

## Casting announced for the the UK premiere of **IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE**



**Gerard McCarthy** has been cast as George Bailey - played by **James Stewart** in Frank Capra's 1946 film

**Gerard McCarthy** has been cast as the central role of George Bailey in the UK premiere of a stage adaptation of Frank Capra's 1946 film classic **It's A Wonderful Life**.

Bailey was originally played by James Stewart who holds the No. 9 position on the American Film Institute's list of the 50 greatest screen heroes of all time; and many critics cite it as one the best Christmas movies ever.

**It's A Wonderful Life**, performed as a live radio play in front of a studio audience, will run from 9 December - 4 January at South London's newest fringe theatre, the **Bridge House Theatre SE20**, and is directed by the venue's Artistic Director, Guy Retallack.

**Press night is Thursday 11 December at 7.30pm.**

Belfast born **Gerard McCarthy**, seen on TV in *The Fall*, made his Shakespearean debut in 2010 as Fenton in *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* at Shakespeare's Globe. He recently filmed the new BBC comedy *Puppy Love*, written by and starring Joanna Scanlan & Vicki Pepperdine.

The rest of the cast features Sophie Scott (Dusa in *Dusa, Fish, Stas & Vi*, Finborough Theatre); Kenneth Jay (*Death of a Salesman, Cool Hand Luke*, West End); Gillian Kirkpatrick (Mrs Bateman, *American Psycho*, Almeida, Beggar Woman, *Sweeney Todd*, Chichester & West End, Velma Von Tussle, *Hairspray*, West End); Daniel Hill (TV includes five series as Harvey Bains, the greedy, vain manager of Bayview in *Waiting for God, 24* with Kiefer Sutherland, and the upcoming *Broadchurch* series 2); Danny Colligan (who played Nathan in the acclaimed, award-winning *Thrill Me: The Leopold & Loeb Story*, directed by Guy Retallack, produced by Rob Harris both in London and at the Edinburgh Fringe).

**It's A Wonderful Life**, by Tony Palermo, is a loving tribute to the golden era of radio and also beautifully captures the eternal comedy of Frank Capra's iconic Hollywood feature film. It's the story of a dreamer, the idealistic George Bailey from a small American town, Bedford Falls, just after the Great Depression of the 1930s; Standing alone on a bridge on Christmas Eve, George has decided, with all his dreams of escape and adventure quashed by his love of family and civic duty, that everyone would be better off without him... or would they? It falls to a guardian angel, Clarence, to try and save him, showing him what the world could have been like without him and how after all, it has been a wonderful life... Not only does the triumph of humanity come effortlessly across through this amazing story, but the unique setting of the recording of a radio play in the 1940s, adds another layer of drama to this immortal classic as the audience is transported to Bedford Falls.

**It's A Wonderful Life** is produced by Bridge House Theatre Productions SE20 Ltd.

**It's A Wonderful Life** runs alongside the family panto show **The Uglies Take Penge**, featuring David Kent & Jonathan Barnes as Cinderella's Ugly Sisters and follows what happened to them after the "Glass Slipper incident".

Bridge House Theatre SE20, at Bridge House, 2 High Street, Penge, London, SE20 8RZ, has joint artistic directors in Retallack and his actress wife, Rachel Tucker, who is currently starring on Broadway in the world premiere of Sting's *The Last Ship*. The theatre's manager and lead producer is Rob Harris. Local residents, Retallack and Tucker had been looking for a venue to create a theatre for Penge, Crystal Palace and the surrounding area for some time. A chance meeting with Bridge House pub owner Scott Blenkhorn and manager Sinon Kelly soon led to a commitment to create a theatre above the popular local hostelry. Cabaret nights, curated and programmed by Rachel, and comedy evenings, programmed by Tammy Stone have already been hugely enthusiastically received by locals. Guy says: "I knew the moment I walked into Bridge House, that this was the 'home' we'd been looking for; as soon as we went upstairs the whole atmosphere of this Victorian function room was so incredibly theatrical!" Rachel adds: "I don't think Guy and I could quite believe the original and beautiful space that was sitting waiting to happen. We are so excited about what this space has to offer the community of Penge and Crystal Palace. Not only is there no other professional theatre in or around the area, but we will be able to generate and create work and jobs for actors and directors in our part of south east London. We expect and want people to come from not just the local area, but from all over London!" and want people to come from not just the local area, but from all over London!"

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public relations

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## It's a Wonderful Life

**Tuesday 9 December - Sunday 4 January**

**Press night is Thursday 11 December at 7.30pm**

8.00pm Tue 9 Dec, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, Fri 2 Jan, 3

4.30pm Sat 13 Dec, 14, 18, 20, 21

4.00pm Sat 27 Dec, 28, 29, 30, Sat 3 Jan, 4

no performances

24 - 27 & 31 December, January 1

Tickets £16.00, £14.50, £12.50, £10.00

## The Uglies Take Penge

**Friday 12 - Sunday 21 December**

**Press performances:**

**Friday 12 December at 3.30pm**

**& Saturday 13 December at 11.30am**

at 11:30am

Friday 12 December, 13, 14, 20, 21

at 12:45

Thursday 18 & Friday 19 December

at 1.00pm

Tuesday 16 & Wednesday 17 December

at 2.00pm

Friday 12, 13, 14, 20, 21 December

at 3:30pm

Tuesday 16 & Friday 19 December

Tickets : £8.50 - £12.50



### BRIDGE HOUSE THEATRE SE20

Bridge House Theatre

2 High Street Penge

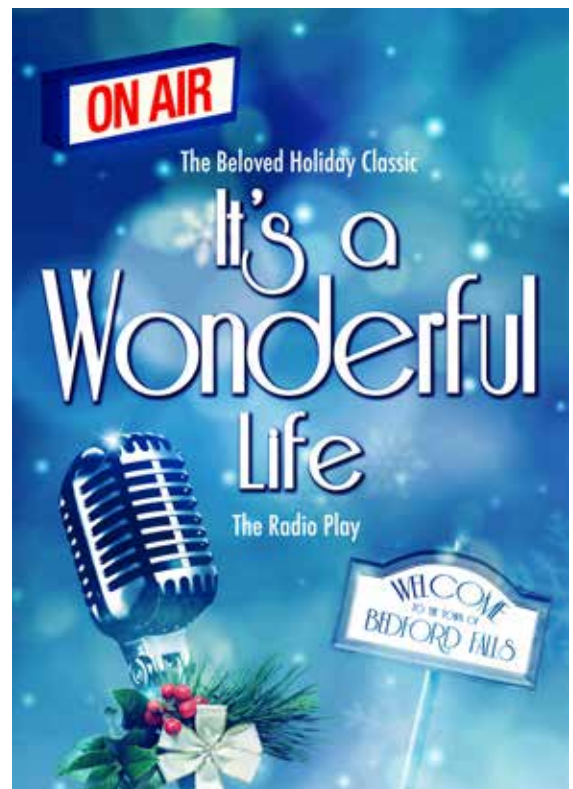
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[www.bhtheatre.co.uk](http://www.bhtheatre.co.uk)

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The Uglies Take Penge  
Previous cast