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## **Renaissance Theaterworks produces *Barefoot in the Park*, directed by Suzan Fete in her final production as Artistic Director**

**February 24, 2026 (Milwaukee, Wis)** – Renaissance Theaterworks (RTW) closes its 33rd mainstage season with BAREFOOT IN THE PARK, Neil Simon’s beloved romantic comedy directed by longtime Artistic Director Suzan Fete in her final production before retiring at the end of the season. A defining artistic leader at RTW, Fete concludes her tenure with this joyful and deeply human portrait of love, compromise, and the unpredictable realities of married life. Performances run March 22 through April 12, 2026, with preview performances on March 20 and 21, at the Theater on 255 S. Water Street in Milwaukee’s Harbor District.

RTW continues its commitment to access and inclusion with \$17 Affordable Cost Tickets (ACT) for Wednesday Matinees, Thursday Nights and Friday Nights, as well as a Pay-What-You-Choose (PWYC)\* preview performance on Friday, March 20 at 7:30pm. Tickets range from \$17–\$49 and are available at [rtwmke.org](http://rtwmke.org), by phone at 414-278-0765, or in person at the box office (open 12:00–5:00 p.m. M-F, and two hours before performances). \*PWYC tickets go on sale same-day, in-person only, at 6:30pm.

Throughout the run of BAREFOOT IN THE PARK, RTW offers a range of accessibility services including Open Captioned performances, ASL Interpretation, Sensory-Friendly performances, Audio Description, a fully wheelchair-accessible venue, and a hearing loop system. These features ensure that every patron, regardless of ability, can experience live theater comfortably and fully. (See Performance Schedule and Special Events for details)

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## **Play Synopsis**

Newly married and full of possibility, free-spirited Corie and pragmatic Paul begin their life together in a tiny New York sixth-floor walk-up with no heat and a hole in the skylight that seems determined to test their optimism. Between an eccentric neighbor, Corie’s well-meaning mother, and their own clashing expectations, the honeymoon glow quickly gives way to real-life growing pains. Neil Simon’s sparkling comedy captures the exhilaration, absurdity, and tenderness of young love—and the courage it takes to meet each other halfway.

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## Cast

CORIE BRATTER.....	Emily Vitrano*
PAUL BRATTER.....	Neil Brookshire*
DELIVERY MAN.....	Bob Balderson
MOTHER.....	Jenny Wanasek
VICTOR VELASCO.....	Reese Madigan*
TELEPHONE REPAIR MAN.....	Mohammad EIBsat

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## Production Team

DIRECTOR.....	Suzan Fete
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER.....	Bailey Wegner*
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....	Tony Lyons
SCENIC DESIGN.....	Jeffrey D. Kmiec**
LIGHTING DESIGN.....	Noelle Stomack**
COSTUME DESIGN .....	Karin Kopischke**
PROP DESIGN .....	Jim Guy
SOUND DESIGN .....	Josh Schmidt**

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association

\*\*Member of the United Scenic Artists of America

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## Playwright Biography

### Neil Simon, PLAYWRIGHT

Neil Simon (1927–2018) was one of America's most prolific and beloved playwrights, renowned for his sharp humor and heartfelt storytelling. His iconic plays include THE ODD COUPLE, PLAZA SUITE, BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS, and LOST IN YONKERS, which earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Simon received more combined Oscar and Tony nominations than any other writer, and his work helped define American stage comedy for generations.

## Select Artist Bios

### Suzan Fete, DIRECTOR

Suzan is a graduate of University of Illinois. Suzan co-founded RTW in 1993. Favorite RTW projects include: directing TOPDOG/UNDERDOG, BLACKBIRD, TOP GIRLS, and THE MOORS, touring NEAT to Port Elizabeth, South Africa in 2013. Suzan is the recipient of Milwaukee Magazine's 2022 Betty Award/Groundbreaker. She is especially proud that RTW

won the prestigious 50/50 in 2020 International Applause Award in recognition of RTW's commitment to women playwrights. Suzan lives happily in Wauwatosa with her husband, Jeff and her emotional support raccoon, General Hamhock.

**Emily Vitrano, CORRIE**

Emily is thrilled to be back at RTW for BAREFOOT IN THE PARK! She was last seen at RTW as Marjorie in THE MOORS and Meg in L'APPARTEMENT. Emily has worked regionally at Milwaukee Rep, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Next Act Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, and Allentown Shakespeare in the Park. Emily also appeared in a national commercial for Batteries/Bulbs Plus, and regional commercials for Mills Fleet Farm, Sanford Brown University, Walgreens. She holds an MFA in Acting from Northern Illinois University. Emily is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association. She would like to thank her husband Miles, her family, and the team at KLF for their support. For Ella, always. And now also for Henry.

**Neil Brookshire, PAUL**

Previously with Renaissance Theatreworks: WITCH, PHOTOGRAPH 51, THE VIOLET HOUR. Other Milwaukee credits: THERE IS A HAPPINESS THAT MORNING IS, THE LAST WHITE MAN: Next Act Theatre, THE THANKSGIVING PLAY: MCT, FROM HERE TO ETERNITY: Skylight. Additional Wisconsin theaters: Third Avenue Playworks, Door Shakespeare, Peninsula Players, Two Crows Theatre. Directing: HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES at The Liberty Theatre Company, Assistant Director THE 39 STEPS at American Players Theatre. He co-authored/performs BENT COMPASS, a solo show of true stories of an Army Medic. Neil has an Interdisciplinary Studies BA from Boise State University and an MFA in Acting from Northern Illinois University.

**Bob Balderson, DELIVERY MAN**

Bob is thrilled to make his Renaissance debut. He came to Milwaukee in 1993 as an acting intern at the Milwaukee Rep after graduating from Binghamton University, NY with an MFA in acting. He has performed with the Wisconsin and Texas Shakespeare Festivals; in Wash., D.C.; Detroit; Philadelphia and NY. In Milwaukee with The Rep, The Florentine Opera, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Boulevard Ensemble, Windfall Theater, Sunset Playhouse, Shorewood Players, Danceworks and Optimist Theatre. He is part of Feast of Crispian, an all veterans acting company performing Shakespeare; and loves performing his show, THE GREAT SONGS OF HARRY (WHO?) WARREN. Don't know about Harry Warren? Just ask him!

**Jenny Wanasek, MOTHER**

Jenny's previous Renaissance acting credits are Emily Dickinson in the one woman show THE BELLE OF AMHERST and Isabella Bird in TOP GIRLS. She's directed five productions for the company: LETTICE AND LOVAGE, EDUCATING RITA, AMERICAN FIESTA, MEMOIR, AND FULL GALLOP. She has acted in some 35 productions and directed as many for Milwaukee Rep, Next Act, First Stage, In Tandem, Milwaukee

Chamber Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Marcus Center - among others. Other favorite acting credits include VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE and CHAPATTI for Chamber, and PRELUDES for Milwaukee Opera Theatre.

### **Reese Madigan, VICTOR**

Reese is thrilled to be back at RTW where he's appeared in AMELIA, RUSSIAN TRANSPORT, WITCH and THE MOORS. Most recently, he was the fight choreographer for CARDBOARD PIANO. He's also appeared in Wisconsin at Forward Theater, Door Shakespeare, APT, Next Act and Milwaukee Rep. A 36 year member of Actors Equity he has performed on Broadway, Off Broadway, in a Broadway touring company and in major regional theaters nationwide. Recent television: Law & Order SVU and The Penguin. Reese is also a director and playwright, with plays LĒTHĒ and ONE DAY IN PIGGSVILLE among his proudest accomplishments. With enormous respect and gratitude to Suzan for her many contributions to theatre in Milwaukee.

### **Mohammad N. EIBsat, TELEPHONE REPAIR MAN**

Mohammad is excited to make his RTW debut. He was recently seen in AMADEUS at Skylight Music Theatre. Directing credits include Assistant Director, THE TREASURER at Next Act Theatre. Acting credits include: THE WHO & THE WHAT(U/S), Milwaukee Rep, *BACK OF THE THROAT*, LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR at Next Act Theatre, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, KING LEAR at Optimist Theatre, RED, RED HERRING, THE METROMANIACS, SONS OF THE PROPHET, PRIN, OMNIUM GATHERUM at Windfall Theatre, and SIGNIFICANT OTHER, MURDERERS at Boulevard Theatre. Exhibit credits: "Chasing Rainbows", "Ordered Chaos", "Someone, Somewhere": Acrylic paintings. Instagram: @mnelbsat and @elbsatart.

## **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE & SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **Week 1**

Friday March 20th, 2026	7:30 p.m.	Pay-what-you-can Preview
Saturday March 21st, 2026	4:00 p.m.	Preview
Sunday March 22, 2026	5:00 p.m.	Opening Night

### **Week 2**

Wednesday March 25th, 2026	7:30 p.m.	Wine Wednesday
Thursday March 26th, 2026	7:30 p.m.	
Friday March 27th, 2026	7:30 p.m.	PRIDE & Talback
Saturday March 28th, 2026	4:00 p.m.	
Sunday March 29th, 2026	2:00 p.m.	Playclub

### **Week 3**

Wednesday April 1st, 2026	1:30 p.m.	Talback & Open Captions
Wednesday April 1st, 2026	7:30 p.m.	Wine Wednesday

Thursday April 2nd, 2026	7:30 p.m.	ASL Interpreted
Friday April 3rd, 2026	7:30 p.m.	Pre-show Talk
Saturday April 4th, 2026	4:00 p.m.	Open Captions
Sunday April 5th, 2026	2:00 p.m.	

**Week 4**

Wednesday April 8th, 2026	1:30 p.m.	Sensory Friendly
Wednesday April 8th, 2026	7:30 p.m.	Wine Wednesday
Thursday April 9th, 2026	7:30 p.m.	
Friday April 10th, 2026	7:30 p.m.	Audio Described
Saturday April 11th, 2026	4:00 p.m.	
Sunday April 12th, 2026	2:00 p.m.	Closing Performance

**Season Sponsors:** Laura & Mike Arnow, George & Sandy Dionisopoulos, Herzfeld Foundation, Shubert Foundation, Bert L & Patricia S. Steigleder Charitable Trust , CAMPAC, City of Milwaukee Arts Board, UPAF, Wisconsin Arts Board, Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

**Show Sponsors:** Anonymous, Marianne & Sheldon Lubar and J. Michael Reavis

**About Renaissance Theaterworks**

RTW is Milwaukee’s first professional theater company founded and led by women and the nation’s second-oldest professional theater devoted to gender equality. RTW is a resident company at 255 South Water St. in Milwaukee’s Harbor District, with increased capacity and improved accessibility.

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