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REGIONAL PREMIERE OF SARA BAREILLES' *WAITRESS* AT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER REUNITES DIRECTOR MARCIA MILGROM DODGE WITH HELEN HAYES AWARD-WINNING ACTOR, MALINDA David Socolar, from the National Tour of *Waitress*, joins the production as Dr. Pomatter

Olney, MD — January 2, 2025 — Olney Theatre Center's production of **Sara Bareilles'** beloved musical ***Waitress*** in the Roberts Mainstage will reunite star **MALINDA** in the lead role of Jenna, and director/choreographer **Marcia Milgrom Dodge**, when it **begins performances on February 13, 2025**. The two last collaborated on Olney Theatre's 2019 production of *Once*, which later earned MALINDA a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Performance in a Musical. They will be joined by David Socolar as Dr. Pomatter, a veteran of both the *Company* and *Waitress* national tours.

Following three previews, the invited press performance is on Sunday, February 16 at 7:30 pm. Interested critics may reserve two tickets by emailing sstraub@olneytheatre.org. Tickets are available to the public from \$41 - \$110 and can be purchased at olneytheatre.org/waitress or by calling the box office at 301-924-3400. The show is currently **scheduled to run through March 30, 2025**.

Says **Artistic Director Jason Loewith**, "I've been eagerly looking forward to mounting the DMV-region professional premiere of Sara Bareilles' amazing musical. Reuniting director Marcia Milgrom Dodge with the amazing MALINDA - the pair who elevated our production of *Once* to award-winning levels - gives this production a real opportunity to shine. *Waitress* is special to all of us: it's yet another way we're centering stories of strong women this season, sharing bonds of sisterhood in ways that inspire and delight."

MALINDA (formerly known as **Malinda Kathleen Reese**, she now goes by the mononym used in her singing career) won the **2020 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Performance in a Musical** for her last turn at Olney Theatre as the Girl in *Once*. Shortly thereafter, the world shut down for the COVID pandemic, and MALINDA, who had been cultivating an enthusiastic audience of over 1 million with her music parody YouTube Channel "Twisted Translations," decided to commit to her music career in folk-pop, drawing on her songwriting and her upbringing in Irish music. She quickly built a 2.7 million following on TikTok with short covers, singing by candlelight, and then exploded in popularity with her take on "Drunken Sailor" during the height of the #SeaShanty phenomenon, garnering millions of views. Her subsequent folk EPs reached #1 on the iTunes World Music charts. In 2023 she released her debut album, It's

All True, accompanied by a visual album, which played in 25 Cinemark movie theaters across the country, followed by a national headline tour. After continuing to tour and release her EP Look At You Now this year, **Waitress** marks her first return to the musical theater since **Once**.

In addition to **David Socolar** as Dr. Pomatter, the featured cast includes **Allison Blackwell** (Becky), **Ashley Nguyen** (Dawn), **Sam C. Jones** (Ogie), **Ethan Watermeier** (Cal), **Greg Twomey** (Earl), and **Bobby Smith** (Joe). The ensemble includes **Russell Rinker**, **Jessica Bennett**, **Wood Van Meter**, **Casey Martin Klein**, **Jay Frisby**, **Wynter Cook**, **Nadja Tomaszewski**, and **Nikki Kim**. **Lou Chubin** and **Iella Barr-O'Connor** share the role of Lulu. **Stellamaris Orellana** and **Dylan Toms** are swings for the production.

Marcia Milgrom Dodge returns to Olney Theatre Center following the worldwide acclaim for her groundbreaking version of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***, originally produced in 2021 and remounted in 2022. Handling both directing and choreography duties this time around, she will again work with Music Director **Christopher Youstra**. The creative team also includes Scenic Designer **Chen-Wei Liao**, Lighting Designer **Minjoo Kim**, Costume Designer **Sarah Cubbage**, Sound Designer **Matthew Rowe**, Wig Co-Designers **J. Jared Janas** and **Cassie Williams**, Intimacy and Fight Choreographer **Sierra Young**, and Dialect Coach **Lynn Watson**. Production Stage Manager **Ben Walsh** is supported by Assistant Stage Managers **Becky Reed** and **Kate Kilbane**.

Headshot photos of selected cast members are available [here](#).

PRODUCTION DETAILS

Waitress

Book by Jessie Nelson

Music and Lyrics by Sara Bareilles

Based upon the motion picture by Adrienne Shelly

Music Directed by Christopher Youstra

Directed and Choreographer by Marcia Milgrom Dodge

Waitress is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. 423 West 55th Street, New York, NY 10019 www.MTIShows.com

Dates, Location, Tickets

Runs February 13 - March 30, 2025

Roberts Mainstage

Olney Theatre Center

2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road

Olney, MD 20832

Tickets: \$35 - \$110 available at olneytheatre.org/frozen and 301-924-3400

Discounts for teachers, active military, and first responders are available at:
olneytheatre.org/discounts

Performance Schedule

Wednesday through Saturday evenings at 7:30 pm.

Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday matinees at 1:30 pm.

Select Sunday evenings at 7:00 pm.

See the full schedule at: <https://tickets.olneytheatre.org/overview/waitress>

Accessible Performances

Audio-Described Performance – Wednesday, March 5 at 7:30pm

ASL Interpreted Performance – Thursday, March 6 at 7:30 pm

RELATED EVENTS

New Work, New Venue, New American Theatre: Peter Marks In Conversation With Jason Loewith

Sunday, February 16, 5:00 - 6:00 pm

Roberts Mainstage

Free with RSVP

As Olney Theatre's new [Bernard Family Theatre](#) nears completion and the final construction phase of the \$36mm Staging the Future capital campaign begins, how is Olney Theatre Center transforming into a true Center for the Arts for an evolving and growing community? How might what we produce in the Bernard reflect, or inspire, trends in the American theater? Former Washington Post Chief Theatre Critic **Peter Marks** joins Artistic Director Jason Loewith to discuss how its mission to create nationally relevant work with deep local impact has evolved along with the changes to the physical campus as part of the [Staging the Future](#) capital campaign.

Behind the Scenes

Women in Sweet Business

Date: Saturday, February 22nd 5:00–6:00 p.m.

Roberts Mainstage

\$10 / Free for members

This panel will explore the real-life experiences of women in the baking world, particularly those who run their own businesses in the world of sweets and confections. Our guests will discuss their personal journeys – from the challenges of starting and growing a business, to the rewards of success, and the lessons learned along the way. In particular, we'll dive into the unique intersection of baking and entrepreneurship, and how it reflects the themes of Waitress.

Speakers: **Elizabeth Ellinghaus Weidhorn & Cara Gabriel**

In The Community

Story Time at the Olney Library

Story reader Karen Vincent

Date: Sunday, March 2, 1:30–2:30 p.m.

Olney Public Library (3500 Olney Laytonsville Rd, Olney, MD 20832)

No RSVP. Just show up!

Beyond the Stage

Happy Hour: Musical Theatre Trivia!

Date: Thursday, March 6th, 2025, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Actors Hall at Olney Theatre Center

\$10

If your brain is full of random Broadway-related knowledge that you don't know what to do with, put it to the test at our Musical Theatre Trivia Happy Hour! Sign up with a team, or come as a single and make some new friends. Then, take in a performance of *Waitress* (tickets sold separately).

Host:

Christopher Youstra (Music Director/ Director of Music Theater)

Beyond the Stage

Pie Eating & Baked Pie Contest

Date: Saturday, March 8th 4:30 p.m.

Cafritz Lobby

Show off your pie-eating skills or pie-baking skills! Olney Theatre will host both a pie-baking contest and a pie-eating contest in this sweet fun-packed event.

Are you a pie baking enthusiast? Bring your best baked pie and compete against other amateur bakers in the area! Are you a pie lover? Olney Theatre will provide contestants with pies and the winner will win two tickets to any of our shows this season!

Please note that these are two separate competitions, and the same pies will not be used for both contests! Your delicious homemade pies will be judged and savored while OTC provided pies will be used for the eating contest!

Book Club

Title: Big Little Lies

Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 6:00 pm

Olney Public Library (3500 Olney Laytonsville Rd, Olney, MD 20832)

RSVP to attend the discussion.

Where can I find the book?

You can purchase a copy through Friends of the Library. A substantial portion of each sale benefits Friends of the Library Montgomery County in support of Montgomery County Public Libraries.

Flowered by Kathy Lynn

Date: Sunday, March 16, 2025, 4:00 pm

Cafritz Lobby

Cost: \$65

Concessions on sale

Please join us for a fun afternoon filled with flowers and leave with a beautiful floral bouquet! Flowered is thrilled to be hosting this beginner's flower arranging class. This class is a fun way to learn about flowers and basic floral design using locally grown flowers, foraged greenery, and store-bought flowers.

Onstage Tours

Roberts Mainstage Theatre

Dates:

Sunday, February 23, 2025 at 3:30 pm

Sunday, March 23, 2025 at 3:30 pm

\$10 per person

How does a professional theater bring the magic of a story on stage? We're inviting folks of every age to come on stage and see how we do it. Lighting demonstrations, costume and prop displays, scenery moves... our professional production staff Philip Snider, Stage Operations Manager & Carissa Gilson, Wardrobe Supervisor/Costume Shop Associate will take you on an amazing Onstage Tour. RSVP early; this event has a maximum capacity of 30 people and tends to sell out fast!

Affinity Nights

Olney Theatre Center is excited to announce Affinity Nights during the run of *Waitress*.

If you identify as part of one of the groups listed below, we invite you and your people to join us for the special Affinity Night to watch *Waitress* with discounted tickets! Arrive early from 6:30 to 7:00 PM for a fun Pie-Themed activity pre-show. We can't wait to share this magical experience with you!

Under 30 Night

Use the code **Under30** for \$30 tickets every Wednesday evening. Excludes Orchestra A and Mezzanine A. Limit 4.

Single By Choice - Wed. Feb. 19 @ 6:30 pm

Use code **Choice** to save 30% off Side Mezzanine seats, Rows A & B

Bakers & Bakers at Heart Night (food service industry) - Thurs. Feb 27 @6:30 pm

Use code **Bakers** to save 30% off Side Mezzanine seats, Rows A & B

Sweet Tooth Night - Wed. March 5 @ 6:30 pm

Use code **SweetTooth** to save 30% off Side Mezzanine seats, Rows A & B

Community Choirs

We invite local choral groups to perform prior to select performances. For *Waitress*, we're proud to present the following ensembles in the Roberts Mainstage Lobby. These choral performances are free and do not require a ticket.

SongRise

Music of Empowerment

Saturday, March 22, 2025, 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Harmony Express

Songs of Love and Heartbreak

Saturday, March 29, 2025, 6:30 - 7:00 pm

ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Mission

Olney Theatre Center for the Arts produces and curates theatrical performance for the diverse audiences in our community, and educates, learns from, supports and inspires a more inclusive generation of theater-makers.

Vision

We strive to become an arts and culture powerhouse, redefining the American regional theater movement by cultivating and sharing the creativity of our community.

History

Founded in 1938 as a summer playhouse, Olney Theatre Center (OTC) now produces world and American premieres of plays and musicals, and reimaginings of familiar titles year-round; presents the work of leading companies and artists; tours nationally and locally; teaches students of all ages; and mentors a more inclusive generation of theatremakers. For more than 8 decades, OTC has brought impactful theater performance and education to our community, helping to grow the vibrancy and vitality of our home in the Washington, DC region.

Over the years, some of the biggest names in theater and film have appeared on our stages, including Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, Jessica Tandy, Hume Cronyn, Bob Fosse, Phillip Bosco, Eve Arden, Eva Gabor, Burl Ives, Jose Ferrer, Carol Channing, Olivia d'Havilland, Tony Randall, Paulette Goddard, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Jane Seymour, Anne Revere, Frances Sternhagen, Arthur Treacher, James Broderick, Olympia Dukakis, Sir Ian McKellen, Marica Gay Harden, John Colicos, Uzo Aduba, Alan Cumming, Cheyenne Jackson, Robin de Jesus, Wilson Jermaine Heredia, Bernadette Peters, among many, many others.

Olney Theatre is now the cultural anchor of a rapidly changing region and serves one of the most diverse, best educated, and wealthiest counties in the country. Situated on the unceded land of the Piscataway-Conoy people, the Olney area was once a rural farming community with a unique Quaker

heritage. Now the area is occupied by every kind of family that makes up 21st Century America, along with major corporations, shopping districts, civic associations, non profit organizations and a diverse collection of houses of worship. Montgomery County's 1 million residents play a dynamic role in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, and are a driving force behind the region's creative economy.

Olney Theatre Center employs 45 full time staff, 20+ part-time positions, 13 early career apprentices, and more than 400 professional artists annually. The Theatre is currently in the final phase of a \$36M capital campaign to build new infrastructure that bettermeets the needs of our community.

For more information, please visit olneytheatre.org/history

Follow Olney Theatre Center on Instagram, TikTok, and Threads @olneytheatre and on Facebook at facebook.com/olneytheatre.

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