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ANITIES

Written by Jack Heifner Directed by Roy Steinberg

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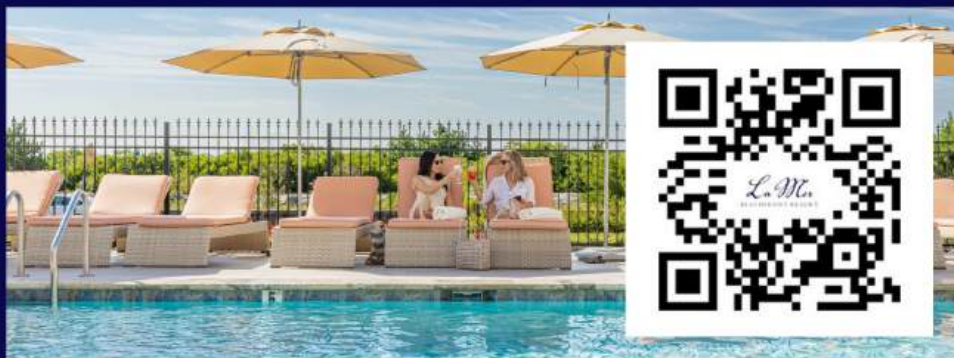


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Roy Steinberg

Producing Artistic Director of Cape May Stage

"I count myself in nothing else so happy, as in a soul remembering good friends." ~ William Shakespeare, Richard II

I have been ruminating about the effect of time on human relationships – how it deepens some and dissolves others. It is surprising why some friendships exist over decades with the most tenuous of connections while other red-hot dynamics for a time disappear over the years.

Our season begins with the exploration of the friendship of three Texas cheerleaders from high school to college to adulthood and the impact of societal changes and personal choices on that trio. After that, five women look back at their lives with a mixture of comedy and pathos and a search for dignity.

Next up is the very human comedy of attempts to reignite passion after years of matrimony. Our fall show takes what appears to be a chance encounter on a New York subway and uses that scenario to meditate on how race and status informs our culture. Finally, while celebrating the holidays we can indulge in a bit of magic and watch a father/daughter relationship be healed by Santa Claus.

We invite you to examine your own lives through the lens of theatre – these stories combine to make us laugh and take pause and look to the future with a grateful heart for the miracle of friendship. After thirty-five seasons, Cape May Stage gives a collective hug to each of you.

Roy Steinberg



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Cape May

magazine

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**Written by Jack Heifner & Directed by Roy Steinberg*+
Featuring Kyra Adams*, Meredith Beck* & Elise Hudson***

June 4, 2025 - June 29, 2025

The Otto and Phoebe Haas Stage

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Josh Iacovelli

Production Manager
Emma Bilderback

Scenic Designer
Josh Iacovelli

Sound Designer
Tony Taylor

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Costume Designer
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Props Manager/Set Decorator
Courtney Davis

Literary Manager
Shawn Fisher

Dramaturgy
Emma Bilderback

Casting Associate
Nathaniel Riccio

Time & Place: Texas in 1963 and 1968 and Manhattan, NY, in 1974

Special thanks to Barbara Kimsey, Nathaniel Riccio, Kevin Hammeran, Taylor Wilkins,
John Drechen, & John Heinz of Concert Quality Production Services.

Produced by Special Arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

**The language in this play is specific to the time period and we are contractually bound to produce it as
written and artistically committed to view it ironically through a 2025 lens.**

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The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs,
either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited. All electronic devices such as beepers,
tablets, cell phones, and watch alarms must be turned off prior to the performance.



2025 Producer Circle Members in support of "Vanities"



Jan & Joe Anania are very pleased to continue supporting the Cape May Stage as Producers for the 2025 season. Joe further extends his support as an active member of the Board of Directors. Both of us are looking to spend more time "down the shore" as Joe starts enjoying the beginnings of retirement. Jan and Joe maintain their permanent residence in Colts Neck, New Jersey.



Ronnie & Barry Cohen are the proud co-producers of Atlantic Capes Fisheries, of three exceptional children, even better reviewed grandchildren and this production of "Vanities." Supporting Cape May Stage is the best prescription for building a strong community. Ronnie conceived and originally implemented the "Producer's Circle" which provides significant financial support for Cape May Stage's ongoing work. We are grateful for living in a town with broad minded attitudes, Broadway quality theater and a thriving, vibrant culture. Barry is also a member of the Cape May MAC board of directors, and Ronnie serves on the board of the Convent Arts Fellowship.



Kate & Jerry Hathaway reside in Cape May. Kate was a producer of the Broadway production of Ann (about former Texas Governor Ann Richards), and performed the title role herself here at Cape May Stage as part of the 2021 season. As a producer, Kate also helped launch the Broadway production of Beautiful, the Carole King Musical, and other productions, including the award-winning Southern Comfort, a musical with a transgender theme. Jerry practices law as a partner at Fox Rothschild, and is a former board member of Philadelphia's the Walnut Street Theater and New York's The Barrow Group. Jerry advises private equity sponsors and funds regarding their transactions, and his clients also include NBCUniversal, Disney, Lincoln Center, The Apollo Theater and The Public Theater. While they did not date until Jerry was out of law school, Kate and Jerry first met in a high school production of *Hello, Dolly!*



Lynn Martenstein & Jorg Pawlik are pleased to support Cape May Stage as it celebrates its 35th anniversary season. Lynn is a lifelong summer resident of Cape May who currently serves on the theater's board as vice president and also sits on the board of the Fund for Cape May. Previously, she led global communications for Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. As well as United Airlines, and directed public relations for both the national American Red Cross and AAA headquarters. Jorg worked in the information technology field earlier and enjoys a wide range of interests today from kiteboarding to playing music. The couple now divide their time between Cape May and Delray Beach, Fla.



Ken & Elaine Kirby reside in Havertown, PA and also have a home in Cape May County. Ken retired from a 35 year career in fund raising, public relations, and government affairs, having worked for The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, The Academy of Natural Sciences, The Franklin Institute, and Main Line Health. Ken currently serves as a consultant to a variety of non-profit organizations. Elaine retired after a 25 year career in special events and marketing for the insurance industry. Ken is a former Trustee of The Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia. They are avid theater buffs - whether it be Broadway or an amateur theater company performing in a local gymnasium. Other than theater, their largest passion (of course!) is their two grandchildren, Carter and Avery.



2025 Producer Circle Members in support of "Vanities"



Victor Keen & Jeanne Ruddy are long time, enthusiastic patrons and generous supporters of Cape May Stage. Jeanne is a choreographer and Artistic Director of Jeanne Ruddy Dance and the Executive Director/Resident Artist of the Performance Garage, a Philadelphia non-profit dance venue founded and operated by Jeanne, Victor, and the board. She was a principal dancer with the Martha Graham Company and a member of the faculties of the Alvin Ailey and Juilliard School Dance Division for more than a decade. Victor is "of-counsel" at Duane Morris LLP, a 700-attorney international law firm headquartered in Philadelphia. He is currently involved in commercial real estate and various other ventures. He sits on several arts-related boards and enjoys spending time and having visitors to his nationally recognized "Outsider Art" collection housed in a repurposed 1869 Philadelphia Quaker Mission.



Janis Washington White is a native of West Cape May and currently serves as a Board member of Cape May Stage. She holds fond memories of the Cape May Stage building in its various roles over the years. A retired school counselor and newly published author, Janis is an enthusiastic supporter of the arts in all its forms. She is proud to expand her support of Cape May Stage as a producer.

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Cape May Stage applauds all of our 2025 Producers Circle members. Thank you for making this season possible!

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Do You Want to be a Producer?

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Get the inside scoop on each season's new productions, help support professional Equity theater in Cape May, and enjoy exclusive member benefits, including:

- Private Producers Circle events throughout the season.
- Two complimentary tickets to opening night of the show you produce.
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- Acknowledgment as Producer on the program's donor list and Cape May Stage website.
- Six "anytime" tickets to all shows and up to ten discounted \$25 tickets to all shows. *

*Subject to availability and can not be used for opening night performances.

For more information about becoming a Producer, please visit: capemaystage.org/producer

Director's Note

By Roy B. Steinberg

Just as our three characters experience innocence to skepticism, so does our country experience the feeling of "Camelot" in 1963 through the upheaval of assassinations in 1968 to the skepticism informed by the Watergate scandal of 1974. Mounting "Vanities" in 2025 after overturning Roe v Wade (passed in 1973), we view this story with a new understanding. The dissolution of the friendships of these women over that decade mirror what many in today's audience may have experienced in our recent history. Though told with humor and heart, "Vanities" makes us laugh, but today's audience surely has a laugh that is informed by so much knowledge of what transpired since 1973 - and since that first production in 1976.

Take the Quiz to Win!



SCAN HERE

"Vanities" is set in the 1960's and 1970's. Test your knowledge of that era, and take a trip down memory lane, by taking this short quiz. Answer all ten questions correctly to be entered into a drawing to win a special prize from Cape May Stage.

The drawing will be held at the final performance of "Vanities" but you need not be present to win.

Just scan this QR code to begin. Good luck and enjoy the show!

If you would prefer a paper copy of the quiz, just ask our box office associates or ushers.



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We salute our board members for all of their work on behalf of Cape May Stage. Thank you!



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Roy Steinberg* (Director) has directed classical, contemporary, and world premiere plays across the United States. In New York, he directed Ann Jackson, Kim Hunter, and Alvin Epstein in *The Madwoman of Chaillot* at the Neighborhood Playhouse and worked with Lynn Cohen and Farley Granger on *The Marriage Fool* at Circle Repertory Company. His production of *Othello* ran at the Intar Theatre, and he directed Joan Copeland in *Second Summer* for the Colleagues Theatre Company. Steinberg served as Artistic Director for Theatre Matrix in New York and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Wisconsin, and directed bilingual touring productions of Moliere's

The Miser and *The Bourgeois Gentleman*. He has also directed college productions nationwide, including *American Buffalo*, *Our Town*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In film and television, Steinberg has directed and produced *Guiding Light*, *One Life To Live*, *Days Of Our Lives*, *Forensic Files*, and *Scandalous Art*, earning four Emmy nominations. His work with Jo-Beth Williams on *Life In General* won five Spirit Awards. At Cape May Stage, Steinberg has directed numerous productions, including *Souvenir*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Blithe Spirit*, *How to Make a Rope Swing*, *Say Goodnight Gracie*, *Visiting Mr. Green*, *Proof*, *Class*, *Steel Magnolias*, *The Understudy*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Happy Days*, *Freud's Last Session*, *The Santaland Diaries*, *The Woolgatherer*, *Mistakes Were Made*, *This Wonderful Life*, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Disgraced*, *Buyer and Cellar*, *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, *The Gin Game*, *Outside Mullingar*, *The Ultimate Christmas Show*, *Chapter Two*, *The Shuck*, *An Actor's Carol*, *Heisenberg*, *Sylvia*, *Sidekicked*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *Double Play*, *America's Sexiest Couple*, *The Lifespan of a Fact*, *One Christmas Carol*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Art*, *The Garbologists*, *A Tuna Christmas*, *Becoming Dr. Ruth*, *Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson - Apt 2B*, *Stones in His Pockets* & *The Gift of the Magi*.

Steinberg holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama and serves as the Producing Artistic Director at Cape May Stage. His proudest production is his daughter, Alexa Catherine.

"A good friend is a connection to life - a tie to the past, a road to the future, the key to sanity in a totally insane world."

~ Khalil Gibran ~



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Kyra Adams* (Kathy)

Kyra is thrilled to return to Cape May Stage for Vanities! A Cape May native and LCMR alum, Kyra made her professional debut in *The Shuck* and is honored to be back at her hometown theatre. An NYC-based actor and proud graduate of NYU Tisch, Kyra's notable stage credits include Million Dollar Quartet (GVT), Merrily We Roll Along (Playwrights Downtown), and Syd Norman's Pour House (NCLH), among others. On screen, she has appeared in HBO's *The Deuce* and *The Gen Z Next Door* (Tubi). Endless gratitude to Sandra Beane-Fox, Paul Mathis and all of her teachers for their love and guidance. As always this one's for Mom, Dad and Alan. @kyraadams



Meredith Beck* (Mary)

Meredith Beck is thrilled to be debuting at Cape May and returning to Vanities! She is a multi-hyphenate theater artist who finds joy in all aspects of theater; whether that's on stage acting, building and singing concerts, directing or stage managing. Recent on-stage credits include: Ann-Margaret in *Elvis!* A Musical Revolution at Walnut Street Theater, Ursula March in *Sweet Charity* at Montgomery Theater, and Mary Martin in her 2-person show *Merman & Martin; Together ON-Broadway!* at Act 2 Playhouse, Gretna, Montgomery, and as the premiere grant recipient for the Philadelphia Women's Theater Festival. In addition to her theater work, Meredith can often be found performing on vocals, Flute, autoharp and her spoons with her Irish band *The Galway Girls*. She serves on the National Council for Actors Equity and is a graduate of Ithaca College's BFA program. Love to John. @meredithashleybeck



Elise Hudson* (Joanne)

Elise is thrilled to be back at Cape May Stage, having previously performed in *The Taming!* Other favorite theatre credits include: *Noises Off* (Delaware Theatre Company), *The Revolutionists* and *Silent Sky* (Hippodrome Theatre Gainesville), *A Christmas Carol* (Trinity Repertory Company), *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (Playhouse on Park), *The Show Off* (Off-Broadway), *Laughing Stock* (Peterborough Players), *Twelfth Night* and *Macbeth* (Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre), and *Coriolanus* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company). TV: both seasons of Spike Lee's Netflix show *She's Gotta Have it*, *Law and Order: SVU*, *A Crime to Remember*. FILM: *Black Klansman*, *Lock It Up*, *Brave the Dark*. MFA in Acting from Brown/Trinity Rep. Big Love to Josh. Instagram: @hudson_elise www.EliseHudsonActor.com

* Member of Actors' Equity Association

+ Member of Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers

Actors' Equity Association (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actors unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote, and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers, and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment of the actors and stage managers employed in this production. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit www.actorsequity.org



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Celebrating its 36th season as a Professional Equity theater, Cape May Stage has a rich history dating back to 1989, when it staged its first official production, "Sea Marks," at the Chalfonte Hotel and Cold Spring Village. In 1993, Cape May Stage moved into its permanent home at 405 Lafayette Street, where it still performs today. This beautifully restored and maintained historic building was erected in 1853 as the Cape Island Presbyterian Church (known as the "Visitor's Church"), and later served as a community center and welcome center for the town.



Over the years, many people have contributed to the success of Cape May Stage. But none more so than its founder, **Michael Laird**. By his own account, Michael was an "equity actor and a director and a producer and a sculptor and a playwright and a poet and a clown." Before settling in Cape May he appeared Off-Broadway in New York, at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia and at Asolo State Theatre in Sarasota, Florida. He also did summer stock at PEI Playhouse in Prince Edward Island, Canada. Michael ran Cape May Stage until he passed away in 2001.



The building used by Cape May Stage is called the Robert Shackleton Playhouse. Named after the late actor **Robert Shackleton**, whose family has deep roots in Cape May, the theater pays tribute to his acting career. Mr. Shackleton was raised in suburban Philadelphia, graduating from Temple University and then moving on to perform in Broadway and London theaters, as well as in the movies. His acting career was interrupted by World War II and in 1956 he tragically passed away at the age of 42. His love of theater lives on in Cape May as his daughter, Leslie Shackleton Martel, serves as the president of the Cape May Stage board of directors.

Thanks to the generosity of the Shackleton family along with other members of the Cape May Stage community, the building was renamed the Robert Shackleton Playhouse in 2007 and this historic structure is now a state-of-the-art theatre known to residents and visitors as "the jewel in the crown of Cape May's architectural gems".

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Emma Bilderback

(Production Stage Manager& Production Manager)

Emma Bilderback is a theatre artist based in New Jersey. A Los Angeles native, she received her Bachelor's from Marymount Manhattan College and her Master's from the University of Amsterdam. In addition to stage management, she is an executive committee member for the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.



Tony Taylor (Sound Designer)

Tony Taylor is based out of Lancaster, PA, working most recently on "Romeo and Juliet" and "SIX". He is happy to be working with everyone at Cape May Stage. Enjoy the show!



Courtney Davis (Props Manager/Set Decorator)

Courtney Davis is thrilled to be back at Cape May Stage this season. She has a B.A in Music Industry with a Minor in Musical Theatre at Monmouth University. She has worked sound, lighting, rails, and makeup at various theatres through New Jersey including Two River Theatre, Algonquin Arts Theatre, and The Broadway Theatre of Pitman, and she is excited for this season at Cape May Stage.



Brian Strachan (Costume Director)

Brian holds a M.F A. in costume design from Temple University. He has designed costumes for many companies in the Philadelphia area, including the Bucks County Playhouse, Lantern Theater, Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival and Enchantment Theater Company. Brian designed for The Hunterdon Hills Playhouse in Hampton, NJ. He has designed dance costumes for the Koresh Dance Company, Sharp Dance Company and Anne Marie Mulgrew. Mr. Strachan has also designed costumes for Rowan University, The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA, Cedar Crest College, and Ursinus College. Brian also teaches makeup design at Rowan University, and Ursinus College.

Please visit his website: brianstrachcostumes.design



Amber Nelson (Lightning Designer)

Amber Nelson is the principal lighting technician for Seashore Sound and has created the lighting looks for many of the Broadway Series concerts at Cape May Stage.

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Josh Iacovelli (Set Designer & Technical Director)

Josh has over 20 years of experience in theatre and television. His roles span from production design, art direction and scenic design. From fabrication to ideation, Josh has spent his entire career making ideas into reality. PM credits include *Romeo and Bernadette*, and *The Gospel according to Heather* here at Theatre 555. Favorite design credits include: *Broadway and The Bard* starring Len Cariou, *The Office a Musical Parody* (dir Donald Garverick), *Friends the Musical Parody* (dir Paul Stancato), *The*

Zero Hour (dir Piper Laurie), *Hit Her with the Skates* (dir Michael Schiralli), *Disaster the Musical* (dir Jack Plotnick), and *The Book of Merman* (dir Joe Langworth). Other notable credits include long-running Off Broadway hits such as *Danny and Sylvia*, *Dietrich and Chevalier* starring Robert Cuccioli, *Cougar the Musical*, *Sistas the Musical* and *Missed Connections*. Josh recently Designed and Directed *Trial on the Potomac* starring Rich Little. Josh received his BA in Theatre and Direction from Stockton University and his MFA from the Actors Studio Drama School at New School University. JoshIacovelli.com

The Playwright



Jack Heifner is the author of over thirty plays and musicals produced in New York, Los Angeles, and theatres around the world. He is best known for the play version of *Vanities*, which ran for five years in New York, is published by Samuel French, and became one of the longest running plays in Off-Broadway history. He is also the author of *Patio/Porch*, *Boys' Play*, *Home Fires*, *Comfort and Joy*, *Heartbreak*, *Bargains*, *Earth To Bucky*, *The Lemon Cookie*, *China Dolls*, *Natural Disasters*, and many other plays. His musicals include *Leader of the Pack* and

Vanities – A New Musical, both also published by Samuel French. A graduate of Southern Methodist University, Mr. Heifner has been Playwright-in-Residence at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas since 1997. He has also worked in television and film.

"I love all aspects of the theater. I have had a wonderful life thanks to Vanities and its success for 47 years. The play is about friendship. It has never been about anything else and that is what people relate to in the play."

Jack Heifner ~ TheaterMania.com



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