

CALLBOARD

racine theatre guild **January 2012**

GLORIOUS! Opens January 20

When the title of a play is followed by an exclamation mark, you can expect something special. That is true with the play *Glorious!* by Peter Quilter, a comedy based on the life of Florence Foster Jenkins. It's a great way to get through the dark days of winter with someone who is upbeat, joyful and optimistic. The show opens January 20 and runs three weekends through February 5.

The play opens in 1940s New York, with Florence Jenkins interviewing a pianist, Cosme McMoon, to see if he would be suitable to be her new accompanist. Jenkins is a rich, eccentric singer, who entertains herself and a group of select friends by giving vocal concerts. While Jenkins apparently hears all that she sings in perfect pitch in her head, what comes out of her mouth is glaringly out of tune. She is charming, full of good humor and the joy of life, and she has an unstoppable will to achieve her dreams.

Cosme agrees to become Jenkins's accompanist, and he meets her coterie of friends. St Clair Byfield is Florence's boyfriend, a British actor who shares Florence's optimism and her apartment. The Mexican cook and housemaid, Maria, is unable to speak English, and Florence speaks no Spanish, so their communication is always interesting. And then there is Dorothy, Florence's very good friend, who visits frequently with her odd pet poodle, Ricky.

We are treated to several renditions of arias and soprano solos in Florence's

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GLORIOUS!

by Peter Quilter

Sponsored by

Lincoln Lutheran

CAST

Florence Foster Jenkins **Kathy Berg**
 Cosme McMoon. **Dimitri Shapovalov**
 St. Clair **Ron Halvorsen**
 Dorothy **Dawn Van Ess**
 Maria **Kate Mooney**
 Mrs. Verrinder-Gedge ... **Mary Buchel**

CREW

Director.....NormanMcPhee
 Scenic Design Steve Barnes
 Technical Director Jacob Warren
 Prod. Stage Mgr. Geoff Greeley
 Stage Manager Jon Eckblad
 ASM Ashley Russ
 Light Design Brian Schalk
 Light Tech..... Marjorie Eckblad
 Sound Design Janet Petrik
 Sound Tech. Debra Grunewald
 Props Spencer Carlson
 & Jeff Kauzlarich
 Costume Design.....CynthiaMcCrary
 & Anna Marie Smetana
 Wardrobe Kate Potter-Barrow
 Makeup Jeanne Christensen
 Flyer Eric Guttenberg

**The Callboard is written by
 Volunteer Nancy Moldenhauer,
 a free-lance writer**

A Note From RTG Director Doug Instenes

JUST GLORIOUS

I see the play *Glorious!* as much more than the story of one woman who couldn't sing. It's about a person living her dream and doing what she loves.

Here at the RTG people come as volunteers and audience members. I think they do both for more than simple entertainment. We see volunteers who do everything from build sets to sew costumes to act on stage, and they do it because they love it. They don't get paid for it, so their only reward is friendships made and the joy of creating the performance, whether on stage or backstage.

Perhaps every amateur actor who loves performing can relate to Florence Jenkins. I believe that everyone can sing. As a director, I jokingly add, if you can't sing well, sing softly. But don't let others silence your voice.

What does *glorious* mean? To me, it is the young child singing loud and off key in the front row of a Christmas concert. It's the shy person who has always wanted to be in a play, and is thrilled to be given one line. It's the friends and family members who are so excited to greet the cast in the green room after the show. We all measure success in different ways. I think one measure of success is the enjoyment of the performer and audience. It's the love and dedication we share.

To me, this play is about passion. It's about trying your best. It's about going for it, whatever *IT* may be for you. Don't let others stop you from reaching your goals or dreams.

The RTG has a slogan on its volunteer form: "The only skill needed is desire." So here's to Florence Jenkins and all others who do what they desire.

Enjoy **Glorious!** and let it inspire your own dreams.

Jan./Feb. - Production Calendar - GLORIOUS

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5						

FRIDAY, Jan. 20	7:30 pm
SATURDAY, Jan. 21	7:30 pm
SUNDAY, Jan. 22	2:00 pm
FRIDAY, Jan. 27	7:30 pm
SATURDAY, Jan. 28	2:00 & 7:30 pm
SUNDAY, Jan. 29	2:00 & 7:00 pm
THURSDAY, Feb. 2	7:00 pm
FRIDAY, Feb. 3	7:30 pm
SATURDAY, Feb. 4	4:00 & 7:30 pm
SUNDAY, Feb. 5	2:00 pm

Florence Foster Jenkins (1868-1944)

Narcissa Florence Foster was born in 1868 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Her father was a lawyer, banker and member of the Pennsylvania legislature. She took music lessons as a child, and found she loved to sing. She wanted to pursue studying opera in Europe, but her parents did not support her musical ambitions.

She eloped to Philadelphia with a physician, Frank Thornton Jenkins in 1885, when she was 17. Her husband did not encourage Florence's pursuit of music, either, and they divorced in 1902. In 1908 she began living with the British stage actor St Clair Byfield, who later became her manager. Their relationship lasted until her death.

After her father died in 1909, Florence inherited enough money to focus her attentions to music and singing. It is said that what she heard inside her head was perfect pitch, though that is not what came out of her mouth. Apparently she was unaware that she was not singing as beautifully as she imagined. She took voice lessons and became involved in the musical social circles in Philadelphia, and then New York, where she founded and funded the Verdi Club. She began giving recitals in 1912, the year the Titanic went down. Her mother's death in 1928 left her another inheritance to fund her musical pursuits.

From her recordings, it can be heard that Florence had a powerful voice and breath control. It is her sense of pitch and timing that were her weaknesses, as well as "dubious diction" in her foreign language songs. Critics and audiences were baffled, then amused and tolerant, and people came to hear her sing, as she began to achieve a cult following. Nicknames included "Soprano of the Sliding Scale" and "Diva of Din."

As is shown in the play *Glorious!* Florence personally interviewed people who came to her recitals, to make sure only supporters would be present, and not those who were horrified at her sing-

ing voice. Another detail the play lifts straight from her life is that she was in a taxicab in 1943 that crashed, and after that she was able to sing a higher F than ever before.

Florence sang a mixture of songs and operatic selections by Mozart, Verdi, Johann Strauss, and Brahms. A favorite encore was Valverde's "Clavelitos," in which Florence appeared in a Spanish flamenco costume, tossing red carnations from a basket to the audience. Her accompanist Cosme McMoon would go out into the audience to gather up the flowers to be thrown out again at the next performance.



Florence Jenkins was also known for wearing elaborate costumes that she designed herself, including wings, flowers, tinsel, tulle, satin, lace, and ornate, highly decorative headgear. Most recitals and concerts included several costume changes.

In spite of public demand, Jenkins gave rare performances in a few small venues in New York, as well as her annual recital at the Ritz-Carlton in New York City. At the age of 76 she finally agreed to perform at Carnegie Hall on October 25, 1944. The tickets sold out weeks in advance, and she died one month later at her residence, the Hotel Seymour in Manhattan.

Only one professional audio recording of Florence Jenkins exists: nine arias composed by her accompanist, Cosme McMoon. Four plays have appeared based on her life: *Goddess of Song* by Charles J. Fourie, *Viva La Diva* by Chris Balance, *Souvenir* by Stephen Temperley, and *Glorious!* by Peter Quilter.

Florence Jenkins sang "Die Mainacht" by Brahms at her 1934 program. Under the title was this quote:

**"O singer, if thou canst not dream,
Leave this song unsung."**

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unique style in various locations. She rehearses in her apartment, sings in a recording studio, and performs at the Ball of the Silver Skylarks. And her ultimate triumph is to fill Carnegie Hall. Florence appears in outrageous costumes, which she designs herself, from a flamenco outfit to an angel. Together with her devoted followers, we laugh with joy at her performances.

Part of the humor of the show is that it is based on a real person, and the singing mimics her style as much as possible. When Florence first demonstrates her voice to Cosme, he is completely taken aback, and asks Florence to stand a bit farther away. "I know," Florence says, "I am blessed with excessive volume." When asking how far away she should stand, Cosme replies, "Canada."

The story of Florence Jenkins is so appealing that it has inspired no less than four plays within the past 12 years about her life and musical career. *Glorious!* opened in 2005 in England, and has since been translated and performed in more than 20 countries.

Critics praised *Glorious!* for its humor and re-creation of eccentric characters. London reviewer Lizzie Loveridge wrote: "The skill [of the show] is in not our feeling that we are being unkind when we laugh at Florence, but relaxed that, for whatever reason, she is enjoying the pleasure she brings. It is a charming night out, which reminds us all what it is to dream."

Other critics wrote:

"A hilarious and heart-warming comedy."

"Delightful and often blissfully funny. This is a cult hit if I ever saw one."

"A glittering comedy with heart."

Come to the RTG for *Glorious!* and welcome the new year with an over-the-top woman who does not let lack of talent inhibit achievement of her dreams. The show runs from January 20 through February 5. Call the Racine Theatre Guild box office at 633-4218 for more information or to reserve tickets. You'll find the entertainment glorious!

Winter Theatre Classes at the RTG

The Guild is offering a variety of theatre classes for folks from the age of 3 to 100. Registration is underway for the winter term, which begins in January. Students must meet age requirements by the first day of class. There is a discount of \$10 per class for households registering for two or more. At the end of the term there will be a showcase with a short performance by each children's class. To register, call the box office at 262-633-4218 or visit the Racine Theatre Guild, weekdays from 12 to 6 p.m.

Creative Kids

(ages 3-5)

Creative movement plays an integral role in a child's development. This class provides opportunity for the youngest artists to explore the space around them through rhythm and expression. It's playtime with a purpose; fun set to music.

Saturdays, January 14-March 17

(8 sessions),

11-11:45 a.m., \$65

Broadway Bound

Sharpen your singing voice and hone your hoofing. Find out what it takes to be a "triple threat." Be challenged and inspired as you train in the techniques of musical theatre performance—singing, dancing and acting.

Junior (ages 6-9)

Mondays, January 9-March 26

(11 sessions), 5-6:15 p.m., \$115

Intermediate (ages 10-13)

Thursdays, January 12-March 29

(11 sessions), 4:30-6 p.m., \$115

RTG Spring Break

Kids Kamp

Nothing to do during spring break?

Come to the RTG for a week of fun and creative activities. Play theatre games, experiment with improv, and get crafty with costumes. Experience the joy of acting and discover your artistic voice.

Junior (ages 6-9)

Monday-Friday, March 5-9,

8:30 a.m.-12 p.m., \$95

Intermediate (ages 10-14)

Monday-Friday, March 5-9,

1-4 p.m., \$95

Act Up!

Build confidence and improve concentration as you learn the foundational skills of an actor: relaxation, improvisation, character creation and performance. Activities will be geared to the specific ages of participants.

Junior (ages 6-9):

Tuesdays, January 10-March 27

(11 sessions), 5-6:15 p.m., \$115

Intermediate (ages 10-13)

Wednesdays, January 11-March 28

(11 sessions), 5-6:15 p.m., \$115

Act Up! II

(ages 11-17)

Progress to the next level in acting. The basic skills taught in "Act Up!" are reinforced and refined. Students move on to scene development. Prerequisite: 1 year of acting classes.

Fridays, January 13-April 6

(10 sessions), 5-6:15 p.m., \$100

Audition Workshop

Learn the secrets to a successful audition—from finding, editing, and performing monologues and vocal pieces to analyzing scripts for a cold reading. This is an invaluable course for any actor.

Teen (ages 13-17): Saturday,

January 14, 12:30-3:30 p.m., \$30

Adult (ages 18-100): Saturday,

January 21, 12:30-3:30 p.m., \$30

Musical Theatre Dance

(ages 16-100)

Get moving and have a blast with dance styles commonly used in musical theatre. Become versed in fundamental ballet, tap and jazz steps. No experience necessary.

Wednesdays March 14-April 4

(4 sessions), 6:15-8:15 p.m., \$80

Brush Up Your

Shakespeare!

(ages 16-100)

Don't be afraid of the Bard! Gain insights on how to approach, understand and perform Shakespeare's plays. Become acquainted with his speech and style in this relaxed beginner course.

Wednesdays, February 8-29

(4 sessions), 6-8 p.m., \$80

Music from around the world

Jean's Jazz Series 2012

at the Racine Theatre Guild

Sponsored by

Educators Credit Union

For ten years, the Racine Theatre Guild has been warming up your cold winter nights by bringing you award-winning musicians. If you have not seen a Jean's Jazz show at the RTG, we encourage you to do so. You won't be disappointed.

7 pm Thursday, January 26

Atlantic Wave

Contemporary Celtic

Paris la Nuit

French/American Jazz

7 pm Saturday, February 25

Tim Clausen

Jazz & blues pianist

Los Perros Cubanos

Music from Cuba's golden age

7 pm Thursday, March 29

Kevin Horrigan

2011 International Finger-style

Guitar Champion

Bill Sargent's

"REALLY Big Band"

Series Ticket (3 concerts)

\$32 adult, \$27 senior

\$15 student

Individual Concert Tickets

\$14 adult, \$12 senior, \$5 student

To order tickets, call the box office at 262-633-4218 or stop in.



Every January the Racine United Arts Fund (RUAF) kicks off its annual fund-raising campaign to raise money to support Racine's four major arts groups. We invite everyone to donate to RUAF to keep the arts growing and strong in our community.

Donations to RUAF support:

- Racine Theatre Guild
- Racine Symphony Orchestra
- Racine Art Museum
- Racine Arts Council

During the run of *Glorious!* a 50/50 raffle will be held, with half of the proceeds going to the winner of the drawing, and the other half going to RUAF.

Please give generously this year. A donation to RUAF improves our community, helps to uplift spirits, and touches thousands of lives with creativity.

COMEDY TONIGHT

Sponsored by
Tri City National Bank

BABY BOOMERS

8 pm, Saturday, Feb. 11

COMEDY SPORTZ

8 pm, Saturday, March 24

Special Performance

JOHN MCGIVERN IN *AMERICAN FIESTA*

4 & 7:30 pm, Saturday, Mar. 31

Auditions for

Sherlock Holmes

7 pm, Jan. 30 & 31

Performances April 13-22, with some daytime school shows.

No experience needed.

Scripts can be checked out from the RTG box office.

The Remaining RTG 2011-12 Season

GLORIOUS!

Comedy - Jan. 20-Feb. 5, 2012

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE

Comedy - March 2-18, 2012

* SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE FINAL ADVENTURE

Adventure - April 13-22, 2012

CHICAGO

Musical - May 11-27, 2012

* Limited-Run Production, purchased separately

The Remaining RCT 2011-12 Season

Animal Tales & Dinosaur Scales

February 10, 11, 12, 2012

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

March 23, 24, 25, 2012

www.racine theatre.org
Box Office 262-633-4218

2519 Northwestern Avenue, Racine, WI 53404



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