



RALEIGH
LITTLE
THEATRE

DIVAS! 2024

Directed by Alison Lawrence

Music Directed by Jeff Whicker

Choreographed by Freddie-Lee Heath

Event Chairs: Diana Hurtado &
Suzanne Ruggles

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2024



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Presents

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WELCOME LETTER FROM DIVAS! COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dear RLT Family and Friends,

Welcome to *Divas! 2024!* We are so excited to be among those hosting you tonight here at Raleigh Little Theatre's annual fundraising event. It is sure to be a magnificent evening with exceptional talent by our group of Divas who will perform and entertain you – each vying for the 2024 *Divas!* crown!! Show your support and love by opening your hearts and wallets to 'vote' for your favorite Diva. Every dollar spent is one vote for a Diva and one more opportunity for RLT to continue realizing its mission to use "theatre to enrich, educate, entertain and engage volunteers, students and audiences of all ages."

So many people are pivotal to this production tonight – both onstage and off. We would like to thank our ever-so-talented and dedicated director, Alison Lawrence, who has worked tirelessly to, once again, make this such a special night. We want to also thank our music director, Jeff Whicker, who you'll see brings out the best in our singers; choreographer Freddie-Lee Heath, who leads our Divas in their performances across and around the stage; Production Manager and Technical Director, Dennis Berfield, who is truly the master behind the production magic; Stage Manager Elaine Petrone, without whom there would be no entrances and exits; and all the rest of the 'behind the scenes' volunteers. There are so many people involved in making this a magical night. The tireless staff at RLT, including RLT newcomers Executive Producer Michele Weathers and Development Manager Kiran Baucom, who have both jumped in feet first. And many thanks to the Board of Directors, the Advisory Board, and the members of the *Divas!* Task Force and the *Divas!* Committee. Every dollar that you spend tonight acknowledges their hard work.

Lastly, a standing ovation for the Divas who have given of their time, their talent and their fundraising skills. Each and every one of you is a big winner!

Please be generous tonight!! And, break a leg tonight!

Best,
Suzanne Ruggles
Diana Hurtado
2024 *Divas!* Committee Co-Chairs

CAST

Melanie Carviou

Joshua Faggion

Ann Forsthoefel

Terra Hodge

Chris Inhulsen

Emma K. Johnson

Audrey LeBouef

Ron Lopez

Dominic & Hannah MacAulay

Cora Stumpf

Anjali Thawani

Aya Wallace

DIVAS! TASK FORCE

Diana Hurtado (co-chair)

Suzanne Ruggles (co-chair)

Alison Lawrence

Kirsten Gates

Andy Ingram

Dee Penven-Crew

Elaine Petrone

J.D. Demers

Tina Morris-Anderson

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director, Alison Lawrence

Music Director, Jeff Whicker

Scenic Designer, Dennis R. Berfield

Lighting Designer, Ali Wood

Sound Designer, Todd Houseknecht

Choreographer, Freddie-Lee Heath

Stage Manager, Elaine Petrone

*Musicians, Tim Wall (Drums) & Jeff Whicker (Piano)
Cameron Fitzpatrick (Bass)*

Cashiers, EisnerAmper

Graphic Design, Eric Forehand @ Stone Pine Studio

Divas! 2024 Videos, Rod & Nancy Rich

Divas! 2024 Headshot Photographer, Jeannine Borzello

Master of Ceremonies, Vincent Genna

Piano provided by Ruggero Piano

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RALEIGH LITTLE THEATRE STAFF

Executive Producer, Michele Weathers

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

"It's a Grand Night for Singing" and voting for your favorite RLT Diva.
Thank you for your support of our favorite theatre.

Our theme this year, "It's a Grand Night for Singing," came about through looking at the theatre's "life" these past four years. We weathered a pandemic, watched as war has raged in eastern Europe, went through a deep evaluation and re-organization of Raleigh Little Theatre's structure that has welcomed a new Executive Producer and other staff members and now we have great political upheaval in our elections and another war raging in the Middle East. Not to mention the number of long time volunteers at RLT that have left this world in the past year. All of this spurred my creative mind to find a theme that would bring a sense of renewal, hope and that would entertain and uplift the spirit of our audience...give our spirit and soul a vacation, so to speak.

In this 18th year of *DIVAS!*, I focused on ways I could shake things up a bit in the show...we have a brand new MC with a strong connection to RLT, a batch of some new faces and some familiar ones and two 13 year old fireballs we are calling Junior Divas, that are a preview of the future young talent that will take our RLT stage by storm. All in all, I wanted this night to be a celebration...

An entertainment...

A distraction from the world outside the theatre doors...

Just one grand night for singing, dancing, GIVING, laughing.

My wish for us all tonight is that you will open your hearts and your wallets to help keep Raleigh Little Theatre a vibrant, progressive, creative, safe and loving place for ALL people to come together and fully enjoy the moments of this One Night Only *DIVAS!* fundraiser.

It IS a Grand Night for Singing. Won't you join us by giving generously?

Alison Lawrence, Director

HISTORY OF DIVAS!

In 2004, the idea for a fundraiser for RLT originated from a small group of volunteers that wanted to help Raleigh Little Theatre raise funds for the new year. Knowing that actors are often in competition for roles, they came up with the idea to start a fake fight between a group of actors and spin this drama into a night of glitz, glamor, and celebration of all-things RLT.

The volunteers realized that by providing their own costumes, performing without a set, and using basic lighting and minimal rehearsals, the money from ticket sales for the evening would all be profit for RLT. At the end of an evening of celebration and performance, the audience could vote to crown the winning Diva of the night. One original Diva took it a step further: "Why not let the audience vote with their dollars?" That idea was the final touch - *Divas!* as we now know it was born.

Since 2004, *Divas!* has been raising money for the theatre every year with the exception of 2009, 2011, and 2014, making 2024 the 18th anniversary. In that time, *Divas!* has raised an incredible \$800,000 for RLT programs, including a record-breaking \$100,000 year in 2021, making it the most successful fundraiser ever at RLT!

PAST DIVAS

2004 Rebecca Johnston

2005 Yolanda Rabun

2006 Staci Sabarsky

2007 Katherine Anderson & Don Smith

2008 Martie Todd Sirois

2010 Katie Hennenlotter

2012 Greg Moore & Kevin O'Barr

2013 M. Dennis Poole

2015 Brian Fisher

2016 Rebecca Johnston

2017 Jess Barbour

2018 Emily Spain

2019 Dee Penven-Crew

2020 Emily Steinhoff James

2021 Alec Donaldson

2022 Tina Morris-Anderson

2023 Benaiah Adesoji

THE 2024 DIVAS BIOS



MELANIE CARVIOU most recently performed the role of Louise Seger in *Always...Patsy Cline* at North Raleigh Arts and Creative Theatre. Some other past roles include Noleta Nethercott in *Sordid Lives*, Norma McCorvey in *Roe*, Darlene Seward in *The Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical*, and Kate in *The Wild Party* (North Raleigh Arts and Creative Theatre), as well as Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz*, and Sister Mary Amnesia in *Nunsense* (Cary Players). Thanks to the cast and crew for such a fun experience!



JOSHUA FAGGION is very excited to be joining the Divas stage for the second year in a row! Joshua has been active in music and theater since a young age, and ever since, has been enjoying exploring what it means to tell a good story. Favorite roles include playing Hero in NRACT's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and Gene/Pew in *Ceramic Goose's Treasure Island*. This upcoming semester, Joshua will be heading out of state to study Musical Theatre at a currently un-revealed BFA program. He would like to thank his family for their unwavering support of his journey towards professional Musical Theatre and is grateful for your support. (@joshfaggion)



ANN FORSTHOEFEL is thrilled to reunite with Alison and return to Raleigh Little Theatre where she performed in *Lost in Yonkers* and *Ruthless, the Musical*, and has taken multiple classes. Favorite shows: *Nunsense* (Sr. Robert Anne), *Oliver!* (Widow Corney), *Pride and Prejudice* (Lady Catherine), *Harold and Maude* (Mrs. Chasen), *All The Way* (McNamara, et al.), *Witness for the Prosecution* (Romaine), and *Urinetown* (Mrs. Millenium). Also, she has sung with NC Opera, Triangle Opera Studios, and Raleigh Symphony Orchestra. Thanks to Alison, Elaine, Jeff, and Freddie-Lee. Love to Terence, Vanessa, and Juli!

THE 2024 DIVAS BIOS



TERRA HODGE is an educator, director, and actress. She serves as RLT's Director of Education. Her favorite directing credits include *The Dance on Widow's Row* (Agape Theatre Project), *Crowns* (Raleigh Little Theatre), and *Caroline, or Change* (The Justice Theatre Project). Her favorite acting roles include Vera Stark in *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (NRACT), Serena in *Porgy and Bess*, and Celie in *The Color Purple* (The Justice Theatre Project). Thank you for your support!



CHRIS INHULSEN is a Cary native, a UNCG Senior, and works at the State Employee's Credit Union. This is his third *Divas!* and is hoping that the third time's a charm! Select theatre credits include: *Brigadoon* (Charlie Dalrymple) Cary Players, *Sweet Charity* (Daddy) Meredith College, *Tartuffe* (Tartuffe) Meredith College, *Assassins* (John Hinkley) NC State, *Big River* (Huck Finn) Temple Theatre. He would like to thank his family and friends for their love and support. Whatever you find yourself doing, keep the arts part of your life!



EMMA K. JOHNSON as of today (May 11th) holds a Bachelor of Arts in Musical Theatre with a Minor in Professional Communications from Meredith College! Previous roles include: Black Stache in *Peter and the Starcatcher* (FVAC); Cinderella in *Cinderella 38* (RLT); Chris Hargensen in *Carrie: The Musical* (MCT); Mom in *Nuclear Family* (MCT). She also recently directed Meredith College Theatre's "Miscast Cabaret." She thanks her friends, family, and dog for all of their love and support. Love to Dad, Slay Divas!

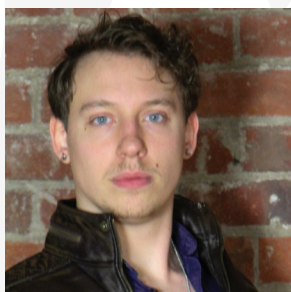


AUDREY LEBOUF is a 7th grader at Ligon Magnet Middle School, where she is part of the wind ensemble, honors chorus, and theater groups, and has played roles including Sally Brown in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, and Madame de la Grande Bouche in *Beauty and the Beast*. She got to keep up her Peanuts performances by playing Lucy in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* at NRACT. After making her *Divas!* debut playing the French horn in 2023, Audi is delighted to be a real Diva in 2024 and excited to raise money for Raleigh Little Theatre!

THE 2024 DIVAS BIOS



RON LOPEZ JR. is thrilled to be one of this year's *Divas*! A graduate of The Boston Conservatory, he has performed in and directed many shows across the country. Favorite credits include John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins*, The Dentist in *Little Shop of Horrors*, and Man in the Chair in *The Drowsy Chaperone*. He has also played both Franz and Rodger in *The Producers*. Ron would like to thank his family and friends for their continued support.



DOMINIC MACAULAY has high hopes to be crowned as this year's *Divas*! champion. Returning from a brilliant, and as he is quoted to have said, "...horribly underappreciated performance," Dominic is prepared to blow you all away with two songs that he has meticulously practiced and perfected in the spirit of a true Diva. Keep an eye out for Dominic this year at Raleigh Little Theatre as well as North Raleigh Arts & Creative Theatre. He will see you there!



HANNAH MACAULAY has been doing musical theatre since she was 4 years old, however, this year's *Divas* Performance will be her big break into the Raleigh Theatre World!! She cannot thank her husband, Dominic, enough for putting in many a kind word for her and to her friends and family for all the continued support. You can most definitely expect to see her onstage this upcoming year, and hopefully, with a crown by the end of tonight!!

THE 2024 DIVAS BIOS



CORA STUMPF, age 13, has made the stage her second home. Favorite credits: *Annie* (Annie), *A Christmas Story* (Helen), *A Christmas Carol* (Ghost of Christmas Past), *Beauty and the Beast* (Chip), *Shrek* (Young Fiona), *Matilda* (Matilda). Cora sang with the NY Pops at Carnegie Hall in 2023 and 2024. Thanks to Temple Theatre's Gavan Pamer, Peggy Taphorn, and Alison Lawrence. Shout-out to favorite duet/scene partner, Jude, and her supportive parents.



ANJALI THAWANI is thrilled to return to *Divas!* for her second attempt at the crown! Anjali got her BFA in Acting from the University of Illinois many moons ago. She worked as a professional actor in Chicago for some time, and in a (very weird twist) ended up in medical school (long story, you'll have to wait for the documentary). These days, Anjali's most important DIVA role is as mom to her three young kids (love you Milan, Mala, Shaan). She has a day job as a breast cancer surgeon at UNC Rex, and is truly honored to have found her way back to the stage with this talented group. Many thanks to all who have supported (or will support) Anjali's second run for the crown!



AYA WALLACE is an arts educator, advocate, and performer attending Temple University (BS) and New York University (MA). She has performed as Averie, *Dot* (NRACT), Wanda, *Crowns* (Agape Theater), Coco, *Wedding Day Worries* (Renee Nixon), and as Wilettta Mayor, *Trouble in Mind* (RLT). Aya assisted in choreography for *Hands on a Hardbody* (RLT), choreographed *Fun Home* (NRACT), and *Last Stop on Market Street* (RLT). Aya was first runner-up for Divas 2021!

PRODUCTION TEAM BIOS

DENNIS R. BERFIELD (Scenic Designer) is from South Williamsport, Pennsylvania. He received degrees in Theater and Communication Studies at the Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, and a Masters of Fine Arts in Scenic Design and Technology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Dennis has worked at various regional and off-Broadway theaters as a Scenic Artist, Carpenter, Master Carpenter, Scenic Designer, Assistant Technical Director, Scenic Coordinator. After working professionally for a number of years, Dennis became an adjunct professor at Millikin University in Decatur, IL and went on to become the Technical Director at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania.

VINCENT GENNA (Master of Ceremonies) has had an exciting career performing in major movie, television, and theatre productions, including the movie *Grease*. After moving to NC over 29 years ago, Vincent performed in RLT's productions of *The Pirates of Penzance* as The Pirate King, and as Curly in *Oklahoma*. His daughter Kimberly Genna Bryant is also an RLT veteran. After RLT, Vincent appeared in 21 musical productions for North Carolina Theatre. Since then, he has become known as the "Visionary of Our Times" as an internationally acclaimed Psychic Therapist, Medium, Spiritual Master, and Author. His dynamic and inspiring radio and television interviews, podcasts, keynote presentations, workshops, classes, private sessions, and best-selling book, *The Secret That's Holding You Back* have transformed thousands of lives worldwide. Thank you Alison and RLT for the invite back.

FREDDIE-LEE HEATH (Choreographer) is thrilled to return to Raleigh Little Theatre, where he has choreographed over 30 productions including *Nine*, *Oliver*, *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, *Cinderella*... he looks forward to the upcoming, *Something Rotten!!* He travels across the state choreographing and teaching master classes. Some of his past accolades include: Order of the Longleaf Pine, National Dance Teacher of the Year, Raleigh Medal of Arts, Wake County School's Hall of Fame for Arts. Love to Mark - he has to live with this Diva!

TODD HOUSEKNECHT (Sound Designer) has been very active in community theatre in the Raleigh area for 15 years, providing set construction, technical direction, and sound design/engineering assistance for organizations that include Raleigh Little Theatre, Cary Players, NRACT, Forest Moon, and others. Highlights include *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Hairspray*, *Legally Blonde*, *Spring Awakening*, *Cinderella*, *Spamalot*, *Hedwig*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Avenue Q*, *Sister Act*, and many many others. He hopes you enjoy the show!

ALISON LAWRENCE (Director) is an award winning actress, director and voice teacher with over 30 years of experience. She lives in Raleigh with her four-legged family. She maintains a successful private Voice studio, The Singer's Art, here in Raleigh as well as teaching private voice lessons through The Temple Theatre in Sanford. Ms. Lawrence received her B. A. degree in Voice performance. Ms. Lawrence has been awarded 4

PRODUCTION TEAM BIOS

Cantey performance awards from Raleigh Little Theatre as well as being honored to receive the Haskell Fitz-Simons Distinguished Performer Award. She has also been the recipient of numerous FORSCOM Festival (Military Performance Awards) awards for her work as a performer, director and musical director while working on Ft. Bragg. Ms. Lawrence also had the honor of joining Clay Aiken's Joyful Noise Tour in 2005 as Beverly Ledford and the community theatre liaison. She located and recruited community theatre actor/singers to perform as the chorus in the show in the 32 cities that were visited on the tour. Most recently Ms. Lawrence was seen on stage as Dr. Eve in NRACT's production of *Sordid Lives*, and as Erronius in *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum*. Ms. Lawrence was seen at PlayMaker's Repertory Theatre: Ensemble in *She Loves Me*, at RLT; Mother Superior in *Sister Act*, Gladys in *Memphis*, Stepmama in *Cinderella* (4 years), Director of 18 years of *Divas!* Fundraisers (and a three-time *Divas!* loser), Theatre In the Park as Florence Foster Jenkins in *Glorious: The True Story of Florence Foster Jenkins*, Judy Steinburg in *It Shoulda Been You*, NC State Theatrefest; Gerde in *The Hollow*, Actors Comedy Lab; Sister Acacious in *The Divine Sister*, NRACT with Actors Comedy Lab; *Love, Loss and What I Wore*. Justice Theatre Project; as Big Edie in *Grey Gardens*, and Emma Goldman in *Ragtime*. You can contact her through email: thesingersart@att.net or Facebook: The Singer's Art Vocal Studio. Adopt a pet! It will change you for GOOD.

ELAINE PETRONE (Stage Manager) appreciates all the opportunities that Raleigh Little Theatre has given her family to explore many roles backstage and on stage since her backstage night in 2004. She is happy to Stage Manage *Divas!* this year as her way to give back. Love and thanks to David and Alyssa for their patience while I go out and play.

JEFF WHICKER (Music Director) is a pianist, singer, and music director from Durham. He accompanies The Triangle Jewish Chorale, the Durham Children's Choir, and is the regular accompanist for the Durham School of the Arts Choral department. He accompanies both private and UNC students of Dr. Daniel Collins, voice faculty at UNC. He has accompanied and served as musical director for a number of high school musicals and chorus concerts in the area. He also is the pianist and music director at Emerywood Baptist church in High Point.

ALI WOOD (Lighting Designer) could be found both on-stage and backstage when there was a show the whole time she was growing up. From skits that her grandfather wrote for their church to the local community theatre, she was always involved and loved the art. In 2017, she graduated college with a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre Arts with a focus in Lighting. Her most recent endeavor was working as an Entertainment Stage Technician for Walt Disney World at Hollywood Studios in Orlando, FL. During her time here, she hopes to continue spreading her love and joy of Theatre with everyone she meets.

LIVE AUCTION ITEMS

Live auction bidding will occur during Act 1 and Act 2 of the program. BE READY TO BID!

Live Auction Package #1 (Valued at over \$800)

COCKTAIL PARTY FOR EIGHT

A night of drinks and delicious food for you and seven of your fanciest friends. Hosted by Georgia & Alec Donaldson... need we say more?

Scheduling will be at a mutually agreed upon time, no later than May of 2025.



Live Auction Package #2 (Valued at \$3,700)

I LOVE NEW YORK! NYC 4-DAY TRIP

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This trip is booked by your own AmFund Travel Specialist and you will have 3 years with no blackout dates to go on your trip.



Live Auction Package #3 (Valued at \$3,700)

GATORBUG BOUTIQUE PRIVATE SHOPPING EVENT

The winner of this package will receive a private shopping trip complete with champagne, light hors d'oeuvres, an in-house stylist, swag bag, \$200 gift card, and a discount for the shopping for herself and up to 25 friends at the Raleigh location of the Gatorbug Boutique.



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ORDER OF SONGS

ACT I

It's a Grand Night for Singing (from <i>State Fair</i>)	The 2024 Divas
Good Evening RLT (adapted from <i>Hairspray</i>)	Audrey LeBouef
Tea for Two (from <i>No-No Nanette</i>)	Anjali Thawani & Ron Lopez Jr.
She Loves Me (from <i>She Loves Me</i>)	Joshua Faggion
Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man (from <i>Show Boat</i>)	Terra Hodge
Dangerous Game (from <i>Jekyll & Hyde</i>)	Dominic & Hannah MacAulay
Wick (from <i>Secret Garden</i>)	Cora Stumpf & Chris Inhulsen
Astonishing (from <i>Little Women</i>)	Emma K. Johnson
The Man that Got Away (from <i>A Star is Born</i>)	Aya Wallace
A Trip to the Library (from <i>She Loves Me</i>)	Melanie Carviou
Not Funny (by Michael Heitzman & Ilene Reid)	Ann Forsthoefel

INTERMISSION

**The silent auction will close at the end of Intermission.
Bid generously and bid often!**

ORDER OF SONGS

ACT 2

42nd Street (from *42nd Street*)

The 2024 Divas

Take it on the Chin (from *Me and My Girl*)

Cora Stumpf

I'm Infected (from *Cry-Baby*)

Chris Inhulsen &
Emma K. Johnson

Agony (from *Into the Woods*)

Ann Forsthoefel &
Joshua Faggion

If Mama Was Married (from *Gypsy*)

Audrey LeBouef &
Melanie Carviou

Song on the Sand (from *La Cage aux Folles*)

Ron Lopez Jr.

Flight (by Craig Carnelia)

Aya Wallace & Terra Hodge

Alice (by Alan Menken)

Chris Inhulsen

I Could be Jewish for You (by Nikko Benson)

Anjali Thawani

Ilona (from *She Loves Me*)/

I Cain't Say No (from *Oklahoma*)

Dominic & Hannah MacAulay

One Vote More (adapted from *Les Misérables*)

The 2024 Divas

On a Clear Day

(from *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*)

Benaiah Adesoji (2023 Diva)



Our lawyers roll up their
sleeves in the office.

And in the community.

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to be involved with the Raleigh Little
Theatre and to support ***Divas! 2024.***

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for crunching the numbers to help us crown our winning Diva!



for designing the *Divas!* playbill and promotional pieces!



RALEIGH
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THEATRE

THE 2024-2025 SEASON



OUR TOWN (MULTILINGUAL)

JULY 25 - AUGUST 4, 2024

SOMETHING ROTTEN!

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

ALL SMILES

SEPTEMBER 4 - 15, 2024

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