

STANDING VATION



A Gift for Rebecca

By John Claes

December 1-10, 2023

Great Red Wine

*made in Iowa
from Grapes
grown in Iowa*



Iowa In the Dark

is a dry red with light, fresh notes. First impressions are tangy acid followed by black cherry fading to plum, a dry mid-palate, and a long, pleasing finish. Made from Marquette, St. Croix, Petite Pearl, and Steuben grapes grown in Iowa, it's a versatile wine that pairs well with grilled meat and spicy foods.

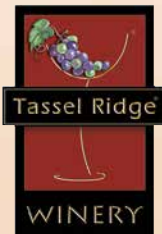
2021 Iowa Sabrevois

is a dry red with bold aromas of spices and leather on the nose followed by blackberry and plum notes with hints of baking spice, smoke, and licorice on the palate. Made from Sabrevois grapes grown in our Iowa vineyards, it pairs well with grilled meat.

2020 Iowa

Reserve Marquette

is a dry red with bright cherry notes and hints of baking spice on the nose and palate followed by a long, moderately acidic finish. Made from Marquette grapes grown in our Iowa vineyards, it pairs well with spicy foods.



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A Note From The Playwright/Director

Santa decides that it's time to retire. Could he really walk away from something that he was born to do? What would the North Pole succession plan be? If he could be coaxed out of retirement at the request of a single child, who would that be and why? Those were the questions I set out to answer when I started writing this play two years ago.

At the time, I was a Director of Philanthropy at Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI). One of LSI's many programs was foster care and adoption services. I was aware of the need for supportive families to provide safe and loving homes for these children and decided that Rebecca – the child who inspires Santa to come out of retirement – would be one of those children. I spent time with my LSI colleagues to develop the character of Rebecca, as well as the foster family that takes her in.

I have many people to thank for the encouragement and influence that resulted in this show, but I will single out one person in particular – my wife, Anne. She has put up with two years of questions like, “How does this sound?” “Will this work?” “Is this funny to you?” “Is this believable?” The words of the script are mine, but none of them would be possible without her. I love you, Anne!

This play is about family and finding a place where you belong. My thanks to the Ankeny Community Theatre for giving me that sense of belonging. I dedicate this show to my family, many of whom traveled to town to make *A Gift for Rebecca* part of this year's Claes Christmas reunion.

My thanks, too, to Four Oaks -- whose mission is to recruit and retain stable, nurturing and diverse foster and adoptive families to keep children safe and assist them in their transition to permanency. Please help yourself to the literature that they have provided and contact them if you feel called to join them in their mission.

A Gift for Rebecca
In Order of Appearance

Alex Messina	Steve Banderman
Teresa Messina	Jolene Gentzler
Jollifin Stocking	Frances Paterik
Flurry-Ann Toe-Loop	Anna Banderman
Santa Claus	Douglas Fiore
Mrs. Claus	Anne Claes
Allister Slalom	Nicholas Root
Rebecca	Evee Gade
Chilly Zamboni	Jim Leeper
Rangifer Tarandus	Al Price
Sami	Scarlett Holscher
Finn	Koko Kopriva
Hannah Messina	June Suddarth
Rebecca's Mother (voice)	Amy McGrew
Santa #857 / Rodney	Troy Gould

Time: Present Day Christmas Eve/Christmas Day

Place: The North Pole / Messina Living Room / Northern
Territories Rest Stop

There will be a 15-minute intermission between acts.

No videotaping of this show is permitted.

A Gift for Rebecca is produced by special arrangement with
John Claes.

Special thanks to the following who helped make the creation
and development of *A Gift for Rebecca* - and this World
Premiere - possible:

Mary Catlett, Cheryl Clark, Kate Rainwater,
Susan Salmon, Maxwell Schaeffer

Production Team

Director	John Claes
Assistant Director	Julia Spera
Producer	Lisa Gould
Stage Manager	Amy McGrew
Set Design	John Claes
Set Construction	John Claes, Eli Suddarth, Kevin Lind
Set Painting	John Claes, Kathy Polson
Set Decoration	Anne Claes
Lighting and Sound Design	Matt Tuttle
Lighting Operator	Matt Tuttle
Sound Operator	Kathy Polson
Stage Crew	Julia Spera, Crystal Holscher
Costumes	Cheryl Clark, Cast
Props	Kathy Polson
Program	Abby Martin
Photographer	Greg Romans
Logo Design	Bekah Wieland
Marketing	Doug Arterburn, Lynn Arterburn, Stacie Bendixen, Lauren Mills, Greg Romans

2023 - 2024 ACT Board of Directors

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Mailing Address: PO Box 122, Ankeny, Iowa 50023

Website: www.ankenycommunitytheatre.com

Email: information@ankenycommunitytheatre.com

Biographies



Anna Banderman (Flurry-Ann Toe-Loop) is excited to make her first appearance on any stage as one of the North Pole elves, and thrilled to be making her debut with her dad. Anna is in the 7th grade.



Steve Banderman (Alex Messina) tagged along when his daughter came to auditions and we're glad he did. Steve hasn't been in a play since high school and is making up for lost time in this Christmas production, an experience that he's delighted to share with Anna!



Anne Claes (Mrs. Claus) was last seen on the ACT stage two years ago in the role of Kate in *Geezers*. Four months prior to that, she played Joanne in another John Claes/ACT World Premier, *The Perfect Rendezvous*. She has been in numerous ACT shows, including a few where she played opposite her husband, John: in *Plaza Suite*; *Delightful Quarantine*; *Almost, Maine*; *Musical Chairs*; and *Done to Death*. She loves to box and bake - her chocolate chip cookies are always a hit with our casts, crew, and audiences! Anne is a paraeducator for Johnston Community Schools. She and John are excited to welcome a granddaughter in April!



Douglas Fiore (Santa Claus) returns to ACT after almost four years, when he played Stiltskin in *Law and Order: Fairy Tale Unit*. Favorite roles include Oscar in *The Odd Couple* at the Actor's Studio in New York City, Juror #8 of *12 Angry Jurors* (ACTORS – Ames) and McDuff in *Macbeth* (Valparaiso Community Theatre in Indiana). Doug teaches at Cowles Montessori School in Windsor Heights. He and his wife, Julie, have five grown children and live in Ankeny with their two dogs, Samson and Delilah.



Evee Gade (Rebecca) is a Junior at Ankeny High School. She has been active in speech, mock trial, and numerous plays and musicals since she was in middle school. In addition to theater, she studies piano and enjoys spending time with her friends and family, especially her dog, Flash. This is Evee's debut with Ankeny Community Theatre and she's very excited to get to know her fellow cast members and be a part of what's sure to be an unforgettable show.



Jolene Gentzler (Teresa Messina) has performed and directed on stages throughout the greater Des Moines area. Favorite roles include Claire in *Rumors* (Carousel Theatre in Indianola) and Larken Barken in *Doublewide, Texas* (ACTORS in Ames). Jolene teaches MadCAP Improv at CAP Theatre in Altoona and directed *Comedy of Errors* there last summer. She enjoys spending time with her husband, Joe, and their two dogs Peanut Butter and Biscuit. Jolene works as a Bankruptcy Specialist at Wells Fargo.



Troy Gould (Santa 857/Rodney) has been doing theater since he was young, enjoying on stage experiences in high school and college before he let “adulthood” get in the way. After a 20-year hiatus, Troy got back into community theater in 2015 and his family followed his lead. Theater arts and performance has become a real family affair for the Goulds -- his two children contribute both backstage and on stage, and his wife Lisa is a talented director in her own right. Troy’s favorite roles include George Bailey in *It’s a Wonderful Life* (Newton Community Theatre), Theo in *Vincent* (Union Street Players in Pella), and Juror #8 in *12 Angry Jurors* and Robert/Thomas Colley Moore in *The One-Act Play That Goes Wrong* (ACT). This is Troy’s 12th show at ACT and he’s excited to be part of this amazing show.



Scarlett Holscher (Sami) kicks off her on-stage experience with this show. She is in the 3rd grade and lives in Ankeny with her mom and dad and her little sister, Greta, and two cats. Scarlett loves drawing, sports and writing. In fact, she is working on a world premier of her own -- her first book!



Koko Kopriva (Finn) is in her first play ever with *A Gift for Rebecca* and we hope it will be the first of many. Koko lives in Polk City with her mom and dad, her young sister Shay, younger brother Tristan, and dog Sady. She is a third grader at Big Creek Elementary. Her interests include dance, church, softball, basketball, swimming, and art. She is also involved in Girls on the Run, a non-profit program to “enhance girls social, emotional, and physical skills and behaviors to successfully navigate life experiences”.



Jim Leeper (Chilly Zamboni) has been in 30+ shows with five different area community theaters in the Des Moines area, his last appearance on the ACT stage being in the role of Jimmy in the vignette, “Sad and Glad” in *Almost, Maine* in 2018. Favorite shows/roles include Nick in *Uh-Oh, Here Comes Christmas*, Harry McMichael in *Not Now, Darling* and Leslie in *It Runs in the Family*.



Frances Paterik (Jollifin Stocking) has done more than forty shows in four decades on stages like the Ingersoll Dinner Theater, Des Moines Community Playhouse, and Tallgrass Theatre. Her last appearance on the ACT stage was in *The Perfect Rendezvous* in August 2021 as Esther, a role that earned Fran that year’s Favorite Supporting Actress award. She is retired from the Des Moines Public Schools, and now works at Holy Trinity in Des Moines and is director of the church choir. Fran is featured in the short film, *Layaway*, that premiered in Los Angeles earlier this fall, earning an audience appeal award.



Al Price (Rangifer Tarandus) marks his fortieth year with ACT with this show. In 1983, he portrayed Mr. Kimber in *George Washington Slept Here*. Since then, he has appeared in many productions, served on the board, and directed a few shows. Some of his many favorites are *Oklahoma*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Our Town* (twice), *Greater Tuna*, and *Clue the Musical*. Of course, it is always an honor to be in an original production of John Claes. Al has been married for over fifty years, has three children, five grandchildren, a great grandson, and a great granddaughter on the way. The majority have been involved with ACT and been recognized for their work. Al would like to thank everyone in his family for their love and support.



Nicholas Root (Allister Slalom) served as choreographer for the recent ACT production of *The Addams Family* and returns to the ACT stage after performing in the role of Sipos in *She Loves Me* one year ago. Favorite roles include The Beast in *Beauty and the Beast* (Urbandale Community Theatre) and the entire D'Ysquith family (nine roles!) in the Central College production of *Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*. Nick will direct ACT's show *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* next summer. He enjoys photography and video games, and his favorite activities include trips to Disney with his fiancé, Alison.



June Suddarth (Hannah) makes her theater debut in *A Gift for Rebecca*. She is in 4th grade and loves reading, writing, making origami and playing with her cat, Katerina.

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John Claes (Playwright and Director) was a regular on the ACT stage for 15 years until he found his true calling as ACT's resident playwright. His first two shows were one-acts, *Otherwise Engaged*, presented in partnership with the Cellar Winery at White Oak in Cambridge in 2020, and *The Perfect Rendezvous*, which opened ACT's 40th season in 2021. "I admit that I'm a guy that likes to hear himself talk. But to hear actors speak words I've written and bring my characters to life – and hear the laughter and applause of an audience -- that's the greatest thrill I've ever known in theater!" Next up? John is adapting *The Perfect Rendezvous* into a full two-act musical with composer and collaborator, Kevin Lind. They hope to bring that show to life next summer, so stay tuned! John lives in Johnston with his wife Anne. They are excited to become first-time grandparents in April, thanks to daughter Katherine and son-in-law Aaron! John is Director of Development for NAMI Iowa.



Julia Spera (Assistant Director) is no stranger to the stage and is excited to mix it up and work on the production side of the theatre. She was most recently seen on the ACT stage in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Dogberry) and *The One-Act Play That Goes Wrong* (Christine). Julia received a BFA in Acting from Belhaven University and is honored to be a new member of the ACT Board. She enjoys reading, crocheting, and playing the piano. Julia and her husband, Ben, live in Baxter with their Bernedoodle, Dulcinea.

2023 - 2024 Contributors

Ankeny Community Theatre would like to thank the following individuals, businesses, and foundations for their generous support of our organization.

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A Gentle Guide to Des
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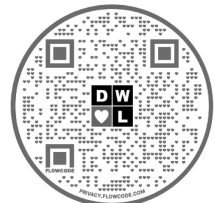
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Ankeny Community Theatre

42nd season | 2023-2024

The Addams Family

Book by Marshall Brickman & Rick Elice, Music & Lyrics by Andrew Lippa

Sept. 29–Oct. 8, 2023

The Odd Couple, Female Version

By Neil Simon

Feb. 9–18, 2024

Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

June 7–16, 2024

World Premiere

A Gift for Rebecca

By John Claes

Dec. 1–10, 2023

Dial 'M' for Murder

By Frederick Knott

April 12–21, 2024

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike

By Christopher Durang

Aug. 2–11, 2024

Presented by special arrangement with these publishers:

The Addams Family: Theatrical Rights Worldwide. *The Odd Couple, Female Version*: Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. *Dial 'M' for Murder*; Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*: Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection.

Coming up next at ACT!
The Odd Couple, Female Version
By Neil Simon

February 9-18
Rated PG-13



Warm up with a night of laughter! You might know Felix and Oscar, but at girls night, you'll meet Florence and Olive! Instead of the poker party that begins the original version, Ms. Madison has invited the girls over for an evening of Trivial Pursuit. Will these two opposite friends be able to survive their proximity to each other? The hilarity remains the same as the original!

.....

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An ACT season punch card is a gift that keeps giving! Purchase in sets of 3 or 6 punches. Each punch can be used for one seat at any performance of any show - so you can use your punches across the whole season, use several punches to bring friends to one performance, or any combination. And ACT members get an additional discount! To purchase, speak with one of our volunteers or visit midwestix.com/organizations/ACT

Coming to ACT this Spring:
Dial "M" for Murder
By Frederick Knott

April 12-21
Rated PG-13



*Dial "M"
for
Murder*

By Frederick Knott

In this psychological thriller, Tony Wendice, who married Margot for her money, now plans to murder her for the same reason. Tony thinks he has arranged the perfect murder, but the plan goes awry when Margot fights back. This melodrama had a successful run on Broadway before gaining even more popularity as a movie directed by Alfred Hitchcock, starring Grace Kelly.

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To provide opportunities for Central Iowa community members to present and enjoy quality live theater.

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To be a welcoming place where people of diverse backgrounds have fulfilling theatrical experiences that are a vital part of the cultural landscape and the quality of life in our community.



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Building and Operations: Responsible for the condition of the building and managing supplies.

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November 16 -19, 2023

Student Theatre Productions
February 23 - 25, 2024

42nd Street
March 28 - 31, 2024

Stop Kiss
May 2 - 5, 2024

→ Music

Drake University Honor Band Festival
December 1 - 2, 2023

Remembered Paths | Drake University Choir
December 3, 2023

Drake University Honor Jazz Band Festival
February 6, 2024

Die Fledermaus | Drake Opera Theater and Symphony
February 17 - 18, 2024



Scan to see all upcoming Drake Fine Arts events.

→ Art

Drake Art & Design Faculty Exhibition
February 1 - March 8, 2024

53rd Annual Juried Student Exhibition
March 24 - April 14, 2024

BFA Senior Thesis Exhibitions
April 20 - May 2, 2024 & May 7 - May 18, 2024

All art exhibitions are held in the Anderson Gallery in the Harmon Fine Arts Center.

Harmon Fine Arts Center - 25th & Carpenter Avenue - Drake University - Fine Arts Box Office: 271-3841

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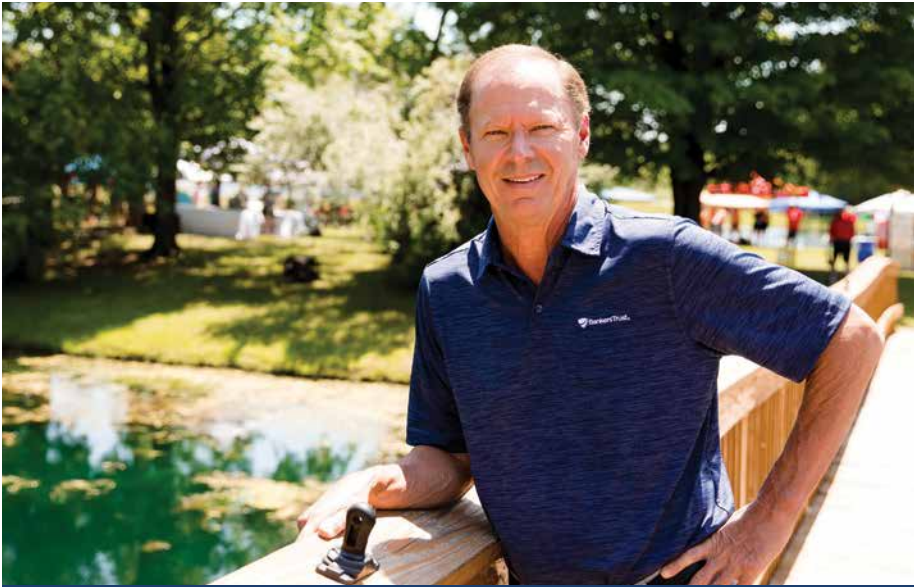


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STANDING OVATION 2023-2024



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