



# Spring 2020 Preview



# Contents

3 . . . . . State of the Playhouse  
5 . . . . . From the President of  
the Playhouse Board  
6 . . . . . Capital Campaign  
Donation Form  
7 . . . . . *A Raisin in the Sun*  
12 . . . . . *Rumors*



15 . . . . . Audition Notice  
16 . . . . . Breaking News!

## Main Street Productions, Inc.

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Westfield, IN 46074  
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*Member of the Encore Association — [encoreassociation.net](http://encoreassociation.net)  
Visit Hamilton County Indiana — [visithamiltoncounty.com](http://visithamiltoncounty.com)  
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Downtown Westfield Association — [downtownwestfieldassociation.com](http://downtownwestfieldassociation.com)*

## Thanks to our 2019-2020 WPH Season Co-Sponsor



### 2020 Shows

#### *A Raisin in the Sun*

by Lorraine Hansberry

**March 20 to April 5**

#### *Rumors* by Neil Simon

**May 8-24**

#### *30 Reasons Not to Be in a Play*

by Alan Haehnel (Youth Production)

**July 17-26**

#### *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen

**Sept. 24 to Oct. 4 (note date change)**

#### *Annie* — Music by Charles Strouse,

Lyrics by Martin Charnin,

Book by Thomas Meehan

**Nov. 12-22**

Details about our spectacular and exciting new season are coming soon to [westfieldplayhouse.org](http://westfieldplayhouse.org), [facebook.com/WestfieldPlayhouse](https://www.facebook.com/WestfieldPlayhouse), and our next newsletter!

# State of the Playhouse

This month's newsletter has proved to be a bit of a problem, for a really interesting reason.

Imagine that you've photographed a paperwhite narcissus. For those of you who aren't familiar, they're a pretty kind of white flower, and they're famous for growing quickly and easily indoors. The first leaves sprout in a few days, and flowers can bloom in three to four weeks. So, you have your newly photographed narcissus, and you mail pictures to all your friends: "Here's what my narcissus looks like now!" Well, if you've photographed it before it's actually bloomed, then your statement is likely not accurate, since the plant may have grown *even more* in the days since you took the photo.

As most of you probably know, Westfield Playhouse has been working on a new theater. Construction of this building has proceeded at such a pace that it's been somewhat a challenge to document it, since it seems like every time someone drives by, it's grown just a bit more. Like our hypothetical narcissus, it's hard to give an accurate report on its progress because it's been built so fast.



Included here are a couple photos that are current as of the end of February. At the end of January, the Board of Directors for Westfield Playhouse went on a tour of the under-construction building. Even at this stage — wearing hardhats and watching steps — it was easy to visualize how the final building would feel, how the bigger stage opened new possibilities, how the different rooms could help expand our possibilities and enrich our communities.

The construction gurus say that we're rapidly reaching a point where it will *seem* that progress has slowed down, but that's just because the progress being made is on the *inside*. Although we don't have grand-opening dates to announce yet, we're confident that the new Playhouse will be open before the end of the year — maybe even before the end of *summer*.

As the dreams of this community become a reality — blooming and growing in the heart of downtown Westfield — we appreciate your support more than ever. Whether monetary contributions, volunteer efforts, or just spreading the word about what Main Street Productions is and what it does, we're grateful for everything that has helped bring us this far. We hope you're as excited as we are; for theater in Westfield, it's almost tomorrow.





## *From the President of the Playhouse Board*

Dear Members and Friends,

As we continue getting closer to the opening of our great new Playhouse, we are continuing to ask for your generosity to help finish the project. There are many unforeseen expenses that arise, and we must continue to ask. Please drive past the new location at 220 N. Union St. in Westfield and take a look at the outside beauty. The inside will be just as glorious, and the furnishing of the theater auditorium will be substantial. I ask that you please consider a new donation using the donation form on the next page. Any amount would be appreciated. We can all be proud of and enjoy what has been done for the arts in Westfield.

*John C. Sampson*  
Your MSP Board President

## *Become Part of the New Westfield Playhouse by Donating to the Capital Campaign for Its Construction*

The mission of Westfield Playhouse/Main Street Productions, Inc. is to create and present quality theatre which balances artistic vision and expression by producing theatre that involves, reflects, and nourishes the community it serves.

○ **Sponsor Level — \$5,000 and up:** A plaque in the new Westfield Playhouse lobby.

○ **Director Level — \$1,000-\$4,999:** A permanently named seat plaque and name in each program for one year.

○ **Producer Level — \$500-\$999:** Name in each program for 1 year.

○ **Leading Role Level — \$250-\$499:** Name in each program for 1 year.

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○ **Tech Crew Level — \$50-\$99:** Name in each program for 1 year.

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make checks payable to Main Street Productions, Inc.  
and mail to:

**Main Street Productions — CapCam Sponsorship**  
**PO Box 702**  
**Westfield, IN 46074**

A receipt and MSP tax 501C3 number will be mailed to you.

Main Street Productions, Inc. Presents

# A Raisin in the Sun

By  
Lorraine Hansberry

March 20th & 21st, 2020

March 27th & 28th, 2020  
March 29th, 2020

April 3rd & 4th, 2020  
April 5th, 2020



Directed  
by  
Nancy  
Lafferty

All Friday and Saturday Shows at 7:30 pm  
All Sunday Shows at 2:30 pm

2019-2020 Season Sponsored by

**HORIZON**  
BANK

## AT A GLANCE

*A Raisin in the Sun*

March 20 - April 5, 2020

**Perfect for:** Those who appreciate gut-wrenching drama, or those who've ever had to balance their dreams with reality

**Watch out for:** Relevant themes and dialogue

## A Raisin in the Sun Burns in Its Brilliance

Langston Hughes' poem "Harlem" — from which *A Raisin in the Sun* gets its title — opens with the haunting line: "What happens to a dream deferred?" That question is asked and answered from many different angles in *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play that has been considered an American classic since its debut.

It follows the travails of the Younger household — a hard-working, loving black family — as they struggle to get ahead, or even survive, in a world that seems to deny every opportunity to those of color. These tensions turn up even higher as the death of the household patriarch results in a \$10,000 life-insurance payment. That's life-changing money . . . but whose lives, and how will they change?

Although set on the south side of Chicago in 1959, *Raisin's* themes and ideas still feel all-too-relevant and contemporary. From day-to-day injustices to systemic oppression to questions of housing and opportunity, many of the problems and issues feel ripped from today's headlines. What does it mean to be black in America? How can you be true to yourself — your dreams and ideals — when there are so many forces trying to grind you down or change you to fit *their* mold?

Westfield Playhouse invites you to join the Younger family for this powerful, moving drama. It's an unforgettable show you'll want to watch with a friend, since it's bound to give you fruit for conversation.

## Questions With the Director

Director Nancy Lafferty kindly answered some questions about *A Raisin in the Sun*.

***There's a lot going on in this show, from dreams of business ownership to fears about family and the future to plans of becoming a doctor. As a director, did you have any "tricks" to keeping the threads intertwined and the action flowing as you envisioned?***

I passed out the poem "Harlem" at our first rehearsal. I said, "This play is about many things. But it is mainly about dreams

— getting or not getting dreams fulfilled. Every person in this play has a dream. Throughout our rehearsal period, I will periodically ask each of you what your character’s dream is.” This play is about dreams. The audience will be able to relate to that. We *all* have had some dreams that have been deferred.

***What are the significant challenges of producing such a play?***

The play is very lengthy. As we rehearse I am well aware of the length and the number of pages. The play contains three acts and will probably last almost three hours. To that end, I will be doing what I can as a director to keep the pace moving, but I’m not too worried about the audience. There is such depth of emotion and such a variety of action going on that I don’t think the audience will realize the length of the play.

***I took some photos at an early rehearsal (see pp. 10-11), and I was surprised at how emotionally invested I was. Do you think there’s a “secret” for this show’s power?***

Yes. It starts with an incredible script. I shake my head every moment that I think about Lorraine Hansberry writing this masterpiece at the age of 28. She took a page out of her own life, and then created one of the most powerful pieces of literature in the American library. The dialogue is so rich and emotional and real. The theme is, sadly, still too relevant — a poor, black family struggling to find and live in adequate housing. Just as relevant today, as it was when it was written in 1957. Producer Jan Jamison remarked early in the rehearsal process: “This script is so well written. It just shows us how silly some of the shows are that we produce today in American theater.”

I concur. If we are going to take time to rehearse and perform a play, why not choose a solid classic, like *A Raisin in the Sun*?

After the script, the secret in the show’s power is the heart of the actors. This cast all got in their cars and drove out of Indianapolis to a little playhouse in a rural setting to tell a story that matters. A story about their race. A story about racism. A story that matters to them. I was asked if I was worried that I would have enough black actors to perform the show. I didn’t know. I hoped. I have always believed

that every play attracts the cast members who need to tell the story. And I had enough actors audition that I could have cast the show twice. This cast is deeply committed to telling this story. They are filled with talent and with determination. They are fiercely involved in this show.

***For parents who want to introduce their children to this piece of modern literature, is there anything they might want to know before seeing this?***

Parents should be aware that there is strong language used in the play. If you don't want your children to hear any cursing, please don't bring them.

## ***Rehearsal Photos***

The hard-at-work actors need to maneuver around set construction and decorations from previous shows. Eagle-eyed patrons might recognize the walls from *Lie, Cheat and Genuflect* (our February show), which will be replaced, painted, and adorned as appropriate for *A Raisin in the Sun*.



***Conflict between Walter Younger (played by De'Jon Marshall-Fisher) and his mother, Lena Younger (played by Gabrielle Patterson).***



*Mama's family enjoys her new hat. From left to right: De'Jon Marshall-Fisher, Andrea Hardy, Gabrielle Patterson, and Kaitlynn Nailon.*



*A tender moment between Walter (played by De'Jon Marshall-Fisher) and his wife, Ruth (played by Andrea Harvey).*

**RUMORS**

An elegant farce  
**By**  
**Neil Simon**

Directed  
by  
**Brynn  
Tyszka**

**May 8th & 9th, 2020**  
**May 15th & 16th, 2020**  
**May 17th, 2020**  
**May 22nd & 23rd, 2020**  
**May 24th, 2020**

All Friday and Saturday Shows at 7:30 pm  
All Sunday Shows at 2:30 pm

2019-2020 Season Sponsored by  
**HORIZON**  
BANK

## AT A GLANCE

*Rumors*

May 8 - 24, 2020

**Perfect for:** Fans of farce, quick-witted repartee, and escalating consequences

**Watch out for:** Blink-and-you'll-miss-it humor that builds on itself to a hilarious climax

# Spreading Laughter with Rumors

What do you get when you cross the wit and humanity of Neil Simon with the energy and absurdity of farce? We're not certain, but we've heard *Rumors* . . .

The play opens at the anniversary party of political bigwig Charlie Brock and his wife, Myra. Unfortunately, Charlie's not available, because he seems to have shot himself in the earlobe. Faced with this crisis are their dinner guests — most of whom are dealing with problems of their own, including marital issues, second-degree burns, an increasingly beat-up BMW, and an elaborate dinner that's not going to cook itself. And that's just the first act!

It's hard to talk about farces without giving too much away, because part of the fun is seeing how pieces collide, minor elements turn into major problems, and small asides become running jokes. But, at its heart, *Rumors* is also a Neil Simon play, full of observations about modern life, insight into how we get along with each other, and dialogue that's so sizzling you just might forget the kitchen staff is nowhere to be seen. (Where *are* they . . . and what does it mean?)

In the real world, a rumor can turn from something small and innocuous into a major meltdown of misunderstanding and mayhem. We hope you'll join us at Westfield Playhouse as the same thing happens on our stage in Neil Simon's *Rumors*.

## Questions With the Director

Director Brynn Tyszka graciously took a few moments to talk about *Rumors*.

***What is it about Rumors that you find most interesting as a director, or that drew you to it?***

As with any farce, there is always ample opportunity for “moments not on the page” — those hilarious staging choices that take an already laugh-out-loud script and turn it into a rolling-in-the-aisles experience. This script is full of potential for moments like this, and I can't wait to find them with the actors!

***Imagine most theater fans have feelings about Neil Simon, but Rumors seems different from many of his other shows. How does it fit in with his body of work?***

Simon's characters are uncommonly quick-witted, using comedy and sarcasm as a defense mechanism . . . and they're *really* good at it. While he didn't write a ton of farce, you'd never know it reading through the script. He fully understood that, on a scale from 1-10, a farce has to start at a 10 and build to a 25, and he accomplishes that feat beautifully.

***Without giving too much away, is there a favorite scene, situation, or bit of dialogue you find most compelling?***

I'm definitely not going to give anything away, because the surprises in this play are too much fun (and serve to brilliantly nudge the characters closer to insanity with every turn). But I will say that one character has a spasmodic back, and I'm pretty sure that the physical comedy fun we're going to have with her will end up being my favorite.

***Are there any "rumors" in your own life that have gotten out of hand, or that led to your own hijinks?***

Woof! Well, if Neil Simon had written me some more hysterical endings to the rumors in my life, I'd probably share them happily! But that's the fun of farce — these characters are real, but they're entrenched in such absurdly heightened circumstances that we're able to laugh at them. And since it's not dark comedy, we can rest easy, knowing we'll end up laughing *with* them in the end, as well.

***What are you hoping audiences will take away from this play?***

Aching abdominals and a few more laugh lines. No, honestly, one of theater's greatest attributes is that it offers its audience an escape, and that is something that most of us in modern society could really use. I'm hoping that *Rumors* audiences will enjoy a chance to turn off their brains for a couple hours, release some tension, and have a great time.



# Audition Notice

Check the Playhouse website for additional audition information:  
[westfieldplayhouse.org](http://westfieldplayhouse.org).

## *Rumors*

Written by Neil Simon, directed by Brynn Tyszka.

**Audition Dates and Location:** Auditions for *Rumors* will be held March 22-23 at the Westfield Playhouse (IN-32 location) at 6:00-9:00 p.m.

**Performance Dates:** May 8 to May 24, 2020.

**Synopsis:** It's the night of Charley and Myra's tenth anniversary party, and all their friends are invited. There's just one problem: nobody knows where Myra is, and Charley is bleeding from the head (and that's just as the curtain rises). A car accident, a gunshot, a slipped disc, a dropped casserole, a case of whiplash, and several drinks later, the rumors are flying, everyone is at the end of their wits, and no marriage is safe. Will they get everything straightened out? Maybe. But not before the police arrive.

This brilliant piece by Neil Simon has everything you could want in a farce: fast talk, slamming doors, trip-worthy phone cords, mistaken identities, physical comedy, hi-jinx, plenty of booze, and (of course) Mr. Simon's famously wry and witty backtalk.

## **Roles to Be Cast**

*All characters can be of **any** ethnicity.*

**Chris Gorman** — 30-45 — Wife of Ken; successful lawyer for a publishing company; only recently gave up smoking, and really wishes she hadn't.

**Ken Gorman** — 30-45 — Successful lawyer (Charley is a client); must be comfortable going up and down stairs several times; he's just trying to hold everything together.

**Claire Ganz** — late 20s to early 40s — "An attractive woman"; maybe a bit younger than the rest; trophy wife; smart-ass; married to Lenny.

**Lenny Ganz** — 30-45 — A successful accountant/financial advisor (Charley is a client); hasn't eaten all day, handled three audits in one morning, and just totaled his brand-new BMW.

**Ernie** — late 40s to late 50s — A psychoanalyst (Charley is a client, as are several others in the group); so warm and caring, it's almost annoying.

**Cookie** — late 40s to late 50s — A reality TV chef; married to Ernie; no sense of style; bad back; not the sharpest tool in the shed; must be good with physical comedy.

**Glenn Cooper** — 30-45 — Politician; going through a rough patch in his marriage; very concerned about his image, pending his upcoming election for State Senate.

**Cassie Cooper** — 30-45 — Glenn's wife; can go from "first lady" to "sexpot" in the blink of an eye; going through a rough patch in her marriage; very high-maintenance and a little crazy.

**Officer Welch** — 40-60 — Male police officer; a *big* guy/strong/vigorous; ideally feels imposing/intimidating to the rest of the group.

**Officer Pudney** — early 20s to early 30s — Female police officer; "just the facts" kind of gal; also voices Myra at end.

## Breaking News!

Westfield Playhouse has been accepted by Hickory Hall Polo Club to host one of their matches. On **June 19**, we will be at the polo match, helping with the event, holding fundraising activities, and giving information about the new Playhouse and our forthcoming shows. We will be working alongside Servants At Work, another non-profit that helps permanently disabled individuals. Polo matches are open to the public. This will be a great fundraising event for us, so plan to come and join us! Information can be found at [www.indypolo.com](http://www.indypolo.com).

