

# FLORIDA REP



15TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON 2012-2013

HISTORIC ARCADE THEATRE • FORT MYERS RIVER DISTRICT

ROBERT CACIOPPO, PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

# MIRACLE ON SOUTH DIVISION STREET

BY TOM DUDZICK

SPONSORED BY  
GE FOUNDATION and THE MORGAN HOUSE

STARRING  
RACHEL BURTRAM\*† • MICHELLE DAMATO\*† • CARRIE LUND\*† • JASON PARRISH\*†

DIRECTED BY  
ROBERT CACIOPPO\*\*†

SET DESIGNER  
TIM BENNETT

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
ERIC WATKINS

COSTUME DESIGNER  
ROBERTA MALCOLM†

SOUND DESIGNER  
KATE SMITH

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER  
LINDA HARRIS\*

ASST. STAGE MANAGER  
GRACE VARLAND

Originally presented by the Penguin Repertory Theatre (Joe Brancato, Artistic Director and Andrew M. Horn, Executive Director).

## 2012-13 GRAND SEASON SPONSORS



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This entire season sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. Florida Repertory Theatre is a fully professional non-profit LOA/LORT Theatre company on contract with the Actors' Equity Association that proudly employs members of the national theatrical labor unions. \*Member of Actors' Equity Association. \*\*Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. \*\*\*Member of United Scenic Artists. †Member of Florida Repertory Theatre's Ensemble of Theatre Artists

## A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

**B**ack in busy, bustling 1950's Buffalo, a block and a half from my father's tavern, there stood a barbershop. Next to the barbershop was a 20-foot-tall shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary – a beautiful life-sized statue encased in wood, brick and glass. It's *raison d'être*? – well, legend had it that the Blessed Mother herself appeared to this barber and gave him a message for the world concerning world peace. (She was in favor of it.) Whether this miraculous materialization actually took place is still a matter of conjecture, but, regardless, there it stood, this monument to a man's faith for us impressionable kids to gawk at and wonder about. The nuns at St. Pat's told us not to waste our prayers or coins on the ersatz saint as the mighty Roman Catholic Church had no intention of ever sanctioning this hokey miracle. And that's how the matter stood at the time I left the neighborhood in 1964.

Fast forward 45 years. My old neighborhood has all but disappeared. Businesses and homes have succumbed to hard times and neglect. Its denizens have fled to the suburbs, and St. Pat's is gone. But amidst the rubble of urban blight something still stands, dare I say, "miraculously?" You guessed it, the shrine to the Blessed Mother – spared from the wrecking ball by a promise from City Hall, lovingly preserved by a handful of faithful residents, its creator long passed away.

I made a pilgrimage to my old neighborhood a couple of years ago. I stood before the shrine – newly Windexed, freshly flowered, its mail slot still active with donations and requests for miracles – and I thought to myself, "There's a story here."

The real-life details of its origin were forever buried with the barber, but that didn't stop my wheels from turning. I invented a family – the Nowaks of Buffalo's East Side – amalgams of people I grew up with, some friends and family, and a little of myself sprinkled in. I enjoyed spending time with this oddball family, in my notebook and on my computer. But seeing them alive on stage, darned if I haven't fallen head over bowling shoes for them. I hope they get under your skin as well.

*Tom Dudzick*

*The Seneca Street Shrine in Buffalo, NY*



# CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

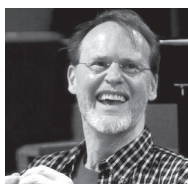
Jimmy Nowak.....JASON PARRISH\*†  
 Ruth Nowak.....RACHEL BURTRAM\*†  
 Clara Nowak.....CARRIE LUND\*†  
 Beverly Nowak.....MICHELLE DAMATO\*†

## TIME & PLACE

Clara Nowak's kitchen, in a run-down, working class neighborhood of Buffalo, NY.  
 Early Autumn, 2010.

MIRACLE ON SOUTH DIVISION STREET will be performed with one 15-minute intermission.

*The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.*



**TOM DUDZICK (Playwright)** is one of the few playwrights who makes a living at it. His first New York venture took place at the John Houseman Theatre with his Christmas play, *Greetings!*, which starred Greg Edelman and the late stage and screen veteran, Darren McGavin. It is fast becoming a happy alternative to *A Christmas Carol*, appearing annually in theatres all over the country. Dudzick went on to create what Chris Jones of the *Chicago Tribune* called, “one of the biggest grass-roots successes in American regional theatre of the last few years,” Dudzick’s *Over the Tavern* Trilogy, a semi-fictional trio of comedies based on his early family years in Buffalo, NY. The first of the trilogy, *Over the Tavern*, has broken box office records all over the country, ran for over a year in Chicago and garnered critical praise such as: “Utterly charming!” from Hedy Weiss of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and “Absolutely enchanting...a little bit of heaven!” from Richard Christiansen of the *Chicago Tribune*. *Hail Mary!* was Dudzick’s next play, about a 21st century parochial school novice who jeopardizes her future as a nun by daring to take religion into her own hands and teach the children her personal, unorthodox views of God. It premiered at Buffalo’s Studio Arena Theatre and is currently being produced at several regional theatres. His next play, a backstage comedy called, *Don’t Talk to the Actors*, has received both East and West Coast premieres and garnered such accolades as “drop-dead, scream-out-loud, tear-wrenchingly funny,” (*Buffalo News*) ...“unstoppable laughter,” (*Cypress Chronicle*) and “hilarious show-biz farce.” (*Event News*, Cal.) Tom’s most recent play, *Miracle on South Division Street*, just completed an off-Broadway run (St. Luke’s Theatre) after delighting audiences and the *NY Times*. *Miracle* premiered at Upstate New York’s Penguin Repertory Theatre in 2009 and, once more, broke a box office record. Peter Kramer of the *Journal News* called it, “A rollicking comedy where one revelation builds on another to an unexpected and thoroughly satisfying conclusion. Best to order tickets before it sells out.” *Over the Tavern* was recently adapted for Irish audiences. It premiered at Cork Arts Theatre in 2009 and was remounted in 2010, becoming the largest box office draw in that theatre’s history. A memorial plaque has been imbedded in front of Dudzick’s boyhood home in Buffalo, commemorating his father’s tavern and the play it inspired. Another great honor — Tom Dudzick was once a question on *Jeopardy!*

†Member of Florida Repertory Theatre’s *Ensemble of Theatre Artists*.  
 See page 15 for the entire ensemble.

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\*The Actors & Stage Manager employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

# MIRACLE ON SOUTH DIVISION STREET

## CREATIVE TEAM



**RACHEL BURTRAM\*\* (Ruth Nowak)** is thrilled to be back on the boards at Florida Repertory Theatre! Her relationship with the company started 10 years ago in 2002 in

*Mousetrap* and as Company Manager. Other work at Florida Rep includes: *Talley's Folly*, *August: Osage County*, *Gaslight*, *Trying*, *Art of Murder*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Amy's View* (with Carol Lawrence), *Rabbit Hole*, *Proof*, *Opus*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Doubt* as well as wearing the hats of Director of Audience Development and Associate Director. In September, Rachel played Frankie in the Kitchen Theatre's production of *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* in Ithaca, NY where she created the Next Steps job creation program with funding from Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency. Selected Regional work includes: *Hair*, *Christmas Carol*, *Backstory* (Actor's Theatre of Louisville & the Humana New Play Festival), *Private Lives*, *Oleanna*, *Noises Off!*, *The Foreigner* (13th Street Ensemble), *The Cripple of Innishman* (City Equity Theatre), *Almost, Maine* (Barnstormer's Theatre) and *Inconsolable* (Gloucester Stage). NYC Credits include: *Pushkin: A Tragedy in Verse* (Actors' Studio with Daniel Sunjata), *Falling* (Vital Theatre Company), *Young, Sexy & Talented?* (NYC International Fringe Festival). TV & Film: *Burn Notice*, *World Traveler*. National commercials. Rachel is a proud member of Actor's Equity and is eligible for the Screen Actors' Guild. Thank you to Bob, John, Carrie and the gang. Proud to call Florida Rep our Theatre Home! [www.rachelburtram.com](http://www.rachelburtram.com)



**MICHELLE DAMATO\*\* (Beverly Nowak)** is returning for her eighth show with Florida Rep. Audiences will remember her from her roles in *Bedroom Farce*, *Rumors*, *Sylvia*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Almost,*

*Maine*, *A Funny Thing... Forum* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*. She is a graduate of Circle in the Square Theatre School in NYC and came to Florida by way of Louisville, KY, where she was a company member with Stage One for four years. Some of her favorite roles include Oliver Twist off-Broadway at the Promenade Theatre and the voice of Shawna in MTV's *Daria: Is It College Yet?* As a voice-over artist, Michelle has done over fifty commercials and audio books.

She was a founding member of the Circle Players and the Daughters of Monty, both New York City based improv companies. Michelle is a proud member of Actors' Equity.



**CARRIE LUND\*\* (Clara Nowak)** has been a company member and the Associate Producer of Florida Rep since its inception in 1998 and has acted in over 90 productions in Southwest

Florida. In 2012, she was named Best Actress of the Year and named one of the "Power Women of the Year" by Florida Weekly. She produced and acted on Sanibel Island from 1984-1998 at the original pink and gold and the newly built Pirate Playhouse and on Captiva Island with Carrie Lund Presents. She taught theatre at Florida Gulf Coast University in its early years, was Director of the Source Teen Theatre for Planned Parenthood, produced theatre companies in her hometown of Erie, PA and New York City and performed in regional theatres in NY, VT and NC, as well as the Three River Shakespeare Festival, Pittsburgh Playhouse and American Ibsen Theatre in Pittsburgh, PA. In 1987, the Sanibel-Captiva Chamber of Commerce awarded her the Distinguished Citizen Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. Selected credits include Florida Rep's *The Little Foxes*, *God of Carnage*, *Sylvia*, *You Can't Take It with You* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*, each reviewed by the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Lend Me a Tenor*, *August: Osage County*, *Rumors* (2002, 2011), *Noises Off* (1998, 2010), *Boeing-Boeing*, *The Last Romance*, *Alone Together*, *Enchanted April*, *Rabbit Hole*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, *All My Sons*, *I'm Not Rappaport*, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* and *Private Lives*. Her work as a voiceover artist can be heard on NPR and industrial DVDs. Her husband, Robert Cacioppo, keeps their life at a break neck pace. They enjoy the accomplishments of their best productions: Matt at UCF and Julia an FSU graduate, who plans to live much of 2013 in Sydney, Australia.

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**MIRACLE ON SOUTH DIVISION STREET**

## CREATIVE TEAM



### **JASON PARRISH\*\* (Jimmy Nowak)**

is now in his eighth season as an ensemble member with Florida Rep and serves as the company's Associate Director. Jason's Florida Rep appearances include *Lend Me a Tenor*, *The Big*

*Bang*, *Noises Off*, *Greetings!*, *The Last Romance*, *King o' the Moon*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *The Santaland Diaries* – now an annual event in Southwest Florida. His directing credits with Florida Rep include *Tru*, [title of show], *The Shape of Things* and this season's upcoming production of *The Fantasticks*, as well as a number of productions for Florida Rep's Children's Theatre Series. His work with other theatres includes *It Runs in the Family* (Sanibel's Strauss Theatre; Director), *Forbidden Broadway* (Prather Entertainment; Director) and appearances with Actors' Playhouse (Miami), Riverside Theatre (Vero Beach), extensive work with Theatre by the Sea (Rhode Island) and a recurring role in the New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concert Series at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall. Jason is a proud member of Actors' Equity. [www.jasonparrishonstage.com](http://www.jasonparrishonstage.com).

**TIM BENNETT (Scenic Designer)** is proud to have been a part of the Florida theatre community since 1977 and has designed for theaters on both coasts of Florida and Key West. His work has also been seen throughout the Midwest, as well as in theaters in North Carolina, New York, and New Jersey. He was the resident Scenic Designer and Technical Director for Jan McArt Productions from 1978 to 1993 and the resident Scenic Designer and T. D. for Caldwell Theater in Boca Raton, FL for the past nineteen years. Tim is very happy to be working on an excellent script with the great staff and crew at Florida Repertory Theatre.

**LINDA HARRIS\* (Production Stage Manager)** is very pleased to be returning to Florida Rep for her third season. Her Broadway credits include *Garden District* at Circle in the Square, *A New York Summer* at Radio City Music Hall and various productions at The New Victory Theatre. Off-Broadway, she has stage managed *The Fantasticks*, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* and productions at Circle Rep, the Actor's Studio, The Lucille Lortel Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre and The Village Gate, among others. Regional credits include Mosaic Theatre, Arena Stage, The Philadelphia Theatre Company, Northern Stage, Westport Country Playhouse, The State Theatre

Company in Austin, Cleveland Play House, Seattle Rep, Dallas Theater Center, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington DC, Delaware Theatre Company, Philadelphia Festival Theatre for New Plays, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Capital Repertory and NJ Shakespeare Festival.

### **ROBERTA MALCOLM† (Costume Designer)**

is pleased to be returning for her ninth season at Florida Rep after 25 years traveling the country as a costumer/designer for everyone from community theatre performers to Florence Henderson, John Ritter, LeVar Burton, Tony Bennett, Patti LaBelle, Margaret O'Brien, Dean Jones and Cloris Leachman. Favorite productions include: *Gaslight*, *Boeing-Boeing*, *You Can't Take It with You*, *My Three Angels*, *Lucky Stiff*, *Florida Follies* starring Florence Henderson, *Too Big to Be a Waitress*, *Show Boat* (Dean Jones and Cloris Leachman national tour), *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Curly McDimple* starring Margaret O'Brien, *Blithe Spirit*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *A Funny Thing... Forum*, *Death of a Salesman* and *Cinderelle – a Rock Fairy Tale*. Thanks to Sean, Becca, Jon, Bob, Fawn – family always; and to Florida Rep and its board for the opportunity to showcase the best theatre around.

**KATE SMITH (Sound Designer)** is happy to return for her fourth season at Florida Rep. She is a native of Pennsylvania and a graduate from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). Kate has worked in many aspects of theatre. She most recently served as the Art Director and Lighting Designer for Florida Rep's summer camp program. Sound design credits include *Time Stands Still*, *The Little Foxes*, *The Santaland Diaries*, *Camping with Henry and Tom*, *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Talley's Folly*, *Tru*, *Sylvia*, *August: Osage County*, *Trying* and *You Can't Take It with You*. Lighting design credits include *Black Tie*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *King o' the Moon*, *The Santaland Diaries* and *The Year of Magical Thinking*. Kate has also worked for Brevard Music Center, Flat Rock Playhouse, IUP's Keystone Rep and Footlight Players.

**GRACE VARLAND (Assistant Stage Manager)** was born and raised in Spring Arbor, Michigan. She recently received her bachelor's degree at Belhaven University where she stage managed for directors John Maxwell and McNair Wilson. Stage appearances include *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Sister Calling My Name*. Grace has also spent

## CREATIVE TEAM

the last two summers with *Horn in the West*, the nation's longest running ("and best") outdoor Revolutionary War drama. When not in rehearsal, Grace enjoys dancing, coffee houses, climbing trees and plenty of reading time. She loves what she does, loves her parents and three brothers and loves The Lord, whom she calls "Teacher."

**ERIC WATKINS (Lighting Designer)** returns to Florida Rep after a five year hiatus. In the interim, he has lit shows in Washington, D.C., Boston, New York City and San Francisco. Eric currently spends most of the year as an Assistant Lighting Designer at the San Francisco Opera. He holds an M.F.A in lighting design from Boston University and a B.S. from the University of Alabama. Thanks to Bob and the rest of the staff for this wonderful opportunity to return to the Rep. Enjoy the show!



**ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION** (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American Actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of theatre as an essential component

of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment of the actors and stage managers employed in this production. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit [www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org).



### FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL THEATRE'S ASSOCIATION

(FPTA) is a statewide organization of professional theatre companies and theatre

professionals interested in the development and promotion of professional theatre throughout Florida. Florida Repertory Theatre is a proud FPTA member theatre.

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