

The
WordPlayers



presents...

*OVER THE RIVER
AND THROUGH
THE WOODS*

BY JOE DiPIETRO



Sponsored by:



wordplayers.org

The WordPlayers' 2019-2020 Season



is dedicated
to the memory of
Gene and Matthew Wooten,
father and son.



They leave a lasting legacy of
deep faith, compassionate love,
and selfless service.

Advent Touring Show

West of Bethlehem by Ethan Norman
Available December 1 - December 22, 2019

Holiday MainStage Show

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson
Public Performances: Dec. 13 @ 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 14 & 15 @ 2:30 p.m.
School Performances (Reservations must be made in advance):
Dec. 13 @ 9:15 a.m., Dec. 16 @ 9:15 a.m. & 12:00 p.m., Dec. 17 @ 9:15 a.m.
at Clayton Performing Arts Center, Pellissippi State Community College,
10915 Hardin Valley Rd, Knoxville, TN 37932

Black History Touring Show

The WordPlayers is honored
to present the World Premiere of:

JACKIE ROBINSON STEALS HOME by Peter Manos

This one-act play chronicles the life story and achievements
of Jackie Robinson, who, in 1947, became the first African-American
athlete to break the color barrier in Major League baseball.

*Available to tour to schools and other venues
February 1 – 29, 2020. To schedule a performance,
please call 865-539-2490 or email wordplayers@comcast.net.*

Summer MainStage Show

Footloose

Music by Tom Snow, Lyrics by Dean Pitchford,
Book by Dean Pitchford and Walter Bobbie

July 17 @ 7:30 p.m., July 18 @ 2:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., July 19 @ 3:00 p.m.
The U.S. Cellular Stage at The Bijou Theatre, 803 S. Gay St., Knoxville

*For more information regarding our season,
please visit our website: www.wordplayers.org*

*To receive periodic updates, please join our mailing list and follow us on Face-
book (The WordPlayers), Twitter (@wordplayers) and Instagram (wordplayers).*

Over the River and Through the Woods

by Joe DiPietro

Setting: Hoboken, NJ, early 1990s
There will be one 15-minute intermission

Originally produced on the New York stage by Jonathan Pollard,
Bernie Kukoff, Tony Converse and James Hammerstein.

Produced by Helen Jayes Performing Arts Center (Pam Klappas,
Artistic Director; Tony Stimac, Executive Producer) on October 3, 1997.

Presented at The Berkshire Theatre Festival (Arthur Storch,
Artistic Director; Kate Maguire, Managing Director) on August 12,
1997.

Produced by The American Stage Company (James N. Vagias,
Executive Producer) on January 10, 1996.

Developed at the 1994 National Playwrights Conference/
Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center (Lloyd Richards, Artistic Director).

First produced at The Belmont Italian American Playhouse
(Dante Albertie, Artistic Director; Marco Greco, Executive Director)
in April 1994.

"Yes Sir That's My Baby"

Written by Walter Donalson and Gus Kahn.
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Dr. Ron and Peggy Turner

Director's Notes

Family can be complicated. Family relationships – especially inter-generational ones – can be loving, exasperating, supportive, hilarious, confusing, heart-breaking, or any combination thereof. Family provides a special tie that binds, for better or for worse.

Psalms 133:1 says, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" Indeed, but staying united within families is no easy task, is it? The most loving families experience separation due to job situations, disparate dreams, health concerns, travel, misunderstanding, poor choices, or even honest differences of opinion.

What is/was your relationship with your grandparents? What images are associated with it? Food? Games? Laughter? Tears? Music? Dancing? Travel?

Do you have grandchildren? If so, are any of the associated images similar to the ones above? Or are they vastly different?

What do these relationships have to do with the person you are? As Nick asks in the play, "How much do you owe those who care for you? How can you repay someone for their devotion? Can it ever be enough?" Maybe, like Nick, you've had this thought: "I wish I could neatly sum up who they were and what they meant to me and how they fit into the puzzle of my life."

This play brought a flood of images when I first encountered it, images which swirled among a wide array of emotions. It made me long for family members and friends separated by miles, or years, or time. It made me laugh a lot, sometimes through misty eyes. All those things convinced me that we must produce this play for our community.

Thank you for joining The WordPlayers to experience the hilarity and heartbreak of Nick's family, which may not be that far from your own.

Terry Weber

Cast

NICK CRISTANO – Matthew Lloyd
FRANK GIANELLI – Lee Wittenberg
AIDA GIANELLI – Mary Sue Greiner
NUNZIO CRISTANO – Cliff Jestice
EMMA CRISTANO – Terry Colquitt
CAITLIN O’HARE – Jessica Cross

Production Team

Director: Terry Weber
Stage Manager: Julia Stark
Set Designer: Steve Krempasky
Costume Coordinators:
Lynn Smith & Edina Bobrek
Lighting Designer: Joe Jaynes
Spot Operator: Stavros Keritsis
Lightboard Operator: Allison Spradley
Composer/Sound Designer: John Thomas Oaks
Wardrobe/Deck Crew: Arisa Carero-Spencer

The Artists



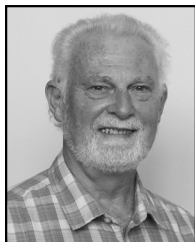
Terry Colquitt (Emma) With 35 years in stage, film & television, Terry regards her career as a journey and an adventure. In recent years, she's played roles such as a villainous stunt woman, a humble merchant's wife, and the arduous Judge Danforth in *The Crucible*. Her favorite genre is Dramey. She's enjoyed the flamboyance of a retired stripper in *4 Old Broads*, the murderous gold digger, Mavis Hollister, in *The Murder Room*, a mysterious old house keeper in *Posthumous*, and touring shows with The WordPlayers. Working with The WordPlayers has endeared the company to Terry and performing with such talent and quality production again is tremendous fun, a delight and a pleasure. When not acting, Terry dotes on her family and participates in young women's ministries.



Jessica Cross (Caitlin O'Hare) is excited to be joining The WordPlayers in another show. Some of her favorite WordPlayers' productions and characters include Mrs. Beaver in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Lucille in *Junie B. in Jingle Bells*, *Batman Smells*, Caroline (Ma) Ingalls in *A Laura Ingalls Wilder Christmas*, Grace Bradley in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, Mrs. Kirk in *Little Women*, Queen Jadis in *The Magician's Nephew*, and in the cast of *John, His Story*. She is also a member of the WordPlayers' Playback Theatre Troupe. She would like to thank Darrin and Hayley for allowing her the time to be in this production. As always, this is for Cole who is always in her heart!



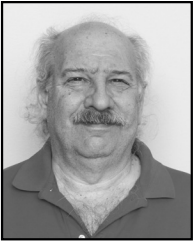
Mary Sue Greiner (Aida) is so excited and blessed to make her debut with The WordPlayers! By day she works as Development Director for the Knoxville Symphony, but at night she enjoys performing. She has a BA in Theatre Arts from the University of Cincinnati and some favorite roles include Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, Fastrada in *Pippin*, Sister Robert Anne and Sister Mary Amnesia in a *Nonsense* or two, and Du in *Keely and Du*. She's also a member of the *Rock It Science* trio. Much love and thanks to Sam for his patience with her performing vice!



Cliff Jestice (Nunzio) is excited to present a full production of this wonderful play after doing a staged reading of it in 2018. Some of his favorite roles have been Snoopy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; Lancelot in *Camelot*; Rooster Hannigan in *Annie*; Dick Jenson in *The Best Man*; Dr. Harper/Mr. Gibbs/Lt. Rooney in *Arsenic and Old Lace*; and Herod the Great in *West of Bethlehem*. When not acting, Cliff performs with his wife, Debra, at senior living facilities in TN, KY, and SC. He would like to thank his wife for her total support and constant encouragement! ("Go, act, get out of the house, please!")



Matthew Lloyd (Nick) is a long-time veteran of The WordPlayers, having performed in over 25 productions in addition to frequent contributions as director, stage manager, and set designer. Favorite roles include: *Godspell* (Jesus), *Cotton Patch Gospel* (17 characters), *Big River* (King), and *Bright Star* (Papa Murphy). Thanks to God and The WordPlayers for so many opportunities and to Terri, Naomi, Cami, Natasha, and my mom for being my biggest fans.



Lee Wittenberg (Frank) is making his WordPlayers' debut. He made his professional debut with the Clarence Brown Company as King Henry VI in Shakespeare's *Richard III* and made his New York debut shortly thereafter in John Holleman's *Hypothetic*. In 1991, he first appeared on a Broadway stage in *The Refrigerator Tour*. That summer he achieved his lifelong goal of playing softball in the Broadway Show *League* where he achieved the notable distinction of a base on balls every time he stepped to the plate, winning the Eddie Gaedel Award in the process. He has studied under David Straight (Tony award winner Beatrice Straight's nephew) at UT.



Terry Weber (Director) recently retired after 30 years as Professor of Theatre at UT, and is thrilled to now be working full-time as Artistic Director of The WordPlayers. Previous directing credits for The WordPlayers: *Walk, Don't Ride*; *A Laura Ingalls Wilder Christmas*; *Walking Across Egypt*; *Junie B. in Jingle Bells*, *Batman Smells*; *The Inner Circle*; *The Magician's Nephew*; plus staged readings of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Candida*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, and *God's Favorite*.

Julia Stark (Stage Manager) is a recent graduate of the UT and majored in "Performing Arts Outreach" with a minor in Hispanic Studies with the College Scholars Program. Currently, she is an instructor at the Knoxville Children's Theatre and Drama Director for the Knoxville Jewish Day School. Julia has worked as an assistant stage manager in the Clarence Brown Theatre's productions of *Violet* and *Peter and the Starcatcher* and is excited to make her stage management debut with The WordPlayers.

Stephen F. Krempasky (Set Designer) Steve is the Executive Director of the Farragut Business Alliance, promoting retailers, restaurants and service providers in the Town of Farragut. Additionally, he is President of MASSKUS Productions, a special events consulting agency. Steve has designed over 300 theatrical and corporate productions including the upcoming musical *Crazy For You* at Bearden High School. He is currently working on *Lion King, Jr.* in Seymour and *Hello Dolly* for West High School. He was recently inducted as a Fellow of the American Association of Community Theatre with over 30 years of service.

John Thomas Oaks (Sound Design) loves Jesus, people, and music (in that order). He loves writing music for The WordPlayers' productions.

The WordPlayers



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Good Things are Happening!



The WordPlayers has received funding from the Arts Fund of East Tennessee through the East Tennessee Foundation. The grant is supporting Playback Theatre performances for under-served populations.

Our next playback performance is at
Karns Senior Center
at 1:00 PM on Nov. 21.
This is free and open to the public.

Thank you, East TN Foundation!



Recently, we received an Arts Builds Communities grant through the Tennessee Arts Commission. This funding will allow us to provide several free performances of our Black History show, *Jackie Robinson Steals Home*, in under-served communities.

Thank you, Tennessee Arts Commission &
the Arts and Culture Alliance!

The WordPlayers is very grateful for the support from...

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We are thankful for the support of our 2019-2020 Season Contributing Players!

(Gifts given between August 1, 2019 and October 1, 2019)

ALL WORLD PLAYERS (\$1000+)

Jennifer Banner
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**The WordPlayers is impacting the greater Knoxville community
for the Kingdom of Christ! Your support is needed and greatly appreciated!**

The WordPlayers is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization.

Please send your tax deductible gifts to P.O. Box 53717, Knoxville, TN, 37950-3717.

**You can help secure the future of The WordPlayers by supporting our endowment through
The East Tennessee Foundation. Please consider building The WordPlayers endowment
through your estate planning and planned giving.
Contact Sherri Alley at East Tennessee Foundation,
(865) 524-1223 for more information.**

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