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By
Paul Elliott

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3 p.m. matinees on April 30, May 1 and May 7
2016
Elizabeth Reinholz Theatre

Produced by special arrangement with
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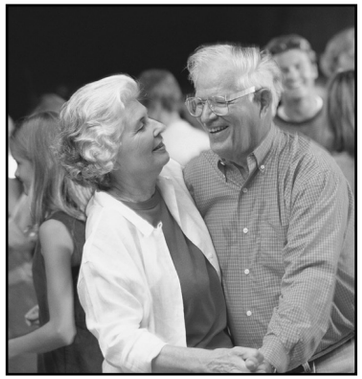
Exit Laughing was premiered in the American Association of Community Theatre's AACT New Play Fest by the Springfield Little Theatre in Springfield, Mo.



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Beloit Civic Theatre is the recipient of a JET grant from Visit Beloit.

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THE CAST

Rachel Ann .....Ellen Adkins
Connie Harland .....Barbara Thompson
Leona .....joan e. kole
Millie .....Kay Nordstrom
Policeman/Bobby .....Alex Trotter

THE SETTING

ACT I: Early evening on a warm summer night in Connie Harland's vintage home outside of Birmingham, Alabama.

There will be a twelve-minute intermission between the acts.
Enjoy the cookies in the lobby.

ACT II: Begins exactly where Act I ended.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director .....Clarissa Johnson
Stage Manager .....Jay Goodwin
Set Design .....Loren Sass
Set Construction .....Joyce Anderson, Les Blumreich, Deb Burns, Ed Skwarlo, Mary Easland, Mike Fallon, Dee Fischer, Donna Balsley, Tom Lepinski, Loren Sass, Les Sass, Arthur Graham, Tom Young
Costumes .....Donna Balsley, Joyce Anderson
Properties .....Donna Balsley, Dee Fischer, Joyce Anderson
Make-up Design .....Dee Fischer

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WHO'S WHO

Ellen Adkins

Ellen Adkins (Rachel Ann) Ellen debuts in this production for Beloit Civic Theatre. Previously she appeared in *Into the Woods* and *The Sound of Music* for Spotlight Theater and in *Next to Normal* and *Westside Story* for Gateway Performing Arts Studio, both in Rockford. Ellen is a sophomore at Harlem High School where she participates in Voices of Harlem, an extracurricular chamber choir. She has two siblings, Emily and Rachael, and to her parents, Terry and Melissa Adkins, she says, "Thank you, Mom and Dad, for always supporting me." Ellen's hobbies consist of singing, baking and napping. She also would like to give a special thank you to her director, Claire, "…for giving me this opportunity and for driving me to rehearsals!"

Dr. joan e. kole

Dr. joan e. kole (Leona) joan has acted in and directed more than 90 professional, community or educational theatre productions in six states and served as an adjudicator for state and regional community theatre festivals in MO, MI, IA (twice), OK and NY. She holds a BA degree from Michigan State University an MA from the University of Nebraska and was awarded her doctorate from Union Institute & University in 2009. Always seeking to "hone her craft," she continued studying acting with a Denver Center for the Performing Arts faculty member while living in Littleton, CO as well as with a New American Theatre staff member in Rockford. She is a 2007 graduate of DirectorsLabChicago. Her passion for live theatre—especially for live theatre involving those 55 and older or those who are challenged in some way—and her respect for *anyone* who risks performing in front of their peers is what fuels her own enthusiasm and creativity. Beloit Civic Theatre audiences have enjoyed joan's previous work as director in our productions of *The Gin Game, Spider's Web* and *Plaza Suite.* She recognizes the impact that community theatres have on communities and the people in them and is "…oh so pleased to be able to share her enthusiasm with you during the run of *Exit Laughing.*"

Kay Nordstrom

Kay Nordstrom (Millie) Kay has performed in the recent BCT productions of *Seniors of the Sahara* and *Bingo, the Musical.* At UW-Oshkosh she appeared in *Blood Wedding, Stop the World, I Want to Get Off* and *The Skin of Our Teeth,* and at Madison East High School in *Stage Door, Pillow Talk* and *Carousel.* Kay is a retired educator from the School District of Beloit. Her family consists of husband, Kendall, 4 children and 5 grandchildren. In her spare time, Kay enjoys reading, sewing, volunteering and traveling.

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Barbara Mae Thompson

Barbara Mae Thompson (Connie Harland) Barbara has appeared for Beloit Civic Theatre in *Church Basement Ladies, Working, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, Ruthless, Spider's Web, Gin Game, God's Favorite* and *The Whole Town is Talking.* She also performed in *South Pacific, Cinderella, The Music Man, Gypsy, The Glass Menagerie, Laundry and Bourbon* and *A Christmas Carol* for Shake Rag Players of Mineral Point. Additional credits include performances at Madison Children's Theatre in productions of *The Yearling, Treasure Island,* and *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Night of the Iguana* for Madison Repertory Theatre. In addition to her extensive credits as an actor, Barbara has directed over 40 plays and musicals at the high school or community theatre level. She retired last June after 41 years in education and is enjoying subbing at Clinton, Milton, Beloit Turner, Beloit Memorial and Janesville schools. "I want to dedicate these performances to my husband John, my biggest fan. Also a 'shout out' to the Rogers girls, Aunt Lolly, Aunt Teal and my mom, Sis. Your spirits are a part of me."

Alex Trotter

Alex Trotter (Policeman/Bobby) This is Alex's first time at Beloit Civic Theater, and he is "proud to be a part of the history of a prestigious local theater." Alex's other theatrical experiences include roles in Pec Playhouse productions of *The Crucible* and *Abundance.* He also appeared in Spotlight Youth Theater's production of *The Legend of Pocahontas* as well as in numerous productions at his alma mater, Christian Life High School. Alex is a full time student at Rock Valley College, studying to teach literature and English at the high school level. In addition to theatre, Alex is a musician who is proficient in bass guitar, drums, mandolin, banjo, melodica, and pretty much anything else with strings. He would like to thank his director and crew without whom "the show would not be possible," and he would also like to thank his parents "… for supporting me in all I do." To his girlfriend he says, "Thank you for supporting me in my dreams. I love you more than life itself!" "Enjoy the show! And don't forget to exit laughing!"

Jay Goodwin

Jay Goodwin (Stage Manager) Jay Goodwin is a member of the Board of Directors of Beloit Civic Theatre who appeared in BCT's winter production of *The Dining Room.* He has previously performed in BCT's productions of *Squirrels in the Attic, Cliffhanger, Arsenic and Old Lace, Over the River and Through the Woods, Greetings, Everything I Really Needed To Know I Learned In Kindergarten, The Whole Town's Talking, Laura, God's Favorite, Night Must Fall,* and *The Dining Room.* He also directed *Exit Laughing* for BCT. Jay has performed with other area theatre groups such as The Summertime Players, Stage I and Janesville Little Theatre in such plays as *The Patient, Personals* and *Love,*

Sex and the I.R.S. Including his work for BCT, Jay has performed in over 50 plays. He also has done comic improv with The Comedy Connection, and he loves karaoke, dancing, spending time with his grown sons (Christopher, Michael, Anthony and Shawn) and going out with friends. Having spent most of his theatre time onstage, Jay is enjoying serving as stage manager for this production. "It is a pleasure for me to work in this other creative capacity with a director new to BCT and a wonderful cast."

Clarissa Johnson

Clarissa Johnson (Director) Clarissa Johnson is incredibly thankful for the chance to direct at Beloit Civic Theatre for the first time! Clarissa is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago where she majored in directing and worked on numerous productions as stage manager, costume designer, and hair/makeup artist when not in the directing chair. She is currently a teacher at Spotlight Youth Theater. Clarissa most recently directed productions in the Rockford area including *Into the Woods* at Spotlight Youth Theater and *Abundance* and *Miracle on 34th Street* at Pec Playhouse. Clarissa would like to thank the cast for their hard work and for all of the laughs that came with working on such a fun show.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Most of you reading this have either experienced the loss of a loved one or have been affected by someone who has. Dealing with grief is a dark, ominous cloud that no one enjoys having to walk through, and it tends to be something that can haunt you for a short time, or for what can feel like an eternity. But in the end, it's how you walk through the grief that matters. And for the three leading ladies of our show, they find they do best walking through their grief hand in hand.

Exit Laughing is not your average comedy, and that is precisely what makes it so special. While our characters Connie, Leona, and Millie all struggle with the loss of their best friend, throughout the show they explore the idea that you cannot allow yourself to be swallowed by the monster of grief forever. They look for coping mechanisms, distractions, and ways to honor their old friend in the best ways they can, while still pushing through life and all of its crazy twists and turns. Their secret is not trying to conquer their grief alone, but facing it together. And they do.

This has been a process of risk taking, exploration, and extensive teamwork. In a very short time, the cast has created a fun, and heartwarming production that will have you reminding yourself to treasure those you love, take risks of your own, and especially, to live life to the fullest before it's gone. I hope you all enjoy the show and exit the theater laughing! — Clarissa Johnson

NEW SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT:

Season brochures announcing our new season will be mailed in June. Beloit Civic Theatre's annual meeting will be held Wednesday, June 1st at the Our Lady of the Assumption Church at 2222 Shopiere Road in Beloit. Season members are invited for an evening of complimentary appetizers and desserts. Our new season for 2016-17 will be announced, the student scholarship winners will be awarded, and a vote will be taken for five BCT Board of Directors members. Mark your calendars! Season members will be able to make a reservation for the event when they attend *Exit Laughing.* A reservation form will be included in the theatre program. Seating is limited to the first 150 people who make a reservation. You may also make a reservation by sending an email to beloitcivictheatre@gmail.com

AUDITION NOTICE

Auditions for our fall musical will be held in early August. You may request to be added to our actor database if interested. Postcards announcing auditions are mailed before each show's auditions. Just give your name, phone number and postal mailing address to anyone working in the lobby or e-mail us at beloitcivictheatre@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE

Refreshments will be available during the intermission. For this production, all proceeds go to the Beloit Memorial High School Theatre Department trip to Scotland this summer, where students will perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

We are "GOING GREEN" at intermission. Please put your coffee and soda cups in the recycling bins.

Please be aware that Beloit Memorial High School is a "non-smoking" facility. Please respect the school policy and state law and refrain from smoking on school grounds.

No photography is allowed during performance.

Please turn off ringing cell phones and pagers during performance.
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please leave your name, address, and phone number with one of the volunteers at the ticket tables in the lobby. Address changes may also be given to one of our lobby personnel.

Please check out our recently updated website at www.beloitcivictheatre.org

Gift certificates are available for the entire season or for individual shows. They make wonderful gifts for all occasions. If interested, contact our box office at (608) 362-1595 or Loren Sass at (608) 365-0235.