



DOMINION STAGEDOOR

THE QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2024

ANYTHING BUT PREDICTABLE

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*A Story by
Harvey Fierstein*

JANUARY 26 - FEBRUARY 10, 2024 | THU-FRI-SAT @ 8PM
GUNSTON THEATRE TWO | DOMINIONSTAGE.ORG

SHOUT OUT!

UNDYING THANKS (NO PUN
INTENDED) TO THE CAST AND
CREW OF OUR FALL
PRODUCTION OF *MISERY*.
YOU CREATED A SHOW THAT
WAS SIMULTANEOUS FUNNY
AND SCARY AS HELL.
A BLOODY GOOD TIME WAS
HAD BY ALL!
(OK, WE'LL STOP NOW)

Coming This Spring!

RENT

MUSIC, LYRICS, AND BOOK BY JONATHAN LARSON
DIRECTED BY JASON DAMASO
SHOW DATES: JUNE 7 - 22, 2024

HARVEY FIERSTIEN'S **TORCH SONG** OPENS JANUARY 26 AT GUNSTON THEATRE TWO!

Torch Song

Dominion Stage's production of the dramedy ***Torch Song*** lights up Gunston Theatre Two in Arlington from January 26 - February 10.

Written by Harvey Fierstein (who also wrote the books for the musicals *A Catered Affair*, *Newsies* and *Kinky Boots*), *Torch Song* is the 2018 two-act adaptation of his 1983 semi-autobiographical Tony Award-winning play *Torch Song Trilogy*. As in the original version, *Torch Song* centers on Arnold Beckoff, a gay Jewish drag queen and torch singer with a very clear picture of the happy life he seeks: a husband, a child, and a pair of bunny slippers that fit. A visit from his overbearing mother, however, reminds him that he needs one thing more: respect.

As in the original version, *Torch Song* is set in the 1970's and early '80's, decades before same-sex marriage and gay adoption were realities, which makes the objectives of Arnold's life—and Fierstein's play—seem almost prophetic. In an interview with *Playbill* shortly before *Torch Song* opened on Broadway, Fierstein explained why he revisited his earlier play for which he also won a Tony for his performance as Arnold. "Many artists paint the same subject over and over, but theatre artists *really* do that. We go out there with this aim of making this [performance] the best." *Torch Song* is Fierstein's attempt at this artistic perfection as a playwright. "I can shape it and make it relevant to the audience now," he said. "It feels to me fresh, alive, and strong."

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Photos on this page from top to bottom, left to right, Gary Bernard DiNardo, Joshua Horvath & Janice Zucker; Melanie Kurstin & Joey Pierce; Gary Bernard DiNardo & Joey Pierce; Erik Wells

Photo on Page 1 (L to R): Erik Wells, Gary Bernard DiNardo, Joey Pierce & Melanie Kurstin.

Graphic design by Dave Moretti; All photos by Matthew Randall

HARVEY FIERSTEIN'S **TORCH SONG** OPENS JANUARY 26 (CONTINUED)

In Dominion Stage's production, Arnold is portrayed by Gary Bernard DiNardo, who is well known to Dominion audiences for his previous performances in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, [title of show] and *The Boys in the Band*. Some of Gary's other roles include Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at McLean Community Players and Max in *Bent* at Hard Bargain Players, both of which earned him WATCH awards.

Two other Dominion Stage veterans are featured in *Torch Song*. Janice Zucker, who plays Arnold's "Ma," last appeared in Dominion's 2007 production of *A Fine and Private Place*. A teaching artist for Wolf Trap, Janice has performed a variety of roles in area theatres including Doris in *The Cemetery Club* at Aldersgate Church Community Theatre, Frieda in *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife* at the Little Theatre of Alexandria (LTA), and Yente in *Fiddler on the Roof* at Saint Mark's Players (SMP). Melanie Kurstin, who plays Laurel in *Torch Song*, has appeared in Dominion's productions of *Firebringer* (Emberly), *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress* (Georgeanne) and *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson* (The Storyteller). Melanie was most recently seen in The Arlington Players' production of *Into the Woods* as The Witch.



The rest of the *Torch Song* cast are making their Dominion Stage debuts. New Orleans native Joey Pierce (Ed) was most recently seen as Tom in LTA's *Prelude to a Kiss*. His other roles include Jim in *The Glass Menagerie* at the Tennessee Williams Festival, and Max in *Lend Me a Tenor* at The Thibodaux Playhouse. Erik Wells (Alan) is a recent William & Mary graduate whose credits include Jedediah, Aaron, and others in *The Laramie Project* at LTA, the King of France in *Henry V* for Shakespeare in the Dark, and Lenny in *The Paper Copy*, which Erik also wrote and directed, and which can currently be viewed on YouTube. Joshua Horvath (David) is a DC native whose previous roles include Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Dmitri in *Anastasia*, Simon in *The Real Inspector Hound*, and Tiny Tom in *Urinetown*. They also appeared in a series of short films by Chloe Abbott (*The Storeroom*, *The Wet Slap*) while studying at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Understudies have become increasingly vital to theatrical productions in this age of COVID and Dominion Stage has cast two for *Torch Song*. Jack Schillaci, who understudies both Arnold and Ed, is a recent arrival to the DMV from New York City and is making his Dominion Stage debut. His recent performances include *Into the Woods*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and *Pippin*. James Storen, who understudies Alan and David, is also a Dominion Stage first timer. Though only recently arrived in the DMV, he is already well known to audiences at NoVa NightSky for his performances as Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* and as Sheriff Wood in *Holy Toledo!*

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HARVEY FIERSTEIN'S **TORCH SONG** OPENS JANUARY 26 (CONTINUED)

Torch Song is Mario Font's first time in the director's chair for Dominion Stage, after having given memorable performances in Dominion's productions of *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *The Boys in the Band*, and this season's world premiere of *Brute Farce*. Mario's other credits include co-directing *Head over Heels* for Damascus Theatre Company (DTC) and performing in productions of *November* and *California Suite* at Providence Players of Fairfax, *Book of Days* and *Peter and the Starcatcher* at SMP, and *Beauty and the Beast* at DTC.

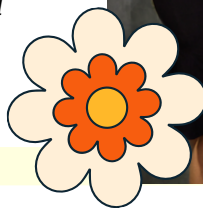
Jason Damaso is producing *Torch Song*, and Matthew Randall is executive producer and show photographer. Paul Di Salvo is assistant director and is also co-stage manager with Todd Paul. Ken and Patti Crowley created the lighting design, Alan Wray created the sound design, and Chip Gertzog created the special effects/projections. The set design is by Bill Brown, with set painting by Edith Eshleman and Carol Zirkle, who also served as the show's master carpenters. The set dressing is by Charles Dragonette, with props by Helen Bard-Sobola. Tracey Froelich is the costume designer, and the hair and makeup designs are by Rebecca Harris.

Performances of *Torch Song* are on January 26 & 27, and February 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 & 10, 2024, at 8 PM. All shows are at Dominion's primary venue, Gunston Arts Center, Theatre Two, 2700 S Lang Street, Arlington, VA 22206. Tickets may be purchased on the Dominion Stage website at www.dominionstage.org. There will also be some tickets available at the door.

TORCH SONG DEALS WITH MATURE SUBJECT MATTER AND IS RECOMMENDED FOR ADULT AUDIENCES.

L to R, back row: Erik Wells,
Joey Pierce, Jack Schillaci.
Middle row: Melanie Kurstin,
James Storen, Gary Bernard
DiNardo, Janice Zucker.
Front: Joshua Horvath

Photo by
Matthew Randall



REFLECTIONS ON **TORCH SONG** FROM DIRECTOR MARIO FONT

Don't we all have a little bit of Arnold in us? Aren't we ultimately looking for happiness and acceptance? And, for some of us "of a certain age", did we or did we not pull the "Oh, did you just call me?" phone routine as part of our dating repertoire? Guilty as charged!

Having lived in NYC in the 70s and 80s for most of my youth and early adulthood, I remember vividly the club and nightlife scene as well as the wild joys and disappointments of life back then. Oddly, as I look back, it was an innocent time - many of the challenges LGBTQ+ folks have faced and continue to face had not reared their ugly heads yet. Fast forward almost 50 years: we're STILL looking for acceptance and happiness.

I present *Torch Song* as a tribute to our universal truths, regardless of sexual identity or orientation - Arnold is everyman. Arnold is us. Arnold is me.

Sooooooooo, sit back, relax, smile, recognize familiar moments, laugh, and cry - it's good for you.

-MARIO FONT

PS: And revel in the avocado green and harvest gold!

HEAR MORE ABOUT IT!

Listen to the ***Embracing Arlington Arts***
podcast interview
with Mario Font and Gary Bernard DiNardo
of Dominion Stage's *Torch Song* at
[https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/
show/embracing-arlington-
arts/id/29375208](https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/show/embracing-arlington-arts/id/29375208)



Gary Bernard DiNardo & Mario Font
Photo by Janet Kopenhaver

DOMINION STAGE RECEIVES THREE NOMINATIONS FOR 22ND ANNUAL WATCH AWARDS!



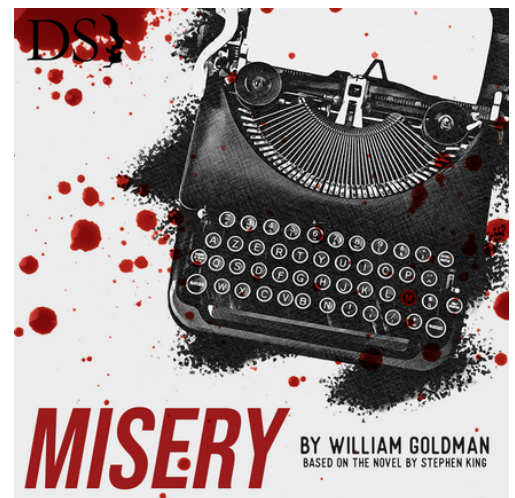
THE WASHINGTON AREA THEATRE
COMMUNITY HONORS (WATCH) HAS
ANNOUNCED NOMINATIONS FOR THEIR 22ND
ANNUAL AWARDS AND DOMINION STAGE HAS
RECEIVED THREE NOMINATIONS FOR
PRODUCTIONS
IN OUR 73RD AND 74TH SEASONS.
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL NOMINEES!

Boston Marriage

OUTSTANDING SET DECORATION
AND SET DRESSING IN A PLAY
CHARLES DRAGONETTE, *BOSTON MARRIAGE*

OUTSTANDING SOUND DESIGN IN A PLAY
REUBEN VELLEKOO, *MISERY*

OUTSTANDING MAKEUP DESIGN IN A MUSICAL
MAURISSA SOSA - *HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH*



Graphics Credits:
Boston Marriage - Dave Morretti
Misery - Brittany Washington
Hedwig - Reb Tantillo

AUDITIONS FOR DOMINION STAGE'S PRODUCTION OF *RENT*

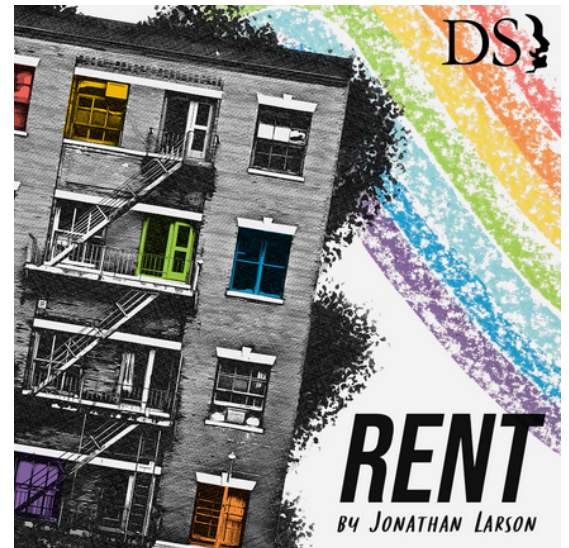
Dominion Stage announces auditions for the final production of our 74th Season: ***Rent***, with music, lyrics and book by Jonathan Larson.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

- Director: Jason Damaso
- Music Director: Stella Monshaw
- Choreographer: Ivan Davila
- Executive Producer: Matthew Randall
- Producer: Allison Gray-Mendez
- Performance Dates: June 7-22, 2024, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights
- Performance Location: Gunston Theatre Two, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington, VA

ABOUT THE PLAY

Rent is Jonathan Larson's Pulitzer Prize winning rock musical retelling of the "La Bohème" story, relocated from 1890's Paris to the early 1990's East Village in New York. The central story of Puccini's classic opera remains the same: a penniless writer's love for a young woman grows even as illness begins to consume her. But in the era of *Rent*, the poet Rodolfo is punk rock songwriter Roger, tubercular seamstress Mimi is an HIV-infected dancer at an S&M nightclub, painter Marcello is aspiring filmmaker Mark, and musician Schaunard is percussionist and drag queen Angel, among other modernizations. The show's theme of love striving to endure beyond all obstacles is universal and timeless, and many of Larson's songs have since entered the popular music repertoire, including "Seasons of Love," and "Out Tonight,"



Graphic by Brittany Washington

AUDITION DETAILS

- Audition Dates: **Monday & Tuesday, April 1 & 2, 2024 from 7:00 - 9:30 pm**
- Audition Location: **Theater on the Run, 3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington, VA**
- Auditions will be conducted on a first come, first served basis. **Last sign-in will be at 9:00 pm.**
- Auditioners will be asked to sing 16-32 bars of a song (not from *Rent*) that best highlights their voice and personality.
- Please bring a headshot and resume if available. If you do not have a headshot, we are happy to take your picture for casting purposes.
- Callbacks will be by invitation on Wednesday & Thursday, April 3 & 4, if needed.

We are committed to diverse, inclusive casting. We enthusiastically invite and celebrate all performers of varying ages, sex, ethnicities, disabilities, race, national origin, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Email questions to info@dominionstage.org and check our website for additional details as the audition dates get closer - www.dominionstage.org.