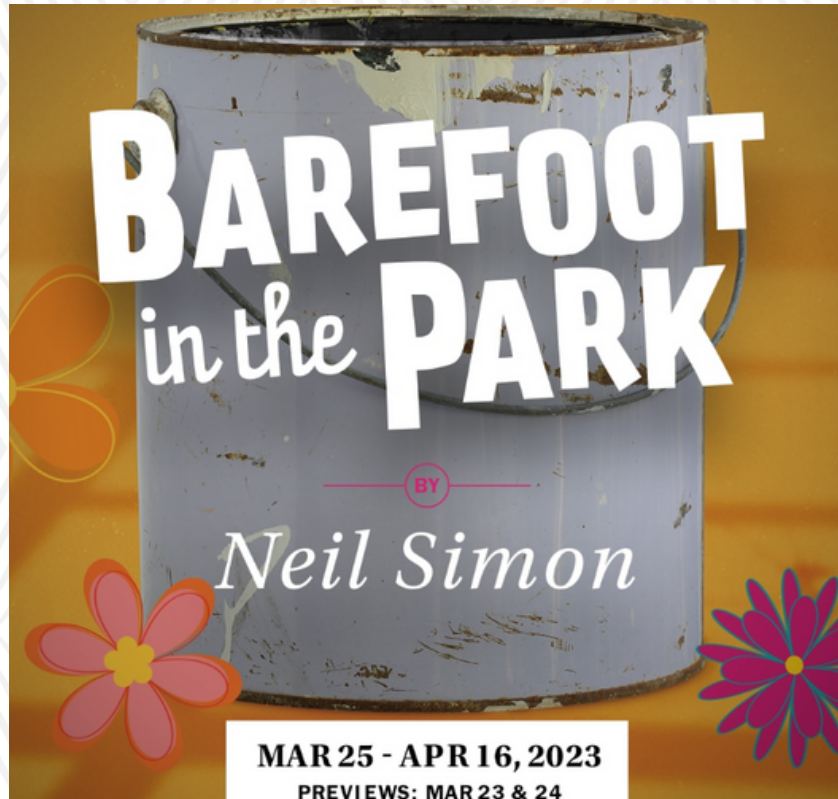


GULFSHORE PLAYHOUSE

Kristen Coury, CEO & Producing Artistic Director

PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO



WITH

MARVIN BELL
JONATHAN BRODY
HOWARD KAYE

PEGGY ROEDER
JORDAN SOBEL
ELISABETH YANCEY

Scenic Designer

DAVID L. ARSENAULT

Sound Designer

VICTORIA DEIORIO

Costume Designer

TRACY DORMAN

Intimacy Director

KATHERINE M. CARTER

Lighting Designer

DALTON HAMILTON

Casting

MICHAEL CASSARA, CSA

Assistant Stage Manager

LAURA SWYGERT

Production Stage Manager

DANNY KUENZEL

Director of Production

RAY INKEL

COO & Managing Director

JOEL MARKUS

CEO & Producing Artistic Director

KRISTEN COURY

Directed by

PETER AMSTER

Table of Contents

TITLE PAGE.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
SHOW SYNOPSIS/ABOUT THE DIRECTOR.....	3
MEET THE CAST.....	4
ABOUT NEIL SIMON.....	6
ABOUT JOAN BAIM.....	7
HISTORY OF BAREFOOT IN THE PARK.....	8
GLOSSARY.....	9
THEMES IN BAREFOOT IN THE PARK.....	11
A CONVERSATION WITH PETER AMSTER.....	12
FURTHER READING/VIEWING.....	14

Performance Guide Materials Assembled by
MEREDITH SINGLETON & JOHN PERINE, Education Associates
and AUDREY ZIELENBACH, Literary Manager

About *Barefoot in the Park*

Newlyweds Corie and Paul move into an apartment in New York City. An unexpected visit from Corie's mother and the presence of an off-kilter neighbor put the young couple to the test as they determine if love is truly enough.

ACT I

About 5:30 PM on a cold February afternoon

ACT II

Scene 1–4 days later, about 7 PM

Scene 2–Later that night, about 2 AM

ACT III

The next day, about 5 PM

About the Director

Peter Amster is thrilled and grateful to be returning to Gulfshore Playhouse, having directed *It's A Wonderful Life: the Radio Play* in 2019 and *The 39 Steps* last season. He has been directing and choreographing theatre and opera for 50 years. In Chicago, where he lived for 40 years, he directed and choreographed at the Goodman Theater, Court, Northlight, Apple Tree, Route 66, Live Bait, the Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Steppenwolf. Elsewhere in the United States, he directed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, American Players Theatre, Peninsula Players, Weston Playhouse, Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Syracuse Stage and Laguna Playhouse. He now resides in Sarasota, where he is a regular guest director and Artistic Associate at the Asolo Repertory Theatre. Peter taught Theatre, Opera and Performance Studies at Northwestern University, Louisiana State University, California Institute of the Arts, Columbia College and Roosevelt University, where he was Director of the Opera for ten years.



About the Cast



ELISABETH YANCEY (CORIE)

Elisabeth Yancey is thrilled to return to the Gulfshore Playhouse after her debut in *Steel Magnolias*. She is based in NYC with Forte Artist Management. Regional: *Into the Breeches!*, *Clue* (Cleveland Play House); *Tame That B!#@H* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Little Women* (Oberlin Summer Theatre Festival); *Hay Fever*, *Orlando*, *The Clearing*, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Wellesley Repertory Theater). Elisabeth's training includes the Chautauqua Institute Conservatory; MFA in Acting from CWRU/CPH; BA in Theatre Studies from Wellesley College; certificate in Classical Acting from LAMDA; and a certificate of literature from Cambridge University. She would like to thank her family, her partner Riley, and her two furry babies Ari and Spook for all of their unending love and support! @elisabethyancey

JORDAN SOBEL (PAUL)

Gulfshore debut. Jordan is based out of Brooklyn, NY and has had the pleasure of performing Off-Broadway and Regionally with companies such as The Huntington Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Pioneer Theatre, The Asolo Rep, Palm Beach Dramaworks, and Playhouse on Park, among others. Television: *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (Amazon), *Julia* (HBO), and *The Village* (NBC). Jordan holds an M.F.A. from The FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, and a B.A. from Boston University. Jordan is a proud member of Actors' Equity and SAG. Love and gratitude to his parents and to the teams at The Collective Talent and Saks&. www.jordansobel.com



PEGGY ROEDER (MRS. ETHEL BANKS)

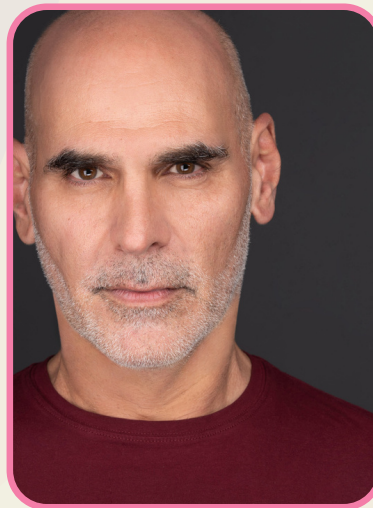
Peggy Roeder is thrilled to make her debut at Gulfshore Playhouse. Florida audiences have seen her work at Asolo Rep in five plays directed by Mr. Amster. She is thrilled to be working with him again. Her home base is Chicago, where she has worked extensively at Steppenwolf, Goodman, Court, Victory Gardens, Northlight, Marriott Lincolnshire, Chicago Shakespeare, About Face, and Drury Lane Oakbrook theatres. National credits include work at Cleveland Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Atlantic Theatre, Chautauqua, Milwaukee Rep, Arizona Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, Peninsula Players, and Muny of St. Louis. Her work has garnered four Jeff Awards, three Artisan Awards, two After Dark awards, and a Broadway World Regional Award. Film and TV credits include *Groundhog Day*, *Road to Perdition*, *Stranger Than Fiction*, *Star Trek: DS9*, *Law & Order*, and *Chicago Fire*. She can be heard on both Second City Divas CDs.



About the Cast

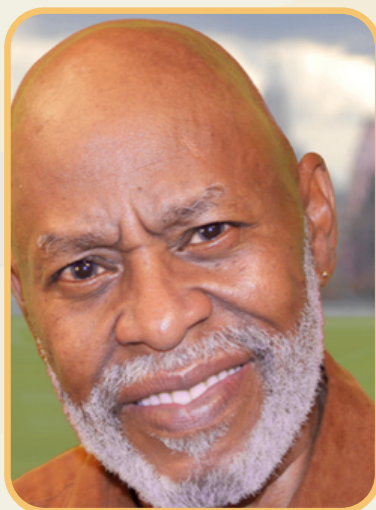
HOWARD KAYE (VICTOR VELASCO)

Happy to be making his Gulfshore Playhouse debut. Other regional theaters include Goodspeed, Pioneer, Actors Theater of Louisville, Florida Studio Theater, Maltz Jupiter, Signature, St. Louis Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Westport Country Playhouse, Alliance Theater, Long Wharf, Merrimack Rep, Virginia Stage, Berkshire Theater Festival, Syracuse Stage, Pittsburgh Public, Baltimore Centerstage, Alabama Shakespeare, North Carolina Theater, Gretna Theater. He has appeared on Broadway in *Miss Saigon*, Off Broadway in *Silence of the Lambs the Musical* and *Pips Island*. Original cast of the North American production of *Mamma Mia!* and starred in shows on Disney Cruise Line and for *Skittles the Broadway* show. Graduate of Juilliard Drama.



MARVIN BELL (DELIVERY MAN)

Marvin Bell is excited to be making his second appearance at Gulfshore Playhouse having portrayed Old Joe in August Wilson's *Radio Golf*. Bell began his career in entertainment as a stand-up comedian. After living in Los Angeles for several years, Marvin Bell moved to New York City where his acting bug resurfaced and led him to an iconic role in Alfred Uhry's *Driving Miss Daisy* (Playhouse On Park; BroadwayWorld Award Nomination Best Featured Actor in a Play). Marvin would reprise that role several times over the next five years. After performing the role of Jim Bono in *Fences* (New Harmony Theater), Bell fell in love with the work of August Wilson, seeking roles in any of the playwright's work, which to date include *The Piano Lesson* and *Two Trains Running* (Cape Fear Theater). During the height of the pandemic, Marvin Bell memorized the entire fourteen-thousand word text of August Wilson's semibiographical one man show, *How I Learned What I Learned* and hopes to one day present it. www.marvinbell.com

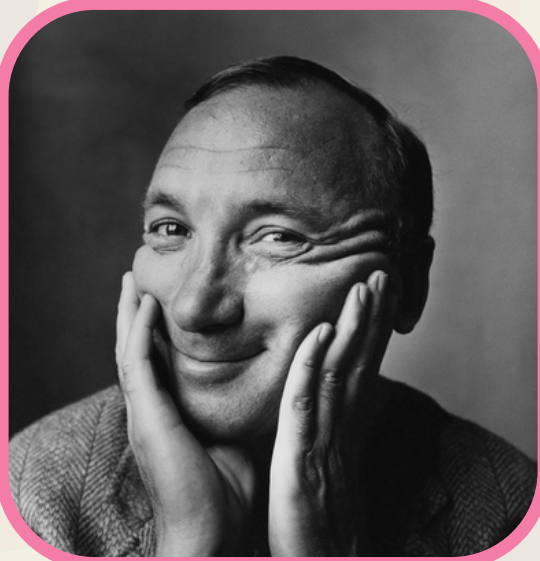


JONATHAN BRODY (HARRY PEPPER / U/S VELASCO)

Jonathan Brody has appeared on Broadway in *A Bronx Tale*, *Amazing Grace*, *Spamalot*, *Titanic*, *Me and My Girl*, and *Sally Marr...and Her Escorts* opposite Joan Rivers. Off-Broadway credits include *Gimpl Tam*, *The Sorceress*, and *The Megile of Itzik Manger* (all in Yiddish!), *Eating Raoul*, *Theda Bara & the Frontier Rabbi*, and as the Pirate King in *Pirates of Penzance*. He's toured with *Mary Poppins*, *Spamalot*, *Funny Girl*, *My Fair Lady*, and appeared regionally in *Animal Crackers*, *Hamlet*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Urinetown*, *Lost in Yonkers*, *Groucho*; *A Life in Revue*, and many productions of *Forever Plaid*. TV credits include *Blacklist*, *The Knick*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Guiding Light*, and PBS's *Great Performances* - "Sondheim: A Celebration at Carnegie Hall," "An Evening With Alan Jay Lerner," and "Porgy and Bess; An American Voice." Proud member of Actor's Equity for 40 years!



About Neil Simon



American playwright and screenwriter Neil Simon (1927-2018) is widely regarded as one of the most successful, prolific, and performed playwrights in theatre history. In addition to *Lost In Yonkers*, which won a Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize, his plays and musicals include *Come Blow Your Horn*, *Little Me*, *Barefoot in the Park*, *The Odd Couple*, *Sweet Charity*, *The Star-Spangled Girl*, *Plaza Suite*, and countless others. In addition to the film adaptations he wrote of many of his plays, his screenplay credits include *After the Fox*, *The Out-Of-Towners*, *The Heartbreak Kid* (original 1973 version), *Murder by Death*, *The Cheap Detective*, *Seems Like Old Times*, *Only When I Laugh*, *Max Dugan Returns*, *The Slugger's Wife*, *The Marrying Man*, and *The Odd Couple II*.

For television, Mr. Simon wrote series, teleplays, and motion pictures, including *The Tallulah Bankhead Show*, *The Sid Caesar Show*, *The Phil Silvers Arrow Show*, *The Phil Silvers Show*, *The Garry Moore Show*, *The Trouble with People*, ABC's *Broadway Bound* and *Jake's Women*. Mr. Simon received more Academy and Tony nominations than any other writer. Awards he received include the Pulitzer Prize for *Lost In Yonkers*, Emmy Awards for *The Sid Caesar Show* and *The Phil Silvers Show*, Tony Awards for *The Odd Couple*, *Biloxi Blues*, *Lost In Yonkers* and a special Tony Award For Overall Contribution To The Theatre. His nominations include Tony Award Nominations for *Little Me*, *Barefoot in the Park*, *Plaza Suite*, *Promises, Promises*, *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Broadway Bound*, *Lost in Yonkers* and *The Goodbye Girl* (musical). Other nominations include a Writers Guild Screen Award for *The Odd Couple* and *The Out-Of-Towners*, a Writers Guild Laurel Award, an American Comedy Award for Lifetime Achievement and a Writers Guild Screen Award Nomination for *Barefoot in the Park*, as well as an Oscar Nomination for *The Odd Couple*, an Evening Standard Award, a Sam S. Shubert Foundation Award, Kennedy Center Honors, a UCLA Medal, a Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award and a William Inge Theater Festival Award for Distinguished Achievement in the American Theater.

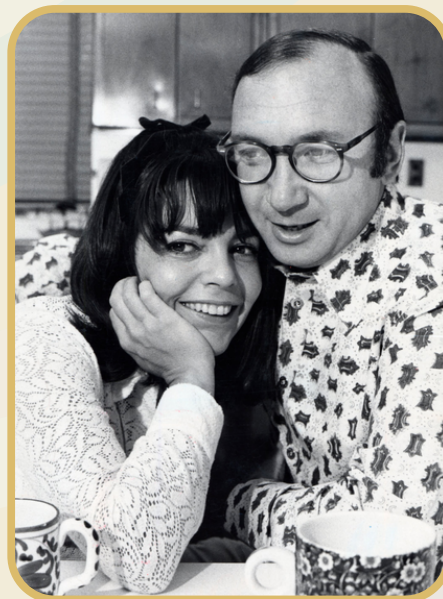
Barefoot in the Park was originally called *Nobody Loves Me* and premiered at the Bucks County Playhouse. It opened on Broadway on October 23, 1963, and closed on June 25, 1967, after 1,530 performances, making it Neil Simon's longest running hit. However, due to a business deal, Simon lost the stage rights of *Barefoot in the Park* and never made any money from its Broadway run.

Of his writing style, Simon said that the story emerged from the characters. He originally outlined the first two acts of *Barefoot in the Park* but left the third open ended, however he never even got through the initial outline.

About Joan Baim

Neil Simon and his first wife Joan Baim were married for twenty years, from 1953 to her death in 1973. Baim was originally a talented dancer who worked for Martha Graham's dance company. She left the dance scene to have a family with Simon. She stopped dancing entirely to raise their two daughters. Simon's work was heavily inspired by his wife and their relationship. In addition to encouraging her husband and bringing out the best in him, she inspired his work in more obvious ways. The title of *Barefoot in the Park* came from a phrase used by Baim, who would say to her husband, "Stop being a fuddy-duddy. Let's go to Washington Square Park and walk barefoot in the grass." After she died of bone cancer in 1973, Neil Simon had a string of subsequent marriages, all of them ending in divorce. During his second marriage to actress Marsha Mason, Simon wrote the screenplay for *Chapter Two*, a film about a widower who remarries a new woman. This film starred Mason, and her character was heavily inspired by their relationship. "It was cathartic for me," Simon once wrote. "In the two years Marsha and I were married, I gave her a rough time — still trying to hold on to my relationship with Joan. Marsha is beautiful and talented, and I found ways to find fault with her. One night in California, everything erupted into a terrible fight. I realized then what I was doing. That's how I wrote the play" ([source](#)).

In his memoirs, Simon reflects back on his marriage to Baim, looking at their ups as well as their downs. Above all, he remembers her poise, her honesty, and her never-ending support for her husband. In many ways, *Barefoot in the Park* is a love-letter to Baim, and a recount of their marriage. It shows their ups, their downs, their sacrifices, and above all their love for each other. Simon and Baim lived together as newly-weds on the fifth floor of a Greenwich Village apartment, similar to Corie and Paul's living situation. Corie captures Joan's spontaneity while Paul reflects Neil's "fuddy-duddy" tendencies. Corie and Paul's struggles to navigate their new marriage are inspired by Simon and Baim's real-life fights. Their back-and-forth dialogue from these fights often snuck its way into the script. But their successes and their love are also reflected in the play, as is what they learned along the way during their marriage.



Neil Simon and Joan Baim, in 1971. Photograph by Jack Mitchell

The Play's History



Original Broadway Production

Barefoot in the Park opened on Broadway at the Biltmore Theatre on October 23, 1963, and closed on June 25, 1967, after 1,530 performances. It was Neil Simon's longest-running hit, and the tenth-longest running non-musical play in Broadway history. The cast included Elizabeth Ashley (Corie), Robert Redford (Paul), Mildred Natwick (Mrs. Banks), and Kurt Kasznar (Victor Velasco); the director was Mike Nichols.

Film Adaptation

Neil Simon adapted *Barefoot in the Park* for the 1967 film featuring Jane Fonda (Corie) and Robert Redford reprising his Broadway performance as Paul.

The film had a \$2 million budget and grossed \$30 million worldwide.



1970 Television Adaptation

In 1970, a television adaptation of *Barefoot in the Park* aired on ABC. The show starred Scoey Mitchell as Paul, Tracy Reed as Corie. This adaptation of *Barefoot in the Park* was the first American television sitcom since *Amos 'n' Andy* to have a predominantly Black cast.

The series would eventually be cancelled due to dwindling viewership from the decline in popularity from the lead-in program, *Bewitched*.

Glossary

What's My Line: A panel game show that played on CBS from 1950 to 1967. The game used celebrity panelists to question contestants in order to determine their occupation and always included a celebrity "mystery guest."

Lord & Taylor: A department store founded in 1826. At the time of the play, Lord & Taylor's president was Dorothy Shaver, the first woman to head a major retail establishment. Under her tenure, she opened the first ever branch store and introduced services like personal shoppers.

Early Phone Numbers: In *Barefoot in the Park*, Corie is assigned the phone number "Eldorado 5-8191." Early telephone numbers started with names instead of digits. The first two letters of the name were usually capitalized, and they corresponded with the first two digits of the phone number on a dial. This system is the early version of area codes and identified the area of the city where you lived.

The Plaza Hotel: A luxury hotel built to replace a hotel of the same name from 1905-1907. It is the famous home of the classic *Eloise* stories for children, and also served as a prominent filming location for *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York*. Neil Simon's play *The Plaza Suite* takes place in Suite 719 and provides a glimpse of the types of guests who stay at The Plaza.

Schraffts: A candy company and associated chain restaurant that was prevalent in 1960s NYC.

Oliver Wendell Holmes: An American jurist and legal scholar who served as an associate Supreme Court justice from 1902 to 1932. One of the most widely cited and most influential common law judges who was known for his lengthy opinion pieces, hence Paul's line.

Furrier: A craftsperson who makes clothing and other items from the fur of animals.

Cannery Row: A neighborhood in Monterey, California, that had been home to the sardine packing industry from 1908 to the late 1940s. Once the sardines left, the neighborhood became a ghost town, with fires destroying canneries through the 1960s.

Glossary

McCall's: A monthly American women's magazine that was very popular during the 20th century, peaking at a readership of 8.4 million in the early 1960s. McCall's published fiction by authors like F. Scott Fitzgerald, an opinion column penned by Eleanor Roosevelt from 1949-1962, and paper dolls.

Toni Home Permanent: A hair mousse product that purportedly mimicked the results of a salon perm at home by adding "hidden body" to the hair.

Rat Fink: One of the hot rod characters created by Ed "Big Daddy" Roth. Roth conceived Rat Fink as an anti-hero to Mickey Mouse. Roth sold airbrushed t-shirts at car shows and in hot rod publications. By 1959, his shirts had become a craze.

A Ce Soir: See you tonight, French

Santini Brothers: A full-service American moving, storage, and relocation company founded by seven Italian immigrants, aka the Santini brothers.

Darryl Zanuck: American film producer and studio executive; he earlier contributed stories for films starting in the silent era.

Al Capone: American Prohibition-era gangster, who dominated organized crime in Chicago from 1925 to 1931 and became perhaps the most famous gangster in the United States.

P.J. Clarke's: An historic saloon located at 915 Third Ave and East 55th Street.

S.S. Andrea Doria: The SS Andrea Doria was an ocean liner for an Italian company home-ported in Genoa, Italy, known for its sinking in 1956. 46 of the passengers and crew were killed in the accident.

Themes in *Barefoot in the Park*

"The Ideal" Partner

In *Barefoot in the Park*, newlyweds Corie and Paul are nearly opposites. Corie is free-spirited and adventurous, while Paul is much more reserved and conservative. Each wishes that the other had a temperament more like their own. What do you look for in an "ideal" partner? Is it right to expect your partner to be someone they are not to suit your wants?

Relationships

Corie and Paul are both surprised when their new marriage faces its first hurdle. Things aren't going as smoothly as they'd planned. When faced with these relationship problems, they jump to conclusions, not really putting in effort to fix the issues. How much work should you put into relationships? What kind of effort do they require?

Compromise

In addition to being opposites, Corie and Paul each represent two extremes. Corie's extroversion could very easily get her and others into trouble. Paul's caution would prevent him from doing anything outside of his box. What do you think Corie and Paul will change about their relationship after the events of *Barefoot*? How will they keep their relationship afloat?



Directing Barefoot in the Park

a conversation with Peter Amster, Director

During the first read for *Barefoot in the Park*, you referenced the idea that Neil Simon could be considered the "American Anton Chekhov". Would you expand upon that idea? What is it about Simon's work that excites you as a director?

What I love about him is that we share a kindred spirit, as we come from similar backgrounds, and I noticed that as I saw this show and some of his other plays on Broadway. We share this sense of finding the pain of family relationships funny, and he feels that what is funny about family is often carrying an underbelly of sorrow. And Chekhov insisted he was writing comedies! Even if you're looking at the page, or if you see some overly "respectful" productions of his plays that feel like they're really doing Chekhov because everything is so sad, he'd be yelling "No! That's not what this is! These are comedies! These are funny!" It's just that the characters onstage don't *know* it. And with Neil Simon's work, it's exactly the same thing. The *actors* know it—there are plenty of jokes in *Barefoot in the Park* and the actors have to be able to land them, but first they have to contextualize those moments within the characters' emotional landscape and make them real. Every laugh has a cry in it, and vice versa. I find what is so enjoyable and entertaining (but also real) about it is that everyone who experiences the joys and sorrows of living and growing up and getting married and having kids understand that it's complicated. That's one of the reasons I love Neil Simon. He can go to very dark places, but eventually the sun comes out.

The characters in this show have a lot of complex relationships. Not just between Corie and Paul, but between all four of our main characters. Talk a bit about how you and your actors are working towards building these relationships. What makes them interesting and complicated?

As soon as Velasco shows up, Corie's radar goes off with this sense of, "He's a kindred spirit." Meanwhile, Paul is a romantic who doesn't *duplicate* Corie—he *completes* her. And sometimes finding the differences between those two types of relationships can be very interesting. Paul and Ethel on the other hand are peas in a pod. Paul and Ethel would make a lovely couple, but they'd have a very dull life. And Velasco and Corie would have a phenomenal life, but they'd probably jump off a mountain by mistake and that life would be awfully short. These characters are like magnets with positive and negative poles and some are attracting each other and some are repelling each other. And the fact that these pairs are doubled help make the push and pull dynamic that much more interesting. In the rehearsal room, we're discovering what this play wants to be beat by beat. We're exploring the behavior of these characters, like how meticulous Paul is, regardless of his level of anger. What's been a lot of fun is discussing the backstories of these characters: What happened to Corie's father, Ethel's husband, and how does that loss affect their relationship? How did Corie and Paul select this apartment? Where is Velasco *really* from? Not that any of these conversations will show up on stage and the audience will recognize those bits, but the actors have to know where these characters are coming from in order to figure out where they're heading.

Directing Barefoot in the Park

a conversation with Peter Amster, Director

Talk a little bit about the overall design of the show (lights, scenic, costumes, sound). How do these different disciplines work together to create a cohesive design for *Barefoot in the Park*? How does the design of this production help to communicate the themes?

Some of these comedies that seem so free-wheeling are actually quite prescribed in their structure. A lot of work on the physical world of the play comes from looking at the stage directions, which are either written by the playwright, or by the original stage manager as dictated by the original director. The stage directions for *Barefoot in the Park* are pretty specific about the needs of this apartment, so the challenge became: how do we configure this apartment for the Norris Center stage? It requires a good amount of cleverness and compression. When considering the furnishing, Scenic Designer David Arsenault and I looked at a lot of research images of first apartments in New York City, and they all looked very nice, very put together. So then we had to consider where this furniture was coming from. Corie references some items coming from Bloomingdales, but the stage directions also refer to the style of decorating as “very eclectic,” so we turned to this contemporary idea of dumpster diving and trying to think of great pieces that Corie could have found on the street. Corie’s ability to take this collection of pieces and style her home very tastefully is a testament to her vision and discernment that may be contrary to our immediate impulse to consider Corie as “scatterbrained.” The costumes are another crucial storytelling device when considering where we are and when we are, especially when the stage is bare at the top of the show. By maintaining the setting of the early 1960s through the costuming, we hopefully eliminate the audience’s questioning of, “Why don’t they just pull out their cell phone and call the restaurant, or call an Uber?” What Costume Designer Tracy Dorman has done is not only provide signatures for character but signatures for time and cultural context as well.

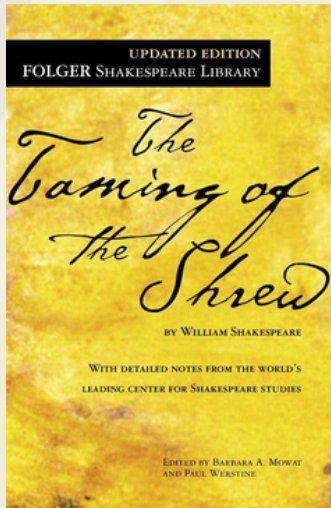


Renderings by Tracy Dorman

***Barefoot in the Park* originally premiered in the early 1960s. What themes do you anticipate continuing to resonate with contemporary audiences? What do you hope audiences walk away with?**

It’s a young story, it’s Neil Simon at the beginning of his career before he started exploring darker themes. This is a romantic comedy, and there’s something about this romance that is timeless. Love has not changed; love is love. It doesn’t matter who you love, the process is the same. In any relationship, you’re really investing your emotional life into someone else, and of course nobody is perfect. There is this impulse in that first rush of love to take all the things you don’t love about someone and change them. You say, “You’re going to be the perfect mate for me as soon as I am finished with you.” Eventually, we all learn how disastrous that impulse can be. And the earlier you learn that lesson, the better off you’re going to be! This play really reminds audiences to focus on what made them fall in love with someone in the first place. I was once speaking with Stephen Sondheim around the time that *Passion* came out, and he said it best: “The best relationships are the most complicated.”

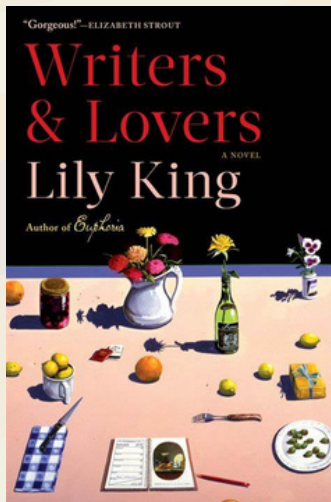
Further Reading



The Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare

When Bianca is unable to wed Lucentio until her unlikable older sister Katherine is married, enter Petruchio, who vows to marry Kate, whether she wants to or not.

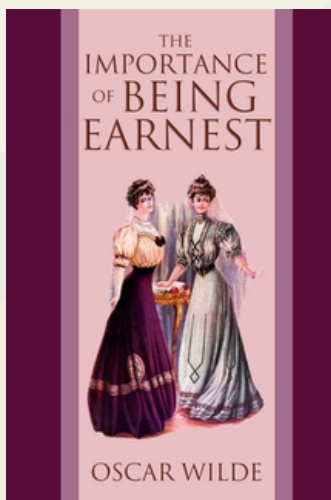
Why we recommend it: The idea of "fixing" your partner to make a relationship work that is explored in *Barefoot in the Park* is put to the extreme as Petruchio works to shape Katherine into "the ideal wife." Shakespeare portrays the husband and the wife not as partners, but as roles people must fit into, with set duties for each one. How does Simon view marriage? How is it different from Shakespeare's view?



Writers and Lovers by Lily King

At thirty-one, Casey is still clutching onto something nearly all her old friends have let go of: the determination to live a creative life as she works on the novel she's been writing for six years. When she falls for two very different men at the same time, her world fractures even more. Casey's fight to fulfill her creative ambitions and balance the conflicting demands of art and life is challenged in ways that push her to the brink.

Why we recommend it: *Writers & Lovers* drifts into the exploration of love in its many forms and how it holds us up in major life transitions, much like Corie's unique relationships with Paul, her mother, and Mr. Velasco in *Barefoot in the Park*.



The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

Two men, Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, use fake personas to escape their social obligations in Victorian England. They cross paths two women with very specific desires for their future husbands, one of whom is Jack's young ward. Shenanigans ensue as the couples flirt and exchange scathing remarks in this classic satire.

Why we recommend it: Wilde's signature comedic wit paved the way for future comedians, like Neil Simon. *Earnest* delights in poking fun at the rigid Victorian society, which forced people to marry only within their social class. Both *Earnest* and *Barefoot* explore similar themes of having extreme expectations for partners, children, and friends, and the problems that these expectations can cause.

Further Viewing



Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1966)

In a film adaptation of Edward Albee's play of the same name, the complexities of marriage are put under a microscope as Martha (Elizabeth Taylor) and George (Richard Burton) invite a younger couple to their home.

Why we recommend it: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* presents an alternative view of marriage than the one presented in *Barefoot in the Park*, which premiered on Broadway almost exactly a year after Albee's play.



Bringing Up Baby (1938)

David, an uptight paleontologist (Cary Grant), and a scatterbrained heiress named Susan (Katherine Hepburn) become tangled up in a series of shenanigans involving a tame leopard named Baby.

Why we recommend it: If you're a fan of the fast paced, back and forth comedy of *Barefoot in the Park*, *Bringing Up Baby* is the perfect film for you. Like Corie and Paul in *Barefoot*, David and Susan learn that the perfect relationship isn't necessarily built on similarities.



Auntie Mame (1958)

This film, starring Rosalind Russell, follows a progressive woman named Mame (Russell) and her nephew Patrick (Jan Handzlik/Roger Smith) that she has been left in charge of. This film focuses on the values we pass down to children and how the environment they are raised in changes the adults they grow into.

Why we recommend it: Unlike *Barefoot*, this comedy focuses on the relationships between adults and children, instead of husband and wife. Corie and Mame are both strong personalities, with more to them than first meets the eye.