

**SHERMAN PLAYERS**

# 'The House of Blue Leaves' opens April 21

**SHERMAN** » The Sherman Playhouse will kick off its 2017 theatrical season on Friday, April 21, with John Guare's dark comedy, *The House of Blue Leaves*.

The play focuses on Artie Shaughnessy, an aspiring songwriter who wants to escape from his wife Bananas, elope with his mistress Bunny, and write a hit song to boot.

In October 1965, when Pope Paul visits New York, Bunny convinces Artie to call his old school friend Billy, a film director in Los Angeles, to ask for a job scoring Billy's films. However, before Artie can reach Billy, Artie's son goes AWOL from the army with nefarious intentions. The ensuing events are hilarious, thought-provoking and chilling all at once.

The *House of Blue Leaves* is directed by Katherine Almquist of Sharon.

"I love this play. It dealt with mental illness long before those words could be said in public," said Almquist. "It is prescient exploring the violence, fear and terror that can grip someone. The expression 'You talkin' to me?' was said here long before the movie 'Taxi Driver.'"

"It's fascinating how [playwright] John Guare is able to mix unbridled, hilarious farce with some pretty heavy undertones," said producer and stage manager David Almquist. "The humor is clever and,

oftentimes, just downright wacky.

But while you're laughing, you always feel like something ominous is slowly bubbling to the surface."

Area actors featured in the cast are Ron Thomas (Washington), John Fabiani (Watertown), Judy Sullivan (Bridgewater), Blythe Everett, Rufus De Rham (both Kent), Alex Desjardins, Jessica Gleason (both Sherman), Keli Solomon, Stacy-Lee Frome, and Erin Shaughnessy (all New Milford).

The *House of Blue Leaves* made its debut Off-Broadway at the Truck and Warehouse Theatre on February 10, 1971, winning the Obie and Drama Critics' Circle Awards for Best American Play.

Fifteen years later, it was revived on Broadway at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre on April 29, 1986, where it was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play. The *New York Times* called the play an "enchantingly zany and original farce."

The *House of Blue Leaves* runs April 21-22, April 28-30, May 5-7 and May 12-14 at 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. April 30, May 7 and 14. Tickets are \$24 for adults and \$12 for children.

On Thursday, April 20, all patrons are invited to attend a "Half-Price Preview Night" at 8 p.m.,



PHOTOS BY TRISH HALDIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Judy Sullivan as the Second Nun, Blythe Everett as the Head Nun, Jessica Gleason as The Little Nun and Erin Shaughnessy in "The House of Blue Leaves."

where tickets are only \$12. Students may see any performance for only \$12 if they pay in cash only at the door and carry a valid student ID. Students may not make reservations in advance for a performance.

Reservations can be made online at [shermanplayers.org](http://shermanplayers.org) or by calling the box office at 860-354-

3622. The Sherman Playhouse is a non-Equity theatre company located at 5 Route 39 North (next to the firehouse) in Sherman.

Judy Sullivan, Jessica Gleason, and Blythe Everett in "The House of Blue Leaves."



Stacy-Lee Frome as Bunny, Erin Shaughnessy as Corinna, and Keli Solomon as Bananas in "The House of Blue Leaves."



Judy Sullivan and Blythe Everett (background); Stacy-Lee Frome and Erin Shaughnessy (foreground) in "The House of Blue Leaves."

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