

Step Back In Time with a Live Radio Play of IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE at Pasadena Playhouse

Pasadena Playhouse revisits the timeless classic "It's A Wonderful Life" as a 1940's live radio play - theatre review

By **Alisa Hayashida** - December 16, 2018



PHOTO: Brick Patrick | SouthPasadenan.com | Foley artist Jeff Gardner, Simon Helberg, Rebecca Mozo, Rob Nagle and Ryun Yu in It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play at Pasadena Playhouse.

After last year's holiday success of doing a live radio play of [Miracle on 34th Street with Alfred Molina](#), Pasadena Playhouse has brought back the concept with a fresh adaptation of [It's A Wonderful Life](#) now playing through December 23. It's an absolutely delightful holiday evening spent at the historic Playhouse, with everything from the lit up Christmas tree in the courtyard to the on point 1940's set, costumes and live

commercials, all working in synergy to transport you to sitting in the audience of a live radio show and hearing this story for the first time.



PHOTO: Brick Patrick | SouthPasadenan.com | Rob Nagle, Haneefah Wood, Rebecca Mozo, Simon Helberg and Ryun Yu in It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play at Pasadena Playhouse.

The majority of the action takes place on the stage and auditorium of Studio A at WBFR in Manhattan, New York on Christmas Eve and just like the audiences of old, we are asked to applaud by a blinking applause light above the actors' heads. The actors all play multiple roles save for the lead, a charismatic Simon Helberg as actor Jake Laurents playing George Bailey. It is fantastic to watch the actors slide into different roles, switching microphones and contorting their faces to accommodate going from a cranky, old man to a 6 year old boy and all the colorful characters that inhabit Bedford Falls.



PHOTO: Brick Patrick | SouthPasadenan.com | Jeff Gardner, Rob Nagle, Haneefah Wood, Rebecca Mozo, Simon Helberg and Ryun Yu in *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* at Pasadena Playhouse

It is the life story of a simple man, George Bailey, who is stopped from taking his own life by a guardian angel and given the gift of seeing what the world would be like had he never been born. The story never ceases to cut right to the heart of what really should matter at this time of year and this production steps up to meet the story with tenderness and humor. Rebecca Mozo is lovely as George's sweetheart, Mary, and creates a poignant bond with Helberg. Haneefah Wood plays several characters and makes a sassy, earthy impression as Violet Bick. **Ryun Yu**, last seen in his tour de force performance as Gordon Hirabayashi in [Hold These Truths](#), is once again deft at taking on seven roles and makes for a feisty angel, Clarence. Rob Nagle anchors the show not only as the radio announcer but a myriad of characters including the irascible Mr. Potter.

The other vital character in this ensemble is Foley artist, Jeff Gardner, providing every possible sound effect from glass shattering to footsteps, bells and slamming doors. It's truly a kick to watch him work!

Cameron Watson returns to direct and does such a fine job of letting the audience into not only the world of a 1941 radio play but also into Bedford Falls and the singularly important life of one George Bailey. So take a trip back in time at Pasadena Playhouse this Christmas, and don't forget the tissues.



PHOTO: Brick Patrick |
SouthPasadenan.com | Simon Helberg as
George Bailey in *It's A Wonderful Life: A
Live Radio Play* at Pasadena Playhouse.

Tickets for ***It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*** are now available at pasadenaplayhouse.org,
b phone at 626-356-7529, and at the box office at 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

December 12 through December 23, 2018

Tuesday through Friday Evenings at 8:00pm

Saturdays at 2:00pm and 8:00pm

Sundays at 2:00pm and 7:00pm

Prices start at \$25 for *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*

Alisa Hayashida

<https://southpasadenan.com>

Alisa Hayashida has been covering arts, culture, & events in the greater Pasadena Metro area and Los Angeles Metro area for the past seven years. She is a valuable arts advocate in South Pasadena, with an extensive background in theatre arts. She has been a proud South Pasadenan for over 25 years.

