

**Rubicon Theatre Company
& Michael Jackowitz present**
IT'S ONLY LIFE
Lyrics and Music by John Bucchino
Co-conceived & Directed by Daisy Prince

Whatever stone life may sling/We can moan or we can sing – John Bucchino's "Grateful"

May 12, 2008...Ventura, CA... Rubicon Theatre Company continues its 10th Anniversary "Festival" Season with the World Premiere Production of John Bucchino's **IT'S ONLY LIFE**, previewing June 19th, opening June 21st, and running through July 13th, 2008.

Conceived by longtime friends, Daisy Prince (director of Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years* and *Songs for a New World*) and John Bucchino (Broadway's *A Catered Affair*), **IT'S ONLY LIFE** is a collection of songs Bucchino wrote over a 40 year time span, representing, as Prince notes, a sort of "diary of life." The two created the piece after, what Bucchino calls, "three or four failed attempts at a revue...with various other directors."

Since working with Prince, he noted, "I can't believe it took us this long [to finally work together]...she is *brilliant*. I know anyone would say that about any director, but she is. She makes me feel better about my own work by her analysis and understanding. She is truly outstanding: one of the biggest, kindest, greatest hearts you will ever meet. I can't imagine anyone else putting this together with me."

The result of Prince and Bucchino's collaboration is a musical collage that carries the characters and audience on a progression of revelations. Through Bucchino's probing, personal songs, the piece moves from an urban, cold, sophisticated world to a world beyond the neuroses – a world in which light, hope and love have a place once more.

Prince commented, "It is my belief that John's songs, whether in their sincerity and simplicity, or in their hyper articulate complexity, express the commonality in our emotional life. Like some of our best novelists, the incredible specificity in John's writing is, perhaps ironically, the thing that makes it universal. I hope that, much like the stories told onstage, the audience sees our common struggle with doubt and fear as the precursor to insight."

According to the *New York Times*, Bucchino's "flowing, finely made piano ballads describe an urban single life in which relationships come and go in cycles of yearning, fulfillment, heartbreak and healing" – where romantic love is anticipated with "high expectations, high anxiety and open hearts."

The cast of **IT'S ONLY LIFE** contains a who's who of Broadway performers. **Billy Porter** (Broadway's *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Miss Saigon*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, and *Grease*) returns to the piece he also performed in concert at Lincoln Center and whose voice graces the CD. Accompanying him are **Jessica Phillips** (Broadway's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*), **Lucas Steele** (Broadway's *The Threepenny Opera*), **Jamison Stern** (Broadway's *By Jeeves*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*) and **Joan Almedilla**, who returns to Rubicon after appearing in the 2004 *Songs for a New World* (also Broadway's *Miss Saigon* and National Tours of *Les Miserables* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*).

In 2006, **IT'S ONLY LIFE** was performed as a concert in the American Songbook series at the Lincoln Center, from which the popular CD recording was made. Prior to that, it was developed at Musical Theatre Works and work shopped as part of 2004's first Summer Play Festival in New York City. However, the production at Rubicon will be the first fully realized presentation of the revue, and a part of the Southern California Festival of New American Musicals.

About the Creative Team

Composer and Lyricist **John Bucchino** recently opened his first show on Broadway, *A Catered Affair*, starring Faith Prince, Tom Wopat and Harvey Fierstein. It recently received the Drama League Award for Distinguished Production of a Musical, 3 Tony Award nominations, and 12 Drama Desk Award nominations (including Outstanding Musical, Outstanding Music and Outstanding Lyrics). He has also written scores for the musicals *Urban Myths* and *Lavender Girl*, and the Dreamworks animated film "Joseph: King of Dreams." His work has been recorded and performed by renowned pop, theatre and cabaret artists including Liza Minelli, Yo-Yo Ma, Kristen Chenoweth, Art Garfunkel, Patti Lapone, Audra MacDonald and Amanda McBroom in venues that include Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, the Hollywood Bowl, the Sydney Opera House and the White House. Honors include the Mercer, Rodgers, Larson, Kleban and Fred Ebb awards. Some of his recordings include "Grateful: The Songs of John Bucchino," "It's Only Life," "Solitude Lessons," and "On Richard Rodgers' Piano." In their Julie Andrews Collection, Harper Collins published a children's book, based on his song, called *Grateful: A Song of Giving Thanks*.

Director **Daisy Prince**'s previous work includes direction of both original productions of Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years* and *Songs for a New World* in N.Y. She also directed *It's Only Life: The Songs of John Bucchino* at the first New York Summer Play Festival and American Songbook at Lincoln Center, and *Pentimento* with Jessica Molaskey, John Pizzarelli, Christine Ebersole and Frank McCourt. Daisy's performing credits include *Merrily We Roll Along* on Broadway, *The Petrified Prince* at New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theater; *Follies in Concert* at Lincoln Center; *Pal Joey* at Encores! City Center and a concert with the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall. Her recording credits include all of the above and John Bucchino's "Grateful." On film, she has appeared in "Everyone Says I Love You," "Deconstructing Harry," and "Celebrity." Daisy is a graduate of Brown University.

Brent Crayon returns to Rubicon to serve as the piece's Musical Director. He has been the pianist and musical director for over fifty musical productions and worked with directors such as Steven Schwartz, Scott Schwartz, Chen Shi-Zheng, Jon Rivera, Kay Cole, Lou Palter, and Ed Harris. Notable shows include *The History Boys* at the Ahmanson Theatre, the West Coast premieres of *Songs For a New World* and *tick...BOOM!* at the Rubicon and Coronet Theatres, the pre-Broadway run of the revised *Flower Drum Song* at the Mark Taper Forum, and most recently, the world premiere of Stephen Schwartz's new musical, *Snapshots* in Dayton, OH.

Orchestrator **Bruce Coughlin** has created the orchestrations for many shows, on Broadway and off, including the recent Broadway hit *Grey Gardens*. He co-orchestrated *The Light in the Piazza* (Tony award: Best Orchestrations (with Ted Sperling and Adam Guettel)) and orchestrated the memorable *Floyd Collins* (Obie award and Drama Desk nomination: Outstanding Orchestrations), the Broadway hit *Urinetown* (Tony Award and Drama Desk nominations), and the Grammy Award-winning *Annie Get Your Gun*. Other Broadway shows include: *The Wild Party*, *On the Town*, *The Sound of Music*, *Triumph of Love*, *Once Upon A Mattress*, and *The King & I*. Other credits include *Candide* (National Theatre, London), *Martin Guerre* (Chicago; Leslie Arden, composer), *Children of Eden* (Papermill Playhouse and BMG recording), and many others. He was principal arranger for the Disney epic "Fantasia 2000" and has worked with singers such as Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, Patti LuPone, Darius de Haas, and others. Recent credits include "Hairspray" (the movie), "Miss Baltimore Crabs" with Marc Shaiman (90 piece orchestra), "The Witches of Eastwick," "Saving Aimee," and *The Grapes of Wrath* (opera). Coming up, his orchestrations will be heard in *9 to 5*, *Ever After*, *Giant*, *Going Hollywood* and *A Star Is Born* (with Hugh Jackman).

The design team of **IT'S ONLY LIFE** features Scenic Designer **Beowulf Boritt**, Sound Designer **Drew Dalzell**, Costume Designer **Elizabeth Cox**, and Resident Property Designer **T Theresa Scarano** with production stage manager **Linda M. Tross**.

About the Cast

The cast of **IT'S ONLY LIFE** features 2 women and 3 men singing solos, duets and company numbers.

Billy Porter returns to the role he performed at the Lincoln Center concert and whose voice graces the **IT'S ONLY LIFE** CD. Billy recently premiered his autobiographical one man show, *Ghetto Superstar: The Man That I Am* to sold out audiences and rave reviews at the Public Theater in NYC. In conjunction with the show, Billy released his second album "At The Corner Of Broadway + Soul: Live At Joe's Pub," an album that celebrates Billy's Broadway, gospel and soul sounds with songs written for him by Adam Guettel, Jason Robert Brown and Ricky Ian Gordon, among others. Billy was first discovered on Ed McMahon's "Star Search" as the 1992 male vocalist champion. Shortly thereafter, he appeared on Broadway in *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Miss Saigon*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, and the *Grease* revival starring Rosie O'Donnell. His off-Broadway and regional credits include both musical and dramatic turns in *Romance In Hard Times*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *House of Lear* and *Radiant Baby* (The New York Shakespeare Festival), Jason Robert Brown's *Songs For A New World*, Adam Guettel's *Myths & Hymns*, and *Angels in America* (Actors Theatre Of Louisville), *Going Native* (The Long Wharf), *Top Dog Underdog* (City Theater), *Jelly's Last Jam* (The Alliance Theater), *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Antigone*, *A Chorus Line* and *Chicago*. In concert, Billy has opened for Aretha Franklin, Rosie O'Donnell, Vanessa Williams and Mint Condition. He has performed with The New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, John McDaniel and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, The Buffalo Philharmonic, Peter Nero and The Philly Pops, Lincoln Center's American Songbook Series and was a soloist for President Bill Clinton at The White House who commented, "If I could sing like Billy, I'd be in a different line of work." Film credits include "Noel" with Susan Sarandon and Robin William, "The Broken Hearts Club" and "Intern." For television, Billy appeared as Little Richard in CBS' "Shake Rattle & Roll," had a recurring role on "Another World," and was a featured guest star on "Law & Order" and "Twisted." He also made appearances on "A Very Rosie Christmas" (CBS), "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and 7 different appearances on "The Rosie O'Donnell Show." Billy studied at Carnegie Mellon University and graduated with a B.F.A in drama. Billy is also a graduate of the Professional Screenwriting Program at UCLA and is an adjunct professor at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama, where he has directed productions of *Company* and *Letter's From Nam*. Billy also directed a critically acclaimed recreation of *The Wiz* and conceived a musical revue entitled *Signed, Sealed, Delivered: The Music Of Stevie Wonder*, which starred Chaka Khan, Peabo Bryson and Melissa Manchester and ran at The Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas in the spring of 2002. Billy's most recent work, *Being Alive*, is a musical celebration combining the canons of Stephen Sondheim and William Shakespeare with the soulful musical styles of the African-American experience. *Being Alive* made its World Premiere this summer at The Westport Country Playhouse and immediately transferred to The Philadelphia Theatre Company.

Joan Almedilla, the only company member who has previously performed at Rubicon, returns from her 2004 appearance in Jason Robert Brown's *Songs for a New World* (nominated for several Ovation Awards including best Ensemble Cast) to perform in **IT'S ONLY LIFE**. When she first moved to the United States in 1993, she competed at Amateur Nights at The Apollo at the Apollo Theater in Harlem and has been featured since. She performed the role of Kim in the original Broadway production of *Miss Saigon*. Her other credits include Fantine in the Broadway National Tour of *Les Miserables*, Soul Girl in the Broadway National Tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Svetlana in NCT's *Chess*. Joan also portrayed Imelda Marcos in David Byrne's (former lead singer of Talking Heads) U.S. premiere of "Here Lies Love" in collaboration with Norman Cook (DJ Fatboy Slim) at Carnegie Hall. Outside of her musical performance, she recited two poems "Wonderment" and "A Hill In The Land Of Moriah" composed by Pope John Paul II at the United Nations in New York City.

Lucas Steele makes his debut performance at Rubicon. Lucas last appeared on Broadway with Cyndi Lauper and Alan Cumming in the revival of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's *The Three Penny Opera*. Off-Broadway and other New York credits include *Oliver Twist* (Theatre for a New Audience), *Corpus Christie* (Bouwerie Lane Theatre), *Dalliance In Vienna* (ATA), *Cheri* (The Actor's Studio), *All American Boy* (NYC Fringe), *Trippin'* by Daniel Beatty, and a year long run of *John Tartaglia: ADLIBerty* at Joe's Pub. Regional credits include productions at ART, Berkeley Rep., and The Walnut Street Theater. As a featured soloist, he has performed in concerts with Betty Buckley, Raul Esparza, Nancy Opel, John Bucchino, the cast of Baz Luhrman's *La Boheme*, and also *The Golden Apple* with the American Symphony Orchestra led

by orchestrator/arranger Johnathan Tunick. A singer/songwriter of his own material, he is also the violinist and lead vocalist for *The Infinite Orchestra* and a charter member of the popular New York singing group *The Broadway Boys*.

Jessica Phillips appears at Rubicon having most recently been seen in the original off-Broadway cast of Tom Kitt's *Next to Normal*, directed by Michael Greif, appearing opposite Brian D'Arcy James in the role of Diana. On Broadway, Jessica performed with Angela Lansbury, Debra Monk, Donna McKechnie and other Broadway Divas in *The Ladies Who Sing Sondheim*, directed by John Doyle; appeared in all three versions of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (Marguerite, Marie cover); was a part of the 25th Anniversary Revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar* (original cast); and toured internationally with *The Who's Tommy* (Mrs. Walker). Jessica's favorite regional credits include *Into the Woods* (Witch), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Millie), John Bucchino's *Urban Myths* (Lavender), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Narrator), and the world premiere of *Jungle Man!* in which she originated the role of Jane. Her film and TV credits include "The Imposters," dozens of children's television shows and soundtrack demos for animated films.

Jamison Stern, another Rubicon newcomer, has Broadway and National Tour credits that include *By Jeeves*, *Little Shop Of Horrors* (Seymour) and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (Lumiere). Off-Broadway, he has appeared in *Newsical the Musical* at Studio 54; *Love! Valour! Compassion!* at Genesius Guild; *Minnie's Boys* at Jewish Repertory, and *Bush Wars* at Actor's Playhouse. Regional credits include *Fully Committed* at the Alley Theatre and La Mirada; *Black Comedy*, *The Invention of Love*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, and *A Comedy of Errors* at the Alley Theatre; *Best Little Whorehouse...* at Arvada Center; *Ragtime* at Pioneer Theatre; *The Compleat Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (abridged)* at both Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; *Tommy* at Houston's TUTS; *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* at Cincinnati Playhouse; *Forever Plaid* at Actor's Theatre of Louisville; and *Big River* (Huck Finn) at North Carolina Theatre, AMTSJ, and Conn. Rep. For television and film, he has appeared on "Law and Order," "Day Zero," "The Finger Lakes," "Joke Bitch," and "The Entrepreneurs."

Schedule and Pricing

IT'S ONLY LIFE previews Thursday, June 19th and Friday, June 20th (\$29 per ticket) at 8:00 p.m. and opens Saturday, June 21st at 7:00 p.m. Opening Night Gala tickets are \$90 and include a pre-show champagne reception, the opening performance, an after-party and a tax-deductible donation to Rubicon. Regular performances of **IT'S ONLY LIFE** continue through July 13 on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. (\$29) and 7:00 p.m. (\$42), Thursdays at 8:00 p.m. (\$42), Fridays at 8:00 p.m. (\$49), Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. (\$42) and 8:00 p.m. (\$52) and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. (\$42). Seniors ages 65+ save \$5 per ticket. Student and equity tickets are available for \$20 with ID.

Discounts of up to 30% are available for groups of 12 or more, and group organizers receive one free ticket. To purchase single tickets or discounted group tickets, call the Rubicon box office at (805) 667-2900. To purchase tickets online, go to www.rubicontheatre.org.

Special performances include:

- **Opening Night Gala, Saturday, June 21st:** Rubicon Theatre hosts a pre-show champagne reception at 6:15 pm before the seven o'clock curtain. Following the opening performance of the show, guests are invited to an after-party with cast, crew and local dignitaries.
- **Talkback Wednesdays, June 25th and July 2nd:** Rubicon's Artistic Team facilitates a post-show discussion with the director and performers following the 7 p.m. early-bird performances
- **Audio Described Performance, Sunday, July 6th:** Via headphones, audience members who are blind or visually impaired are privy to a live description of the performance to aid in their enjoyment

For a complete performance schedule, visit www.rubicontheatre.org. All performances are at Rubicon Theatre, an intimate historic church built in the 1920s. The theatre is located at 1006 E. Main Street (the corner of Main and Laurel) in Ventura's Downtown Cultural District.

[Show Run](#)

IT'S ONLY LIFE previews June 19, opens June 21 and runs through July 13.

[Sponsors](#)

IT'S ONLY LIFE is sponsored by **Ann Deal and Fashion Forms**, the **New York Marriott Marquis** and **Sandra and Jordan Laby and the San Buenaventura Foundation for the Arts**.

Rubicon's 2007-2008 Season, the 10th Anniversary Festival Season is sponsored by **Barbara Meister and the Meister Family Foundation** and **Ann Deal and Fashion Forms**. Media sponsors include **Time Warner Cable, Gold Coast Broadcasting**, and **Ventura County Star**.

[Location](#)

All performances are at Rubicon Theatre, an intimate former church built in the 1920s. The theatre is located at 1006 E. Main Street (the corner of Main and Laurel) in Ventura's Downtown Cultural District.

[For Tickets](#)

Please call Rubicon Theatre Company's box office at (805) 667-2900 or visit www.rubicontheatre.org

[Press Information](#)

For interviews with the cast or creators of **IT'S ONLY LIFE**, to receive photos, or to arrange for press tickets, please contact:

Los Angeles: David Elzer/DEMAND PR at (818) 508-1754; email: ElzerD@aol.com
Ventura and Santa Barbara County: Alyson Schuster at (805) 667-2912 ext. 232; email: ASchuster@rubicontheatre.org