



PLAYHOUSE NEWS

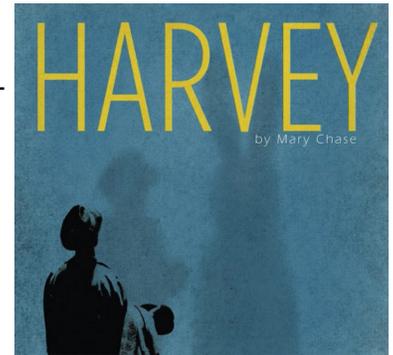
What's Up Now - *SVP* is Back LIVE!

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Somerset Valley Players, Hillsborough's award-winning, nonprofit community theatre, is open for live performances with its second show, the comedy, *Harvey*, opening on Friday, October 22.

Written by Mary Chase and directed by Richard Butler, *Harvey* is a comedy about Elwood P. Dowd, who insists on including his friend Harvey in all of his sister Veta's social gatherings. Trouble is, Harvey is an imaginary six-and-a-half-foot-tall rabbit.



Produced by Roberta Steve, The show is sponsored by Affordable Air.

Harvey runs weekends October 22- November 7. Friday & Saturday shows at 8 pm; Sunday matinees at 2 pm. Tickets are \$20 adult/\$18 seniors & students. *SVP* theater is located on 689 Amwell Road (Route 514) in Hillsborough. The theater is air conditioned, barrier free and wheelchair accessible.

Masks are required within the playhouse.

For tickets and show times go to www.svptheatre.org.

Somerset Valley Players

Executive Board:

President: Roberta Steve
 Vice President of Production: Todd R. Bennington
 Vice President of Theatre Mgmt.: Emily M. Windus
 Vice President of House Mgmt.: Randy J. Coddington, Sr.
 Vice President of Sales & Marketing: Shannen Rivers
 Secretary: Kyle Hamilton
 Treasurer: Michael A. Muller

601 Route 206
 Suite 26-216
 Hillsborough, NJ 08844
 908-369-7469
www.svptheatre.org

Calendar of Events

LOCATION: *SOMERSET VALLEY PLAYHOUSE*
(UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

HARVEY

SHOW DATES: OCTOBER 22—NOVEMBER 7, 2021
SHOW TIMES: FRIDAY & SATURDAY—8PM; SUNDAY—2PM

NOVEMBER MEETING

DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 2021
TIME: 7:30PM – 9:30 PM
BOARD AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
LOCATION: ONLINE (ZOOM)

A CHRISTMAS STORY

SHOW DATES: DECEMBER 3—19, 2021
SHOW TIMES: FRIDAY & SATURDAY—8PM; SUNDAY—2PM

DECEMBER MEETING

DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2021

TIME: 7:30PM – 9:30 PM
BOARD AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
LOCATION: ONLINE (ZOOM)

JANUARY MEETING

DATE: JANUARY 10, 2022
TIME: 7:30PM – 9:30 PM
BOARD AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
LOCATION: ONLINE (ZOOM)

THE HOLLOW

SHOW DATES: JANUARY 21—FEBRUARY 6, 2022
SHOW TIMES: FRIDAY & SATURDAY—8PM; SUNDAY—2PM

FEBRUARY MEETING

DATE: FEBRUARY 14, 2022
TIME: 7:30PM – 9:30 PM
BOARD AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
LOCATION: ONLINE (ZOOM)

SVP is *very* grateful to our **2021 Season Sponsors**

- Ada & Francis Savarese
- Affordable Air
- Edgestone Realty (Gilbert Gray, Realtor)
- JML Landscaping
- Mailbox Business Center
- Petrock's Bar & Grille
- Red Oak Mortgage, Inc.
- Robert W. Pittenger Family
- State Line Aviation

Election Results

The annual election of eligible Board positions took place at the May 10 Membership Meeting. The results were as follows:

- VP of Production: **Todd Bennington**
- VP of House Management: **Randy Coddington**
- Secretary: **Raymond Shinn**

Thank you to all nominees who ran and to the members who came out to vote!



From the President's Pen
by Roberta Steve



Hello again! We realize we're overdue with our 2nd (and 3rd!) quarter edition of the *SVP* newsletter, but gosh, have we been busy!

First, the great news: We officially reopened for live performances on September 10! Our first show back on stage was the hilarious comedy *Don't Dress for Dinner*. (Read more about the show in this issue.)

We'll present two more live shows in 2021: The classic comedy, *Harvey*, which runs October 22 – November 7, and the holiday favorite, *A Christmas Story*, running December 3 – 19.

It's been a long road back, and I must recognize the immense contribution of the 2021 Board of Trustees in making our reopening possible. While the experience of seeing a live show at the theatre will be somewhat different, what won't change is our commitment to presenting top quality theatre. We hope you'll come see us and agree!

More great news: We've put together an exciting 2022 – our 55th – season of shows. (Look for the line up in this issue.) A big thank you to the members of the Play Selection Committee for their hard work and dedication!

Thank you for your love and support for the theatre in the little red schoolhouse. We're back in business!

Roberta Steve

President

Somerset Valley Players

Announcing *SVP's* 2022 Season

The year 2022 will mark *SVP's* 55th season! Our Play Selection Committee has done a great job in selecting 8 shows that you'll enjoy including two musicals, a mystery, two thrillers, two comedies, and a fun holiday show.

You'll be hearing a lot more about each show in upcoming newsletters, but now, with no further adieu, here's the line up of shows:

The Hollow

An Agatha Christie mystery!
January 21 – February 6

Barefoot in the Park

A Neil Simon delightful comedy!
March 4 – 20.

The Savannah Sipping Society

Four funny Southern ladies!
April 29 – May 15

Baby

A musical about what to expect when you're expecting!
June 10 – 26

Deathtrap

A twisty thriller about a planned murder!
July 22 – August 7

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Can you spell a fun musical?
September 9 – 25

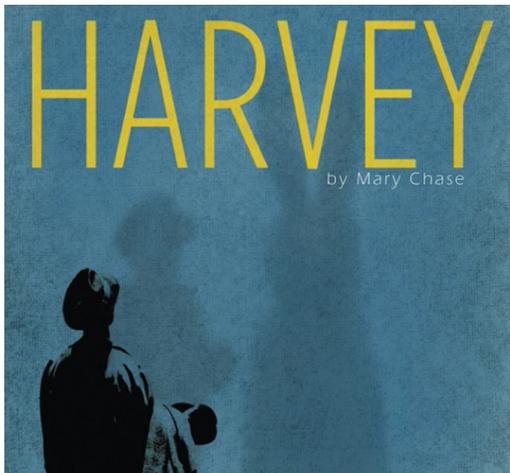
Bad Seed

An edge of your seat thriller about an unlikely serial killer!
October 21 – November 6

A Wicked Christmas Carol

A fairy tale holiday story?
December 2 – December 18

(See 2022 Season flyer on page 13 of the newsletter!)



It's not often that the title character in a Pulitzer Prize-winning play is neither seen nor heard. In the case of Mary Chase's classic comedy, *Harvey*, it's a definite plus!

Harvey opens on October 22 at the *Somerset Valley Players*, Hillsborough's nonprofit community theatre, and runs weekends through November 7.

The comedy, which has had many revivals since it first opened on Broadway in 1945, is about a man, Elwood P. Dowd, who insists his best friend is a six-foot-tall invisible rabbit named Harvey. The reactions of his concerned family and beleaguered psychiatrists result in sidesplitting comedy and a wise moral to the story.

SVP's production also has great personal meaning for the director, Richard P. Butler. "During my senior year in high school (a long time ago) I played Elwood in my high school production," recalls Butler. "I fell in love with the play, and it has always stayed with me. I've been hoping to direct it one day and am grateful to *SVP* for the opportunity."

Remembering his experience as a cast member of the show, Butler saw to it that the *SVP* cast had a point of reference for the imaginary rabbit by working with a talented young six-foot-tall actor, Asher Lindsey, who "stood in" for Harvey during rehearsals. "Having Asher really helped to help

Classic Comedy *Harvey* Is Next Production at *Somerset Valley Players*

create the illusion – especially for Mike Johnson, the actor playing Elwood -- that Harvey is real," Butler explains.



"There is also a personal connection to *Harvey* for two cast members," states Roberta Steve, producer. "Susan Schwirk, who plays society maven Mrs. Eugene Chauvenet Senior, appeared in an *SVP* production of the comedy over 35 years ago, before the theatre moved to its permanent residence in Hillsborough. She played the role of Elwood P. Dowd's sister, Veta Louise Simmons in that past production," adds Steve.

(continued on next page)



Mike Johnson and Susan Schwirk

Classic Comedy *Harvey* (cont.)

“Mary-Kate Bozinta, who plays cab driver E. F. Lofgren, has a family connection to the show. Her father played the role of psychiatrist William Chumley in an *SVP* production in the mid 1990s,” continues Steve. “Both actresses have great nostalgia for those prior productions and want new audiences to love the show as much as they do.”



Mary-Kate Bozinta and Roberta Steve

“*Harvey* is a love letter to audiences, and the human race in general,” maintains Butler. “The playwright’s affection for her characters – even the stereotypically unsympathetic ones - radiates a warmth that underscores the funny situation very effectively.”

“Even though the show is over 75 years old, its wisdom is still relevant,” Steve concludes. “Elwood and Harvey experience every moment in life as special, and more importantly, they connect with all of the people they meet. As Elwood himself says ‘a man can never have too many friends.’ In a world where we isolate in social media bubbles and document life instead of living it, we all still have a lot to learn from Elwood P. Dowd and his friend, Harvey.”

Produced by Steve and stage managed by Shannen Rivers, *Harvey* will be on stage at the *Somerset Valley Players* theater on 689 Amwell Road (Route 514) in Hillsborough beginning Friday, October 22, through Sunday, November 7. Friday and Saturday performances begin at 8 p.m. Sunday matinees start at 2 p.m. The theater is air conditioned, barrier free and wheelchair accessible.

For tickets and show times go to www.svptheatre.org. Tickets are \$20/adult and \$18/student & senior. Masks are required inside the building.



Somerset Valley Players Reopen with Comedy: *Don't Dress for Dinner*



The *Somerset Valley Players* – Hillsborough’s nonprofit community theatre – is used to opening nights. But on Friday, September 10, they celebrated their “re-opening” night as the theatre once again offered live performances after an 18-month closure due to COVID. Their three-show 2021 season kicked off with the comedy, *Don't Dress for Dinner*.

“I’m honored to have been chosen to direct the first live show after the COVID closure,” stated Todd Bennington. “Being back in the director’s chair has invigorated me. It’s like getting back on the proverbial horse. My actors and I are ready to jump back in the saddle and deliver an amazing show.”

The three shows that *SVP* will present in 2021 are all comedies. “It was very important for us to re-open with a slate of comedy shows,” explains *SVP* President Roberta Steve. “We follow up *Don't Dress for Dinner* with the classic comedy, *Harvey*, and round out the year with the crowd



pleaser, *A Christmas Story*. We want our audiences to laugh, smile, and feel good again!”

Don't Dress for Dinner is a companion piece to the comedy *Boeing, Boeing*, which *SVP* produced in 2016. Bennington who also directed that production comments, “*Don't Dress for Dinner* isn’t a sequel even though it features the same lead characters, Bernard and Robert. The two shows definitely stand alone, although they are both hilarious, door slamming, mistaken identities farces.”

Set in a French farmhouse in the 1960s the play involves three couples caught up in various degrees of adultery, lying, romance, and French cui-



sine. “My production team and I have loved recreating the 1960s style via our set design, props, and costumes,” Bennington relates. “It’s such a fun era and we love to be able to transport audiences back to that time.

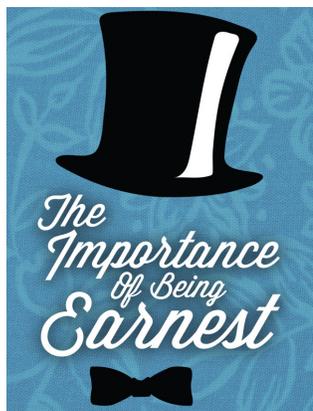
“The past year and a half have been a serious challenge we’ve all endured,” concludes Bennington. “Our patrons have really supported us throughout the entire closure. They’ve been telling us they’re excited to sit in the theatre and enjoy live performances again – and you know what? We’re just as excited to do it again!”

Produced by Bennington and Holly Lessing and stage managed by Lessing, *Don't Dress for Dinner* ran September 10 through September 26.

SVP's 2021 Virtual Season of Comedy

Even though our stage was dark, *SVP* was still busy presenting entertainment virtually. This past Spring we announced a three-show "Spring Season of Comedy" designed to delight audiences with comedies of different genres: satire, farce, and character-based. The season consisted of three shows:

- * *The Importance of Being Earnest*
- * *Radio Play Disaster*
- * *Four Weddings and an Elvis*



The Importance of Being Earnest Introduced Our Spring Season of Comedy

Opening the season was a production of one of the most performed comedies in the

English language, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Directed by **Richard Butler**, produced by **Emily Windus**, and staged managed by **Shannen Rivers**, *The Importance of Being Earnest* tells the story of two Victorian gentlemen who think lies will lead them to true love. And they do!

Here's an ovation to a stellar cast:

Omar Ahmed
Lorraine Ford DeMan
Darin F. Earl II
Patrick Horan
Barry Leonard
Alex Luckenbaugh
Krystina Matos
Kate Mochnacz
Roberta Steve

The Radio Play Disaster



Our second production in our Spring Season of Comedy was the farce, *The Radio Play Disaster*.

Self-proclaimed genius Harlan Bean was ready to make history with his science-fiction radio masterpiece Battle of the Planets...

...until it all went wrong!

Directed by **Holly Kowalenko**, Produced by **Mike Muller**, and stage managed by **Joan Diaz**, the show highlighted several crazy characters played by *SVP* favorites:

Thom Carroll
Marie Fiorello
Heather Giarrusso
Laurie Hardy
Rupert Hinton
Shawna Lagan
Edward Liu
Kim Mackanic
CJ Miller
Joyce Porter
Eric Radell
Shannen Rivers
David Williams

Our thanks to Edgestone Realtor **Gilbert Gray** for his sponsorship!

SVP's 2021 Virtual Season of Comedy (cont.)



Comedy *Four Weddings and An Elvis* Closes Out SVP's Virtual Season of Comedy

In our 1Q newsletter we told you a little bit about the first two shows. We want to congratulate the cast and crew of our final virtual show, *Four Weddings and an Elvis*.

Directed by **Ed Hayden**, produced by **Roberta Steve** and **Lauren Fogarty**, the comedy follows three couples who visit a Las Vegas wedding chapel. Some find love, and some don't, but audiences found laugh-out-

loud humor in each couple's predicament.

In a unique bit of casting, two real-life couples portrayed couples in the show. And neither couple in the show ended up together! Now that's acting!

Kudos to the cast:

Dale Bachman
Laura Carey
Michele Flynn
Kim Mackanic
Stephen Mennella
Chris Schmalbach
Haley Schmalbach
Dave Telfeyan
Nick Webber
David Williams

Our thanks to Edgestone Realtor **Gilbert Gray** and **Red Oak Mortgage, Inc.** for their sponsorship!

We Made the Hillsborough Township Newsletter!

Eagle Scout Trey Wright

At the May 11th Township Committee Meeting, Mayor Shawn Lipani recognized Trey Wright for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Trey's Eagle Scout project consisted of replacing the old, dilapidated sign at the Somerset Valley Playhouse in Hillsborough with a new sign. They worked with local architect, Ken Quabeck, coordinated building permits and purchased supplies. The project took over 235 hours to complete with the aid of 37 volunteers.

Congratulations to Trey and all involved for this achievement.

Pictured: Mayor Lipani and Trey Wright





CONGRATULATIONS to Board of Trustees members **Mike Muller** and **Emily Windus** on their engagement! Mike serves as Treasurer, and Emily as Vice-President of House Management.

SVP shoutout to **Wasif Sami**, who served as technical advisor for all of our virtual entertainment throughout the COVID-19 lockdown enabling us to continue to offer our audiences and artists opportunities to enjoy theatre in a new medium. Wasif, a 2021 graduate of Hillsborough High School, is starting his freshman year at Princeton University.



Meeting Bites

April 2021

- VP of Production
 - The board met and discussed possible options for opening in the fall if the conditions of the pandemic improve. Shows will be considered that can be done on stage but switched to virtual if needed. Shows are also considered based on how low cost can be kept. Suggestions for shows that fit these criteria can be made to the VP of Production.
- Treasurer
 - 2021 county grant paperwork has been completed and will be delivered soon.
 - Final 2020 county grant payment was received.
 - *SVP* maintains a stable financial condition.
- VP of House Management
 - New flags were donated and will be put up as soon as weather permits.
 - Periodic inspections of the building show the building remains in good condition.
- Old Business
 - A meeting will be announced for June where the by-laws review committee will hold a presentation on their suggested revisions. Materials will be circulated in May about the proposed changes.
- New Business
 - *SVP* has continued its sponsorship of the Somerville High School Arts Scholarship in the amount of \$100.
 - At this time, all production members have opted to donate their time to the theater.
 - At the close of nominations from the floor, the election slate read as follows:
 - VP Production: Todd Bennington (unopposed)
 - VP House: Randy Coddington Sr. & Ed Hayden
 - Secretary: Raymond Shinn, Holly Kowalenko & Mike Schuller
 - Drive-thru elections will be held during the May meeting.

May 2021

- Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held for the sole purpose of having an in person, “drive thru” style, 2021 election for 2022

officers. No reports were given and no business was conducted other than the election. The results of the vote are stated below.

- VP of Production: Todd Bennington. Todd ran unopposed. As per the bylaws the Secretary, Kyle Hamilton, cast one vote.
- Vice President of House: Randy Coddington
- Secretary: Raymond Shinn

June 2021

- A motion was made by Mike Schuller that all non-membership prep Board meetings take meeting minutes and report those minutes at the next membership meeting. This motion was seconded by Joan Diaz. The motion passed by majority vote.
- VP of Production
 - Shows chosen for the 2021 season were based on shows/directors who lost shows in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
 - The 2022 Play Selection Committee has been formed. Members include: Karen Abbatiello, Todd Bennington, Joan Diaz, Tracey Fama, Holly Lessing, Mike Muller and Emily Windus.
- Treasurer
 - We received the first disbursement of the 2021 County grant.. Waiting on the final disbursement.
 - Charitable donations continue to come in frequently.
- VP of Theater Management
 - Trainings and refresher training my occur soon for Box Office, ushers and concessions, due to the long hiatus caused by COVID-19 pandemic.
- VP of Sales & Marketing
 - A teaser campaign will be held on social media to let people now we are opening.
- VP of House Management
 - American flag and POW flag have been put up.
 - Randy made repairs to parking lot fence, which is getting old. Eagle Scouts may be solicited for a new fence.
 - General wellness checks on the building have not revealed any issues.
- Old Business
 - A special virtual meeting to review the proposed revisions to the by-laws will be held on June 24. The vote for the proposed revisions will be held at the July 12 membership meeting..

Meeting Bites (cont.)

July 2021

- VP of Production
 - Announcement for 2022 play submission was sent out via email and social media.
 - NJACT will be hosting a smaller virtual Perry Awards this year.
 - The Board is looking into rehearsal spaces. Membership is encouraged to offer suggestions.
- Treasurer
 - Final funds have been received for *The Radio Play Disaster* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Funds are pending from *Four Weddings and an Elvis*.
 - A Zoom meeting was held with the Cultural & Heritage Commission to discuss the 2021 mid-year grant report.
 - **SVVP** remains in stable financial position.
- VP of Theater Management
 - Possible box office and usher training/refreshers may be held soon.
 - The Hospitality Committee will be contacted to resume planning opening night parties.
- VP of Sales & Marketing
 - September reopening teasers completed.
 - 2022 season flyer is in planning.
- VP of House Management
 - New solar lights installed by shed 1.
 - Branches were trimmed around parking lot.
- Old Business
 - Vote on proposed changes to By-Laws
 - Vote was held and required 75% approval which was not met. No changes made to by-laws. By-law review committee are thanked for their time.
- New Business
 - Special board meeting was held July 14 to discuss reopening.
 - A decision was made to require masks for audiences and all **SVVP** personnel in the theater except the actors on stage.
 - Members are encouraged to reach out to the President if they have any questions or concerns regarding **SVVP**.
 - A community yard sale will be held September 25th.

August 2021

- No Membership meeting was held in August.

September 2021

- VP of Production
 - The 2022 season finalized all rights obtained. The season is as follows:
 - *The Hollow*
 - *Barefoot in the Park*
 - *The Savannah Sipping Society*
 - *Baby the Musical*
 - *Death Trap*
 - *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*
 - *Bad Seed*
 - *A Wicked Christmas Carol*
- Treasurer
 - Final funds disbursement were received from *Four Weddings and an Elvis*.
 - Grant paperwork for the 2022 calendar year was submitted.
 - **SVVP** remains in stable financial status.
- VP of Theater Management
 - Mask requirement is now in place for all **SVVP** staff and guests with the only exclusion being actors actively on stage.
 - Box Office is in need of more volunteers.
 - Mike & Jayne Schuller are thanked for getting concessions back up and running for **SVVP**'s opening.
- VP Sales & Marketing
 - A promotion is going out highlighting a savings if you buy all 3 shows of the abridged 2021 season.
- VP of House Management
 - Fire inspection conducted and passed.
- Old Business
 - September 25th community yard sale will likely be canceled due to lack of sign up. Possibly re-schedule to the Spring.
- New Business
 - Thank you to those who attended the **SVVP** Spruce Up Day to help get the theater ready for reopening.
 - Long time **SVVP** supporter, South Branch Reformed Church, had catastrophic flooding at the church due to tropical storm Ida. Mike Muller made a motion to donate \$500 to the church, which was seconded by Emily Windus. A vote passed unanimously in favor.



Somerset Valley Players

Is Proud to Announce

Our 2021 Season*

689 Amwell Road (Rte 514)
Hillsborough, NJ 08844-3317
(908) 369-SHOW (7469)
www.svptheatre.org
Air Conditioned
Handicapped Accessible

Virtual Shows



By Oscar Wilde
Apr. 16, 24 &
May 2, 2021
Tickets:
\$12 per show per device

THE RADIO PLAY DISASTER
By Don Zolidis
May 14, 22 & 23, 2021
Tickets: \$12 per show per device



By Nancy Frick
June 4, 5, 12 & 13, 2021
Tickets: \$12 per show per device

Live Shows



By Marc Camoletti
Sept. 10-26, 2021
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students

HARVEY
By Mary Chase
Oct. 22 -Nov. 7, 2021
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students



By Philip Grecian. Based on the motion picture, A Christmas Story, ©1983 Turner Entertainment Co., distributed by Warner Bros., written by Jean Shepherd, Leigh Brown & Bob Clark.
December 3-19, 2021
Tickets: \$20 Adults | \$18 Seniors/Students

*Shows & Performance Dates Subject To Change



This program is made possible, in part, by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and administered by the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission through the State/County Partnership Local Arts Program.





Somerset Valley Players Is Proud to Announce Our 2022 Season*

689 Amwell Road (Rte 514)
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(908) 369-SHOW (7469)
www.svptheatre.org
Air Conditioned
Handicapped Accessible

Agatha Christie
The Hollow
By Agatha Christie
Jan. 21–Feb. 6, 2022
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students

DEATH TRAP
By Ira Levin
July 22-Aug. 7, 2022
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students

Barefoot in the Park
By Neil Simon
March 4-20, 2022
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY
SPELLING BEE
Music & Lyrics by William Finn
Book by Rachel Sheinkin
Conceived by Rebecca Feldman
Additional Material by Jay Reiss
September 9-25, 2022
Tickets:
\$22 Adults
\$20 Seniors/Students

THE SAVANNAH SIPPING SOCIETY
By Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, and Jamie Wooten
April 29-May 15, 2022
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students

BAD SEED
By Maxwell Anderson,
from William March's Novel
Oct. 21-Nov. 6, 2022
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students

Baby
The Musical
Book by Sybille Pearson
Music by David Shire
Lyrics by Richard Maltby, Jr.
Based upon a story developed
with Susan Yankowitz
June 10-26, 2022
Tickets:
\$22 Adults
\$20 Seniors/Students

A Wicked Christmas Carol
By Bobby Keniston
December 2-18, 2022
Tickets:
\$20 Adults
\$18 Seniors/Students

*Shows & Performance Dates Subject To Change



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