ish after his Mother tried virtually everything else to get him to focus. Dann has performed in dozens of community theater productions and is thrilled to be back in the round at CP, six years after his WATCH nominated turn as Zed the Village Idiot in *Cinderella Waltz*. Yeah, you read that right. Other CP credits include *Earth and Sky* and the upcoming holiday treasure not to be missed, *It's A Wonderful Life: A live Radio Play*. Dann is the Director of Free Range Improv in Annapolis, winner of three consecutive Rammie Awards from Rams Head for best comedy show of the year. Dann is grateful to be included on stage with such an amazing cast and thanks Director Terry Averill for his passion and trust and Shirley for never sleeping! He'll dedicate his performance each show to Rex Knight. "Can't stop me, Copper!"



MARK T. ALLEN (Anton Diabelli)

Mark is delighted to be back on stage again with The Colonial Players. His most recent acting stint here was as Mr. Daldry in *In the Next Room, or the Vibrator Play*; and two years ago he had the pleasure of directing *Foxglove* in Colonial's biennial festival of short plays. Other groups he has worked with, both on-stage and behind the scenes, include the Columbia Community Players, Laurel Mill Playhouse, and the Rockville Little Theatre. Other favorite roles include Inspector Thomas in *The Unexpected Guest* at CP, Barrymore in *I Hate Hamlet* at Laurel Mill, and Curtis Appleby in *Night Watch* at Columbia. "Many thanks to Terry for trusting me with this role, and to the rest of the cast and crew for being as wonderful as is always the case at Colonial Players. And, as always, many, many thanks to Megan, Ben, V&P, and the Tuggers for all their love and support."



JEAN BERARD (Dr. Gertrude Ladenburger)

Jean is delighted to be back in the company of The Colonial Players. Previous shows with this wonderful group include

The Unexpected Guest; *Spitfire Grill*; *Why Torture is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them*; and *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. Her most recent roles have been Frau Blucher in Silhouette Stages' production of *Young Frankenstein* and Ethel Savage in *The Curious Savage* at Laurel Mill Playhouse. "Many, many thanks to everyone here who makes these opportunities possible, and love and gratitude to Jim Berard for putting up with it all!"



REBECCA DOWNS (Dr. Katherine Brandt)

Rebecca has guest-starred on TV shows like *CSI Miami*, *Robbery Homicide Division*, *Will & Grace*, and *Everybody Loves Raymond*. She has shot independent features in New York, Atlanta, and LA, and has done voices for cartoons and video games, including *Spider Man*, *Rocky Rabbit*, *Heretic* and the entire *World of Warcraft* series. Her commercials for companies such as FedEx, Toyota, Taco Bell, Applebee's, Lexus, and Verizon kept her housed and fed, and all of these projects offered opportunities to work with some wonderful actors and directors: Robert Hayes, Ed Asner, Tom Sizemore, and Joe Johnston. However, theater is still her biggest love. Her favorite stage roles include the psycho baton twirler in *Talking With...*, Cassandra in *Agamemnon*, Ruth in *The Homecoming* and Lillian LaFleur in *Nine*. Rebecca is also a professional jazz singer and published songwriter. She has collaborated on music for films such as *Wedding Crashers*, *Down With Love* and *Monster-In-Law*. She performed her own songs on the soundtrack for the Oscar nominated film *The Cooler*, and on TV shows *Roswell*, *Joan of Arcadia* and *Cathouse*. She is thrilled to be back at The Colonial Players working with such a talented director and cast.



GREG JONES ELLIS (Ludwig van Beethoven)

Recent local roles include Monsignor O'Hara in *Sister Act* (ASGT), Mr. Lundie/Archie Beaton in *Brigadoon* (Compass Rose), Thomas Andrews in *Titanic* (Guest Artist, Theatre Lab), and Lane in Colonial Players' *Ernest in Love*. Greg has also acted in nearly all of the quarterly staged readings at the Washington Stage Guild for the past three



THE STAFF (continued)



JUDI WOBENSMITH (Co-Producer)

Judi has been involved in more than 200 productions in the Annapolis/DC area both on and off the stage. She has produced shows at Colonial Players,

including this season's *Shiloh Rules*, Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre, and Petrucci's to name a few. Previous directing credits include: *A Christmas Carol* (four times at CP), *The Music Man*, *Gigi*, *The King and I*, *Carnival*, *Marriages*, *Something's Afoot* (at Colonial Players and 2nd Star Productions), *The Sunshine Boys*, and *Mrs. California*, among others. She has served three terms on the Board of Directors at CP, Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre, and Children's Theatre of Annapolis. Judi has appeared in various TV commercials and documentaries. This season she serves on CP's artistic and production teams. Judi spends her spare time working at the House of Delegates in Annapolis.

around backstage at CP, he drives back and forth to DC where he works as an analyst for the Coast Guard when he's not playing saxophone with the Coast Guard Headquarters Big Band, The Cutters. In his infinitesimal spare time, he looks for golf balls, usually finding ones other people have lost, not the one he played last.



SHIRLEY PANEK

(Co-Producer/Assistant Director)

Although she has been with Colonial Players since 2010, this is the first producer role and assistant director role for Shirley at CP. Previously, she has been seen onstage (most recently: *Good People*, *Rocket Man*, *Superior Donuts*) and offstage as both lighting designer and stage manager for various shows. She is excited to work on this beautiful and complex show with an amazing team of actors, designers, and production team. "Thanks to Terry for letting me be a part of the team, and a huge thank you to Judi Wobensmith, who joined the team as co-producer to share her expertise to this new producer. Love to Jeff and Alice and Emma."

ABOUT OUR NEXT PLAY

Our holiday season offering this year will be a re-imagining of a beloved classic of American movie making. *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* brings to the stage an ensemble of actors performing a radio version of Frank Capra's 1946 movie about George Bailey, whose dissatisfaction with his life leads him to contemplate suicide on Christmas Eve. With the help of his somewhat bumbling guardian angel, George comes to see that his life has not been a failure and that his small town of Bedford Falls would be a poorer place without him. Joe Landry's play is set in a radio station studio with five actors playing multiple parts and providing a variety of sound effects. It offers a fresh perspective on the classic and familiar tale of Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*. The *Chicago Sun Times* praised Landry's play as "one of the best holiday shows around." The *Chicago Tribune* said it creates just the right kind of retro warmth: "If you cry every time you see the movie, you'll be blubbering away right on cue." This special holiday production is not a part of our regular season and runs for just two weekends, opening November 30. Tickets are available at thecolonialplayers.org or by calling 410-268-7373.



THE STAFF



RICHARD ATHA-NICHOLLS (Sound Designer)

Richard is happy to be back at The Colonial Players designing sound for *33 Variations*. He previously engineered or designed sound at Colonial for *Nine*; *Dead Man's Cell Phone*; *The Spitfire Grill*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Jekyll & Hyde*; *Jake's Women*; *A Christmas Carol*; *The Piano Lesson*; *Over the River and Through the Woods*; *Pippin*; and two summer short play festivals. As well as designing sound, Richard has appeared on area stages, and in his spare time helps run Discworld conventions. Occasionally he has been known to direct. Love to C, A & P.



ALEX BRADY (Lighting Designer)

Alex has been designing lighting in the Annapolis-Baltimore region since 2002 and most recently was lighting designer for the September production of *Shiloh Rules*. In 2016, he was nominated for the Washington Area Theatre Community Honors Award for Outstanding Lighting Design for both *Venus in Fur* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Colonial Players. Alex serves as the resident lighting designer for the AACC Dance Company and works with various local theaters and high schools. He is SAFD certified in stage combat with the broadsword. Alex is an alumnus of the Graduate Institute at St. John's College and teaches in the Humanities and Fine Arts Departments at Anne Arundel Community College. He is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Society for Historic Swordsmanship, where he studies and instructs German longsword, sword and buckler, medieval dagger, and Italian dueling saber.



CARRIE BRADY (Costume Designer)

Carrie is happy to be costuming for Colonial Players again after costuming *Sherlock's Last Case*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and *City of Conversation*. Most recently, she appeared on stage in *Shiloh Rules*. Previously, she costumed for Spirited Productions and the Moonlight Troupers/The Theatre at AACC, covering shows such as *The Appeal*, *Twelfth Night*, and assisting with

Macbeth. From time to time, Carrie enjoys helping out at her alma mater, St. Mary's High School Drama Club, with set construction and costumes. Many thanks to everyone who has helped out and especially to her husband, Alex, for his constant support.



HERB ELKIN (Co-Stage Manager)

A regular presence behind the scenes in a variety of roles, Herb has stage-managed 17 productions at CP, including four nominations and one WATCH award for outstanding play. His most recent stage-managing credits are *Good People* (2016), *Side Man* (2015), *Rocket Man* (2014), *Coyote on a Fence* (2014), *Trying* (2013), and *Going to St. Ives* (2012). Among his most memorable experiences are flying a gorilla across the stage during *Over My Dead Body* (2009) and completely changing the stage during intermission from dreary London to dazzling Italy for *Enchanted April* (2008). Prior to becoming active behind the scenes, he appeared on the stage in several CP and other area productions until his resident critic (*Bay Weekly's* Jane Elkin) recommended redirecting his talents elsewhere. Herb is CP's Vice-President and works by day as Deputy Director for IT/Finance at the Naval Academy.



JOANN GIDOS (Properties Designer)

JoAnn has been designing/providing props to local theaters and schools for more than 25 years. This season, in addition to *33 Variations*, she also is working on *The Quartet* and *Lucky Stiff* at CP and *The Liar* at Compass Rose. Some of her favorites include *Shipwrecked!*, *Calendar Girls*, and *Trying*. A thank you to all of the people who have helped her over the years and Mike for his constant support.



ERNIE MORTON (Co-Stage Manager)

Ernie is thrilled to be working with this exceptional cast and excited to join this journey to the Romantic Era. He has served as stage manager at CP for a number of shows since starting off with the 2014 One Act Festival. When Ernie is not running



THE CAST (continued)



RYAN SHOOKMAN (Pianist)

Ryan began his studies at a young age with his mother in his home in South Orange County, CA. From the day he began, he wanted to become a classical pianist. Ryan proceeded to study at The Redlands School of Music in California, The Juilliard School in New York City, and The Paris Conservatory and International Academy of Music of Nice in France, receiving the equivalent of multiple masters degrees in classical piano. No stranger to the concert stage, he has been heard worldwide in over 20 countries. He has lived in the Baltimore area for 10 years. He works with more than 40 students in his studio, is music director of New Light Lutheran Church, serves on the board of LARA (LGBT Academy of Recording Arts) representing classical music, and performs frequently as a soloist and collaborative artist. He has also performed with his mother, Maureen Shookman, in a four-hand piano duo raising money for people with Down Syndrome, inspired by his little sister and buddy, Faith. When it comes to theater, he has directed over 25 shows at theaters in the Baltimore-Washington area. Thanking his family, friends, and husband for always being supportive, Ryan feels so fortunate to be a translator of music, the beautiful language of the soul.



PAUL VALLEAU (Mike Clark)

Paul is thrilled to be a member of the *33 Variations* cast. "Thank you to the entire cast and team; your passion and drive for our show have been a pleasure to experience. To my gorgeous wife, you are my heartbeat. You move me in magical ways every moment we breathe. Thank you for your strength, support, and smiling at me with your beautiful eyes. Mom, thank you for always being my solid ground. Your leadership and guidance have helped me become the man I am today." Previous shows include *In the Next Room, or the Vibrator Play* (Leo); *A Few Good Men* (Lt. Kaffee); *Morning's at Seven* (Homer Bolton); and director of *Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll*, all with The Colonial Players. In Iowa, he appeared in *Don't Dress for Dinner* (Robert) and *The Producers* (Leo) with The Des Moines Playhouse and in *Next Fall* (Brandon) and *Reasons to be Pretty* (Kent) with Stage West.



VICTORIA SCALFARO (Clara Brandt)

Victoria is excited to be debuting in her first show with Colonial Players! She has been an avid performer in theater since she was five years old. Some notable credits include Maria in *The Sound of Music*, Molly in *Annie*, and Laurie in *Oklahoma!* Off the stage, Victoria is the theater director at Southern High School as well as an elementary music teacher with Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.
presents



Written by
MOISÉS KAUFMAN

Directed by
TERRY AVERILL

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

Pianist.....Ryan Shookman
Dr. Katherine Brandt.....Rebecca Downs
Clara Brandt.....Victoria Scalfaro
Mike Clark.....Paul Valleau
Anton Diabelli.....Mark T. Allen
Anton Schindler.....Dann Alagna
Ludwig van Beethoven.....Greg Jones Ellis
Dr. Gertrude Ladenburger.....Jean Berard
Ensemble.....Dirk Gertz, McAndrew Noonan

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by

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and

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(Greg Reiner, Executive Director; Dominick Balletta, General Manager;
Jeffrey LaHoste, Senior Producer)

There will be one intermission between Act I and Act II.

Produced by Special Arrangement with Dramatists Play Service.

Taking photographs and using any recording devices are strictly prohibited. Smoking is prohibited throughout the building.