

## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES COMPLETE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR *BABBITT*

### Stage and Screen Luminary Matthew Broderick to Lead Star-Studded Cast in World-Premiere Play, Adapted from Acclaimed Sinclair Lewis Novel

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast and creative team for its world-premiere production of *Babbitt*, by Tony Award winner **Joe DiPietro** (*Memphis*), adapted from the novel by **Sinclair Lewis**, choreographed by **Stephen Buescher**, directed by Tony Award winner **Christopher Ashley** (*Come From Away*), the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and featuring acclaimed stage and screen star **Matthew Broderick** (*The Producers*, Playhouse-born revival of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*) in the title role. The production will run in the Mandell Weiss Theatre **November 7 – December 3** (press opening: November 12). For tickets and information, please visit [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org).

In addition to **Matthew Broderick** as “George Babbitt,” the cast features **Genevieve Angelson** (Broadway’s *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*) as “Tanis Judique/Zilla Riesling/Eunice Littlefield/Storyteller 5,” Emmy Award nominee **Anna Chlumsky** (*Veep*) as “Seneca Doane/ Tinka Babbitt/Lucille McKelvey/Storyteller 4,” **Julie Halston** (*Sex and the City*) as “Mrs. Frink/ Mrs. Bumbleworth/Opal Mudge/Miss McGoun/Storyteller 6,” **Ann Harada** (Broadway’s *Avenue Q*) as Myra Babbitt/Storyteller 1,” **Francis Jue** (Playhouse’s *Wild Goose Dreams*) as Storyteller 2/Paul Riesling/Doc Littlefield; **Matt McGrath** (La Jolla Playhouse’s *His Girl Friday*) as “Charles McKelvey/Storyteller 3” and Obie Award winner **Chris Myers** (*An Octoroon*) as “Ted Babbitt/ Stanley Graf/Fabio/Storyteller 7,” along with understudies **Jalen Davidson, Iris Feng, Victor Flores, Kya Lee** and **Linda Libby**.

The creative team includes **Walt Spangler**, Scenic Designer; **Linda Cho**, Costume Designer; **Cha See**, Lighting Designer; **Leon Rothenberg**, Sound Designer; **Charles G. LaPointe**, Hair and Wig Designer; **Mark Bennett and Wayne Barker**, Co-Composers; **Gabriel Greene**, Dramaturg; **tbd casting co.**; **Stephanie Yankwitt, CSA/Jacole Kitchen**, Casting; **Martha Donaldson**, Stage Manager; **Kelly A. Martindale**, Assistant Stage Manager.

“The idea of adapting Sinclair Lewis’s scintillating novel has been percolating with Joe DiPietro, Matthew Broderick and myself for several years, and I’m delighted to be mounting the world premiere at the Playhouse this season,” said **Ashley**. “Lewis’s shrewd political and social satire is still deeply relevant in America 101 years later, and I can’t think of a more glorious cast and creative team to bring the production to life on the Weiss stage.”

Multi-award-winning star of stage and screen Matthew Broderick and Tony Award-winning playwright Joe DiPietro join forces with our own Christopher Ashley for this unmissable theatrical event. *Babbitt* entered the zeitgeist in 1922 as a novel by white-hot satirist Sinclair Lewis, the first American Nobel Laureate. An instant literary classic, *Babbitt* has been a stalwart on “best ever” lists for over 100 years, and is now adapted for the stage. George F. Babbitt is a middle-aged real estate broker in the Midwestern city of Zenith. By day, he has a prosperous, respectable middle-class existence. By night, he’s plagued by the thought that he has amounted to nothing. Searching for more to life than his top-of-the-line toaster and hickory golf club — more *meaning* — Babbitt leaps with abandon into the most spectacular rebellion of his life — one that could end up costing him everything.

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Two-time Tony award-winning actor and instantly recognizable film presence, **Matthew Broderick** was most recently seen starring in Netflix's Opioid Drama *Painkiller*, opposite Uzo Aduba, and Sony's Coming-of-Age Comedy *No Hard Feelings* opposite Jennifer Lawrence and Laura Benanti. On stage, Broderick was most recently seen starring in the Broadway revival of Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite* alongside his wife, Sarah Jessica Parker. They will both reprise these roles when *Plaza Suite* transfers to London's West End in January 2024. Additionally, he was seen in *The Starry Messenger* at Wyndham's Theatre, *The Seafarer* at the Irish Repertory Theatre and *The Closet* at the 2018 Williamstown Theater Festival. Previously, he starred in The New Group's US premiere of Wallace Shawn's *Evening at the Talk House* at the Pershing Square Signature Center and in the off-Broadway production of *Shining City* at the Irish Repertory Theatre, for which he earned an Obie Award for both performances. Other theatre credits include A. R. Gurney's comedy *Sylvia* alongside Annaleigh Ashford; the smash Broadway hit *It's Only a Play* opposite his frequent co-star Nathan Lane; the award-winning Broadway run of *Nice Work If You Can Get It*; the Broadway production of Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*; and *The Foreigner* at the Roundabout Theatre. In 2005, he starred in the feature film version of *The Producers*, reprising his Tony-nominated performance he gave during the record-breaking production on Broadway. A New York native, he made his professional stage debut opposite his father, James Broderick, at age 17 in the production of *On Valentine's Day*. His performance in Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy* won him the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Supporting Actor. Broderick won his first Tony Award for Neil Simon's *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, and starred in the play's sequel, *Biloxi Blues*. He won his second Tony for his role as J. Pierrepont Finch, in the Broadway revival of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Additional theatre credits include *Night Must Fall* and *Taller Than a Dwarf*. On screen, Broderick starred in Shawn Snyder's *To Dust*, which won the Tribeca Film Festival Audience Award for Narrative feature; the animated comedy *Wonder Park*, starring Jennifer Garner and Mila Kunis; *Rules Don't Apply*, directed by and starring Warren Beatty; as well as *Manchester By The Sea*, directed by Kenneth Lonergan. Additionally, he starred in the critically acclaimed film *You Can Count on Me* opposite Laura Linney. He also earned considerable acclaim starring opposite Reese Witherspoon in the Independent Spirit Award-winning political satire *Election*, directed by Alexander Payne. Broderick has also starred in such blockbuster movies as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *Glory*, *War Games*, and Disney's *The Lion King*, as the adult voice of Simba. Additional credits include *Lazy Susan*, *Love is Blind*, *The American Side*, *Dirty Weekend*, *Tower Heist*, *Margaret*, *Bee Movie*, *Then She Found Me*, *Deck the Halls*, *The Last Shot*, *The Stepford Wives*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Godzilla*, *Addicted to Love*, *The Cable Guy*, *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, *The Night We Never Met*, *The Freshman*, *Family Business* and *Max Dugan Returns*. On television, Broderick was recently seen in Netflix's *Daybreak*. He has also appeared on Fox's live musical event *A Christmas Story Live!*, *Modern Family*, *30 Rock*, the Showtime film "*Master Harold*"...and the Boys and received an Emmy nomination for the TNT production of David Mamet's *A Life in the Theater* in which he starred opposite Jack Lemmon. Broderick resides in New York with his wife Sarah Jessica Parker and their three children.

**Joe DiPietro** is a playwright and lyricist. He has won two Tony Awards, a Drama Desk Award and three Outer Critics Circle Awards. His musicals and plays have received thousands of productions across the country and around the world. Broadway: *Diana*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* starring Matthew Broderick and Kelli O'Hara (ten Tony nominations, including Best Book, Best Musical), *Memphis* (four Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Book, Best Score), *All Shook Up*, *Living on Love* (starring Renee Fleming). Off-Broadway: *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*, *Clever Little Lies* (starring Marlo Thomas), *The Toxic Avenger* (OCC Award - Best Off-Broadway Musical), *The Thing About Men* (OCC Award - Best Off-Broadway Musical), the much-produced comedy *Over the River and Through the Woods*, and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (longest-running musical revue in Off-Broadway history). Other recent regional credits include: *The Second Mrs. Wilson* (Long Wharf Theatre and George Street Playhouse), *Hollywood* and *Chasing the Song* (La Jolla Playhouse), *The Last Romance* (The Old Globe), *Creating Claire* (George Street Playhouse). His new Tom Jones musical,

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*What's New, Pussycat?*, recently debuted at Birmingham Rep to critical acclaim and is slated to make its West End debut. He is a long-time board member of Only Make Believe, a charity dedicated to bringing interactive, therapeutic theatre to chronically ill children.

Tony Award winner **Christopher Ashley** has served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director since 2007. During his tenure, he directed the world premieres of *Come From Away*, *The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical*, *Diana: The Musical*, *Memphis*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *The Squirrels*, *A Dram of Drumhicit*, *Restoration* and *Chasing the Song*, as well as *As You Like It*, *His Girl Friday*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Freaky Friday* and *Xanadu*. He also spearheaded the Without Walls (WOW) initiative, the DNA New Work Series and the Theatre-in-Residence program. Ashley recently directed *Come From Away* for AppleTV+ and *Diana: The Musical* for Netflix. Other screen credits include the feature films *Jeffrey* and *Lucky Stiff*, and the American Playhouse production of *Blown Sideways Through Life* for PBS. Broadway credits include *Come From Away* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Awards), *Diana: The Musical*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis* (Tony nomination), *Xanadu*, *Leap of Faith* (Drama Desk Award nomination), *All Shook Up* and *The Rocky Horror Show* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award nominations). He also helmed productions of *Come From Away* in London (Olivier Award nomination), Toronto, Australia and on national tour. Other national tours include *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis*, *Xanadu*, *All Shook Up* and *Seussical: The Musical*. Additional New York stage credits include *Blown Sideways Through Life*, *Jeffrey* (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards), *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *Valhalla* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination), *Regrets Only*, *Wonder of the World*, *Communicating Doors*, *Bunny, Bunny*, *The Night Hank Williams Died* and *Fires in the Mirror* (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. Mr. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.

**La Jolla Playhouse** is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what's new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. The Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new works, including mounting 110 world premieres, commissioning 70 new works, and sending 34 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

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**FACT SHEET**

- WHAT:** ***Babbitt***  
By Joe DiPietro  
Adapted from the novel by Sinclair Lewis  
Choreographed by Stephen Buescher  
Directed by Christopher Ashley
- WHEN:** **November 7 – December 3** (Press Opening: November 12 at 7pm)  
Tue/Wed at 7:30pm; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8pm; Sun at 7pm; Sat/Sun at 2pm
- WHERE:** **Mandell Weiss Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse**  
2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037
- WHO:** Scenic Designer: Walt Spangler  
Costume Designer: Linda Cho  
Lighting Designer: Cha See  
Sound Designer: Leon Rothenberg  
Hair and Wig Designer: Charles G. LaPointe  
Co-Composers: Mark Bennett, Wayne Barker  
Dramaturg: Gabriel Green  
Casting: tbd casting co., Stephanie Yankwitt, CSA/Jacole Kitchen  
Stage Manager: Martha Donaldson  
Assistant Stage Manager: Kelly A. Martindale
- Cast:** Genevieve Angelson as *Tanis Judique/Zilla Riesling/Eunice Littlefield/Storyteller 5*  
Matthew Broderick as *George Babbitt*  
Anna Chlumsky as *Seneca Doane/Tinka Babbitt/Lucille McKelvey/Storyteller 4*  
Julie Halston as *Mrs. Frink/Mrs. Bumbleworth/Opal Mudge/Miss McGoun/Storyteller 6*  
Ann Harada as *Myra Babbitt/Storyteller 1*  
Francis Jue as *Paul Riesling/Doc Littlefield/Storyteller 2*  
Matt McGrath as *Charles McKelvey/Storyteller 3*  
Chris Myers as *Ted Babbitt/Stanley Graf/Fabio/Storyteller 7*
- Understudies: Jalen Davidson, Iris Feng, Victor Flores, Kya Lee, Linda Libby.

**BACKGROUND:**

Multi-award-winning star of stage and screen Matthew Broderick and Tony Award-winning playwright Joe DiPietro join forces with our own Christopher Ashley for this unmissable theatrical event. ***Babbitt*** entered the zeitgeist in 1922 as a novel by white-hot satirist Sinclair Lewis, the first American Nobel Laureate. An instant literary classic, *Babbitt* has been a stalwart on “best ever” lists for over 100 years, and is now adapted for the stage. George F. Babbitt is a middle-aged real estate broker in the Midwestern city of Zenith. By day, he has a prosperous, respectable middle-class existence. By night, he’s plagued by the thought that he has amounted to nothing. Searching for more to life than his top-of-the-line toaster and hickory golf club — more *meaning* — Babbitt leaps with abandon into the most spectacular rebellion of his life — one that could end up costing him everything.

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**TICKETS:** [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org); (858) 550-1010

**SPONSORS:** Kay and Bill Gurtin; Sheri L. Jamieson, Karen and Jeff Silberman  
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