

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE OPENS ON NOV. 15 IN EAST SONORA

Nostalgic radio show lifts spirits with a classic holiday story of love and redemption

SIERRA REPERTORY THEATRE brings the spirit of the holiday season to its East Sonora stage with Joe Landry's live 1940s radio broadcast version of the beloved film *It's A Wonderful Life*, playing November 15 to December 22. Seven actors play dozens of characters, while a foley artist produces the sound effects, all in front of their live studio audience.



San Diego's Tom Andrew will play the role of George Bailey at SRT's East Sonora stage. He's pictured here in the same role at Cygnet Theatre. Photo by Daren Scott

"So many people have commented on how much this show is like the film, and they really like that," said actor Tom Andrew, who played the role of George Bailey for six seasons at Cygnet Theatre in San Diego and will reprise the role at Sierra Rep this winter. "I have also had many people come up to me who don't like the film but love this show. To me that says a lot about the format of the show."

Sierra Rep Artistic Director Scott Viets will direct the production.

"Translating a beloved film to the stage in a totally unique way is what makes this so fun," Viets said. "Taking the format of a radio presentation in the 1940s is such a cool concept, and this show promises lots of nostalgia and good ol' fashioned holiday cheer for everyone!"

The *Chicago Sun-Times* called the play "one of the best holiday shows around," writing, "This is a fresh and inventive way of reconnecting with a classic story of love and redemption." And The *Chicago Tribune* described it as "a well-loved tale told with style, charm and a heart so big it could burst the ribcage of the harshest Grinch."

Andrew received a 2008 Craig Noel award from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle for his role in the show, and The San Diego Union-Tribune called his performance "remarkable and touching."

The engaging and spirit-lifting tale follows George Bailey as he learns that "no man is a failure who has friends." After a lifetime of dreaming, George finds himself still at home in Bedford Falls, blessed with a wife and children and often helping those in need through his inherited loan company. But when a large amount of money suddenly goes missing, George wonders if the people he loves would be better off

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2014 Season

SRT's 35th Anniversary Season

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Photo Courtesy of Cygnet Theatre Company

Sierra Repertory Theatre — Page 3

Award-winning play brings beloved holiday story to the stage

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without him. Enter Clarence, an angel in line to earn his wings. Clarence shows George a world without George Bailey, proving just what a wonderful life George possesses.

"The part of George Bailey is an amazing gift to play," Andrew said. "To know how important your individual life is to everyone you come in contact with is something I really never thought about. George's journey has made me think a lot about that."

Andrew said George would do anything for his family, friends and anyone who needs his help.

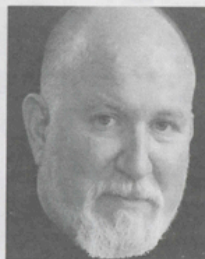
"It's something I think we as Americans have sadly gotten

away from, and to get to be that kind of person on stage, if only for a few moments, to me it's worth its weight in gold."

San Diego-based actor Tim West plays Clarence, a role West also performed alongside Andrew at Cygnet Theatre. Fresno actor Chris Carsten, who recently played Professor Higgins in the national tour of *My Fair Lady*, provides the voice of head angel Joseph, as well as the Announcer. Sonora actress Susan Chapman plays George's love interest, Mary, while Chicago actress Cathy Schenkelberg, Washington state actor Nick Ferrucci and Sierra Rep favorite Caitlin Randall

(Church *Basement Ladies*, *Cinderella*) voice various other characters. Justin Lang, whose experience includes acting, direction, sound design, and teaching, provides the foley sound effects.

Award winning guest artist Jeanne Reith costume designs after creating the costumes for Cygnet Theatre's original production of *Wonderful Life*. Reith has designed costumes for



Actor Tim West plays Clarence, an angel-in-training.

more than 350 plays in New York, Los Angeles, San Diego and other major cities. Guest artist Deborah Malcolm, whose work includes designs for Akron Symphony Orchestra, designs the sets for the East Sonora production. Sierra Rep's Mercy Sharpe manages props, and Lia Metz is stage manager.

It's A Wonderful Life: The Live Radio Play opens November 15 and runs through December 22 at the East Sonora Theatre on

Mono Way. Most Thursday and Friday performances begin at 7 p.m., Saturday evening shows begin at 8 p.m., and Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday matinees begin at 2 p.m. There will be one Thursday 2 p.m. matinee on December 19, and a special "talk back" with the performers follows the evening performance on Thursday, November 21. General admission ranges from \$26-\$32 depending on the day of the performance, with senior, student and child rates available. Rated G. (Aged 6 and up).

For more information or reservations, call Sierra Rep's box office at (209) 532-3120 or visit Sierra Rep at www.sierrarep.org.