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JOHN VIARS THEATRE

Our Town

Feb. 2-18, 2024

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical

Apr. 5-21, 2024

The Play That Goes Wrong

May 31-June 16, 2024

School of Rock

July 12-28, 2024

KATE GOLDMAN CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Dragons Love Tacos

Mar. 1-10, 2024

Ivy + Bean The Musical

May 3-12, 2024



PURCHASE FLEX FOUR OR
FAMILY FOUR-PACK
[DMPLAYHOUSE.COM](https://dmplayhouse.com)



December 12, 2023



The Des Moines Community Playhouse presents
The Final Act Ensemble in

Madcap Mix-ups (& More!) for the Holidays

Director: **Jerry Eisenhour**

Music Direction/Rehearsal Pianist: **Susie McCauley**

Vocal & Music Direction: **Elysa Koss**

Sound Effects: **Shirley Dalby & Susie McCauley**

Accompanist: **Francine Griffith**

Ensemble

Ralph Bowman
Victoria Christian
Shirley Dalby
Al Downey
Ruth Downey
Sue Franck
Barbara Keck
Molly Ketchum
Elysa Koss

Ira Lacher
Hu Lundberg
R.J. Lundgren
Susie McCauley
Mark Pullen
Rick Stageman
Marsha Szymczuk
Ed Truslow

Act I

Burns & Allen: George and Gracie Figure Taxes
Fibber McGee & Molly: McGee Meets a Gangster

Act II

My Friend Irma: Irma Needs Christmas Money

This show is performed with one 10-minute intermission.



You mean
the pilot's
on stage?

Mark Pullen,
Assistant Vice President/
Chief Pilot (retired)
at Hy-Vee

Mark Pullen,
Into the Woods,
2015-16 Season
and Volunteer
of the Year for
backstage work

**Ordinary People.
Extraordinary Theatre.**

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ALL IS CALM
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THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE OF 1914

IN THE JOHN VIARS THEATRE

For a single night,
No Man's Land was
Every Man's Land.
Dec. 1-17, 2023

 **THE PLAYHOUSE**
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church lector and reading books in character to her grandchildren.



Ed Truslow has been an active member of The Playhouse community since 2010, when he made his debut in an episode of Final Act Ensemble's

The Shadow. He voiced the role of the Wizard in Final Act Ensemble's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Ed has been in productions at The Playhouse and Urbandale Community Theatre, where he played his favorite role to date, FDR in *Annie*. In his free time, Ed enjoys motorcycles, Studebaker cars, model trains, and driving the real thing as an engineer on the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad.



Final Act Ensemble, a group of performers 60 and older, has been bringing the Golden Age of Radio back to life since 2007, when it started out

as a radio production class at The Playhouse. Students liked the class so much they took it on the road. Since then, they've performed vintage radio scripts for retirement communities, libraries, nursing homes, churches, and schools all over the Greater Des Moines area, Boone, Huxley, and

Madrid, not to mention the Iowa State Fair, the Okoboji Performing Arts Center, Terrible's Casino, Meskwaki Casino, and the State Historical Museum. A typical show features actual scripts and songs from the era, snappy announcer repartee, dizzy commercials, and live sound effects. Anyone who recognizes "The Shadow knows!," "A little dab'll do ya!," "What a revoltin' development this is!," or "Tain't funny, Magee" is in for a good time—and some great memories—with the Final Act Ensemble. To book Final Act Ensemble: 515.974.5357, finalact@dmplayhouse.com.



Des Moines Playhouse (Producer), founded in 1919, offers exciting entertainment on stage, an array of

avocational opportunities both on stage and backstage, and theatrical education programs for, and outreach to, students of all ages. Each year, more than 55,000 people attend productions in the John Viars Theatre and the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. The Playhouse's education program is one of the most extensive of any community theatre in the United States, reaching more than 10,000 individuals of all ages every year at the theatre, as well as in schools and community centers throughout Iowa.

CAST NOTES



Ralph E. Bowman taught high school for 36 years. He has directed 138 shows in high schools and community theatres and acted in shows. Ralph says his

favorite stage role was Joe Benjamin in *God's Favorite* at Independence (MO) Community Theatre. He has written 43 books, mostly westerns. Ralph and his wife of over 50 years, Sandra, have one son and two grandchildren.



Victoria Christian, a former editor at Meredith, debuted at The Playhouse as Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*. She's been in Final Act Ensemble for 11

years. Her roles have included Glenda the Good Witch in *The Wizard of Oz* and Ghost of Christmas Past in *A Christmas Carol*. Her late mother, Rena Rae, was also an FAE member.



Shirley Dalby (Sound Effects) says acting – whether voice, film, or live theatre – is her passion. She's played numerous characters in Final Act Ensemble shows

over the past six years. She has been in commercials and corporate training films that have aired locally, and has posed as a truck driver, a farmer, a princess, and a grandmother (to name a few) in print media. She has also had many musical adventures, one of which allowed her to sing in an international choir in Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles.



Al Downey was named a Playhouse Legend in 2011. He made his Playhouse debut in 1960 in *The Madwoman of Chailot*. Since then, he has appeared on

stage in more than 25 shows. His last Playhouse stage role was as Simeon's Father in *Kinky Boots*, and his favorite role was Lucien P. Smith in *The Boys Next Door*. He also performed with the Drama Workshop and Charlie's Showplace. Al has served on virtually every backstage crew and stage managed several shows. His interests include drawing, reading, and playing the piano.



Ruth Downey was a classroom teacher for Clarke Community Schools during which time she helped create a traveling theatre group, The Piccadilly Players.

She retired after working 30 years in the accounting field. Ruth's Playhouse credits include the Principal in *There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom*. She has also worked backstage on props crew, shift crew, and as a dresser, and in guest services as an usher and ticket taker. She enjoys music, serving as a church organist for more than 50 years, and traveling and spending quality time with her husband, Al.



Jerry Eisenhower (Director) is a 2013 Volunteer of the Year for his many hours spent helping paint sets at The Playhouse and his time directing the Final Act

Ensemble. Before retiring, he taught theatre for 30 years. Jerry, along with his wife, Susan, lent their Foley artist

Des Moines Community Playhouse

831 42nd Street
Des Moines, IA 50312

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Ticket office and
administrative office:
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515-277-6261

School matinee reservations:
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skills to the Playhouse's 2020 holiday show, *Playhouse on the Air Presents: Miracle on 34th Street*.



Francine Griffith (*Accompanist*) is a musician/educator in the Des Moines area. Some of her collaborations include staff accompanist at Drake University,

private piano instructor, Kinder Choir Director at Plymouth Congregational Church, and musical director and pianist/repetiteur for area theatre productions. Francine earned her B.M.E. from Drake, studying piano with Chiu-Ling Lin, and has taught elementary music in the Waukee School System.



Sue Franck, a Drake University Theatre Arts graduate, was a member of The Playhouse's education department during the '70s and '80s, teaching a variety

of youth classes and directing two Theatre for Young Audiences productions. Her full-time career was in the administration of International Student Exchange Programs, where she enjoyed four decades of travel and interesting cross-cultural experiences. Sue is delighted to be a member of such a fun and talented group.



Barbara Keck has been a part of Final Act Ensemble for the last 13 years. When she's not rehearsing for the next Final Act Ensemble production, she enjoys basket

weaving, singing, and playing with her great-grandchildren.



Molly Ketchum has been an active member of the theatre community for many years. Her favorite role to date, Ethel Thayer in *On Golden Pond*, was

at the Boone Community Playhouse. She has also worked on several films. A retired elections administrator, she participates in women's suffrage reenactments. She also enjoys steampunk and Renaissance faire activities.



Elysa Koss (*Vocal & Music Direction*) has appeared in *Fiddler on the Roof*, *A Little House Christmas*, *Meredith Willson's The Music Man*, and *Leaving Iowa* at The

Playhouse. Other area credits include period melodramas and medicine shows at Living History Farms, shows with the Final Act Ensemble, One Actor/One Writer/One Week, and local commercials. Elysa plays handbells and guitar and likes to bike with her husband, Frank.



Ira Lacher has appeared on stages throughout the Des Moines area and is grateful to return to the Playhouse as a member of the Final Act Ensemble, which he joined this

summer. Credits include *Ragtime* at The Playhouse, as well as *Caucus the Musical*, *Race*, and *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* for various metro area theater companies. Thanks to my new colleagues for this opportunity, and to Lisa, my loving wife of 38 years, for putting up with my dramatics, both on stage and at home.



Hu Lundberg retired from the US Postal Service after working there for more than 36 years. He voiced the role of Scrooge in a Final Act Ensemble production of *A*

Christmas Carol. Hu has taken part in classes and building sets at the Playhouse and enjoys traveling to visit his adult children.



R. J. Lundgren has an extensive background in theatre, acting, writing, and directing. He has a B.S. in broadcasting business from

Northwest Missouri State University. R.J. participates in many events performing as the first Irish Pope, His Hooleyness Malarkey I, or as the steampunk Pope, His Radiance Brother Barnabas Brass-Boilerplate. An award-winning leather artist (RJLeather), he also designed the Black Hawk County Iowa Vietnam Veteran's Monument.



Susie McCauley (*Music Direction/ Rehearsal Accompanist/Sound Effects*) made her debut performance in 2007 as a foley artist (sound effects) with

Mystery Loves Company. Her favorite role to date is Jane Ace in *Jane Visits the Psychiatrist*. Other experience at The Playhouse includes stand-up comedy, radio performance, and song/dance classes. She likes reading, walking, music, and writing new radio plays to be performed by Final Act Ensemble. Susie and her husband, Dick, have been married for 60 years.



Mark Pullen is a very active member of The Playhouse community and received the 2013 Dick Brown Superior Volunteer of the Year Award for his time spent

constructing sets, running lights, ushering, and working backstage for countless shows. He has also had his share of roles on stage including his favorite, Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Cherokee Community Theatre. His most recent Playhouse role was as Mr. Svenson in *The Hundred Dresses*. Mark received his degree in engineering from Iowa State University and is retired as chief pilot for Hy-Vee.



Rick Stageman joined Final Act Ensemble in 2022 and has played a variety of roles. His theatre work includes *Bus Stop* at Charlie's Showplace and *Who's Under Where* at the

Ingersoll Dinner Theatre. Rick retired in 2022 after 33 years at MidAmerican Energy. When he isn't performing, he works as a public address announcer around the area and narrates audiobooks for the Iowa Department for the Blind.



Marsha Szymczuk had no background in acting when she attended a Final Act Ensemble performance shortly after retiring as a hospice nurse in

2013. She was immediately drawn to the art and is so grateful to have been accepted into this fun and supportive group. Marsha was taught how to release her inner ham and particularly enjoys the wide variety of roles available, from circus performer in one act to femme fatale in the next. She also enjoys using her voice as a