



***The Cemetery Club* kicks off 25th season at Clayton Community Theatre**

Clayton Community Theatre (CCT - www.placeseveryone.org) will commence its 25th season with *The Cemetery Club* by Ivan Menchell, directed by Sam Hack.

Performances of *The Cemetery Club* are Thurs-Sun, Sept 14 – 24, 2023, 2023 (7:30 p.m. Thurs-Sat; 2:00 pm Sun – NOTE: no performance on Sept 15) at Washington University South Campus Theatre, 6501 Clayton Rd, Clayton MO 63117.

Tickets: \$15-\$25 (discounts for season tickets, group sales, seniors and students) - available via [SimpleTix](https://www.SimpleTix.com), or from CCT online at www.placeseveryone.org, or by phone at 314-721-9228. Financial assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.

Please note: 7:30 p.m. start time for evening performances.

The Cemetery Club is Ivan Menchell's touching, bittersweet slice-of-life story about three widows and longtime friends endeavoring to cope with change and loss. Ida is good-natured and down to earth. Lucille has embraced a bold, fun-loving attitude. Doris is tightly wound, judgmental, still in deep mourning.

After many years of marriage, the three women no longer have their spouses or their former routines to help define them. They have established a "cemetery club" routine: once a month, they meet for tea and emotional support, and to visit their husbands' graves. But the cycle of life goes on: Sam, a widower, enters the scene. The women's routine is disrupted by new people, new events and new interests.

This comedic drama, set in Forest Hills, Queens (NYC), is at once genuinely funny and deeply serious. There are secrets, anger, betrayal and love. The play touches on life's

big issues and questions about relationships, choices and challenges – and how we face them in later life; in this rich ensemble piece, each of the characters faces and reconciles them in her (or his) own way.

This very human story gives both audience and actors the opportunity to explore a full range of emotions. Director Sam Hack says, “We have an astonishingly talented cast for *The Cemetery Club*. Our audiences have loved the work of Jan Meyer (*The Lion in Winter*), Gabi Maul (*Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Broadway Bound*), Aaron Mermelstein (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, *A New Look at The Odd Couple*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, and *Broadway Bound*), and Tina Renard (*The Laramie Project*), and we are delighted to welcome Helene Meyer (founder of Slaying Dragons Theatre). All of these artists should definitely be counted among the best working on local stages.”

Sam Hack, director of *The Cemetery Club*, is Clayton Community Theatre Artistic Director and a longtime member of the CCT Board. Well known throughout the St. Louis theatre community as one of the area’s most distinguished theatre educators, he retired from full-time teaching after more than two decades as theatre director at Hancock High School in St. Louis County. Over the course of a career spanning some five decades, Sam has acted and directed with many professional and community theatre companies. In recent seasons he directed Neil Simon’s coming-of-age trilogy: *Biloxi Blues*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Broadway Bound*.

Playwright Ivan Menchell, born in 1961, has numerous Broadway credits and is also a producer and television writer. *The Cemetery Club* first opened on Broadway in May 1990. In 1993, it was adapted into a movie starring Olympia Dukakis, Ellen Burstyn, Diane Ladd and Danny Aiello, directed by Bill Duke.

The Cemetery Club is the first production of CCT’s 25th season (2023-2024). The next two productions are *The Play That Goes Wrong* by Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer, and Henry Shields, directed by Tim Kelly (April 4 – 14, 2024) and *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare, directed by Heather Sartin (July 11 – 21, 2024). Season tickets are available.

THE CEMETERY CLUB – CAST AND CREW

- Gabi Maul as Ida
- Jan Meyer as Lucille
- Helene Meyer as Doris
- Aaron Mermelstein as Sam
- Tina Renard as Mildred

Director: Sam Hack

Assistant Director/Stage Manager: Lilian Claire Dodenhoff

Assistant Stage Manager: Tina Renard

Members of the press: Visit the [CCT Media Resources Page](#). For additional materials, info and reviewer tickets, reach out to CCT media contacts Nathan Schroeder and Judith Rubin, media@placeseveryone.org; tel. [314-721-9228](tel:314-721-9228).

About Clayton Community Theatre

Clayton Community Theatre was founded in 1998. CCT's purpose is to provide a vehicle for all members of our community to be involved in the production of top-quality live theatre. Through its annual productions and program of community outreach, CCT has involved hundreds of individuals in productions that have played to consistently enthusiastic reviews and crowded houses. CCT believes that our successful history as a theatre company has proven that there is an important place in our community for a volunteer theatre company that is open to all and driven by a commitment to excellence.

CCT productions take place in the Washington University South Campus Theatre, an outstanding 210-seat venue at 6501 Clayton Road with handicap accessibility, elevators, and a lighted parking lot. CCT operates on the Washington University campus as an independent community theatre company and is not affiliated with the Washington University Performing Arts Department.

Clayton Community Theatre is incorporated as a Missouri nonprofit corporation and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Membership in the organization is open to any interested individual. CCT receives financial assistance from the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.

Next up at CCT (April 4-14, 2024) Mark your calendar for *The Play that Goes Wrong!*



Clayton Community Theatre
Proudly Announces the

**Cast of
THE PLAY
THAT GOES
WRONG**

by HENRY LEWIS, JONATHAN SKYER & HENRY SHIELDS
April 4-14, 2024
Directed by TIM KELLY



"Break a leg!" takes on a whole new meaning for a woefully misguided troupe of players at the Comley University Society's opening night performance of their latest production. An unconscious leading lady, a corpse who can't play dead, a ruffled detective, and a word-mangling butler (among others) must battle against technical gaffes, forgotten lines, and sabotaging scenery in a quest to arrive all in one piece at the final curtain call. Part Monty Python, part Sherlock Holmes, all mayhem, this 1920s whodunit is disastrously delightful.

 Jason Meyers As Chris	 Jeff Kargus As Robert	 Jeff Lovell As Dennis	 Jennelle Gilreath Owens As Sandra
 Ella Klasing As Annie	 Michael Baird As Max	 Joey Franks II As Jonathan	 Brad Kinzel As Trevor

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