



Sweet Charity

Book by **NEIL SIMON**
Music by **CY COLEMAN**
Lyrics by **DOROTHY FIELDS**

32nd Season
LYRIC
STAGE

April 17– May 3, 2026
www.lyricstage.org

OUR MISSION

Lyric Stage is a Dallas-based, 501c3 professional musical theatre company, dedicated to the development and preservation of the musical.

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As we begin our 32nd season, please remember Lyric Stage in your valued continuing support and patronage. Lyric Stage is a fully qualified 501c3 non-profit organization, and your donation is tax-deductible as allowed by the law.

Like many theater companies, ticket sales account for less than half of our annual budget. Your generous gift, of any size, is greatly appreciated and will help Lyric Stage continue to produce the quality and award-winning shows that you love to see!

You can give to Lyric Stage today, or any time, online, or visit the box office when you attend a performance.



Too Many Girls - 2013



The Most Happy Fella - 2012



Gypsy - 2011



My Fair Lady - 2010



Aida - 2023



Sweeney Todd - 2024

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This story begins in 1957 with renowned Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini's creation of *La Notti di Cabiria*. Fellini's film brought us the dark and cynical story of Cabiria, a prostitute down on her luck and looking for a better life. His no holds barred attack on optimism, false hope, and faith, jarred the cinematic world, enraged the Catholic institution, and destined his story to become a classic.

Both Broadway legend Bob Fosse, whose Tony-winning choreography we honor in our production, and the prolific playwright Neil Simon realized the genius of Fellini's work. They determined to bring the story of a simple girl, down on her luck and looking for love, to the stage. Thus, in 1966, *Sweet Charity* was born. Audiences were delighted by the comical antics of Charity Hope Valentine, initially brought to life on the stage by the famous dancer Gwen Verdon. Her heartbreaking romances, her light-hearted mishaps, her social blunders, and her undying ability to always find the bright side of any situation warmed many hearts back in the day.

Yet while Fosse and Simon worked to bring a simpler, comical, and less political work to the stage, there was no denying the underlying cynicism surrounding the work. While Charity remained the eternal optimist, her peers and environment shed a harsh light on the growing state of society in the mid-'60s -- girls forced to sell their bodies to make a living, youngsters turning to drugs and charismatic charlatans to find faith and meaning in life, relationships for convenience rather than love, shattered dreams, and missed opportunities.

In this production, I also tried to focus on female solidarity, highlighting the bond between Charity and her colleagues at the Fandango Ballroom, exploring those relationships and how those women found ways to thrive and survive together. Despite the odds, and facing issues of sexism and misogyny, these characters, who are often disregarded, find joy and support with each other.

Even today, Charity can be seen as an endearing and inspiring beacon in a society where optimism and hope can easily be crushed by cynicism and despair. The character of Charity accepts her fate with the poise and dignity of a woman well beyond her years. Her refreshing attitude toward life unknowingly serves as a model for all those around her. So, perhaps we can all learn a little from her. Enjoy!

Penny Ayn Maas, Director

LYRIC STAGE

1170 QUAKER STREET
DALLAS, TX 75207

Presents



SWEET CHARITY

Book by Neil Simon

Music by Cy Coleman

Lyrics by Dorothy Fields

**Based on an original screenplay by
Federico Fellini, Tullio Pinelli and Ennio Flaiano**

Production Design **SCOTT GUENTHER**

Costumes **DALLAS COSTUME SHOPPE**

Stage Manager **BEN DOAN-STEVENS***

Assistant Stage Manager **KATE GONZALEZ**

Choreography by **TRICIA GUENTHER**

Assistant Choreography by **GABRIELA AYALA YARBROUGH**

Musical Direction by **HANS GRIM**

Directed by **PENNY AYN MAAS**

THE CAST

Charity Hope Valentine.....Annabelle Woodard*
Helene.....Noelle Saul
Nickie.....Kayla Starr Bryan
Vittorio Vidal.....Anthony Ortega
Oscar Lindquist.....Brandon Wilhelm
Daddy Brubeck.....Johnny Brown
Ursula & Ensemble.....Grayson Gardi
Herman & Ensemble.....Andrew Nicolas

Female Ensemble:

Addisen Bairrington, Gabriela Ayala Yarbrough,
Macy-Caroline Matens, Payton Zemaitis

Male Ensemble:

Christopher Nguyen, Daniel Vanegas,
Jordan Grice, Rayon Lim

Female Dance Swing..... Paige Huffman

THERE WILL BE ONE 20-MINUTE INTERMISSION

THE ORCHESTRA

Conductor/Keyboard – Hans Grim
Ellen Kaner – Reeds
Guillermo Villa – Trumpet
Drew Phelps – Bass
Jaime Reyes – Drums



** The Actors and Stage Manager employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*



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THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Producer.....CATHERINE CARPENTER COX

Director..... PENNY AYN MAAS

Music Director.....HANS GRIM

Choreographer..... TRICIA GUENTHER

Assistant Choreographer GABRIELA AYALA YARBROUGH

Stage Manager.....BEN DOAN-STEVENSON*

Assistant Stage Manager.....KATE GONZALEZ

Production Assistant..... LILY HOGGE

Production Design – Set/Lights/Sound.....SCOTT GUENTHER

Costume Design.....DALLAS COSTUME SHOPPE

Costume Assistant..... ANNIE CORRALES

SPECIAL THANKS

Kris Ikejiri – Photography Services



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MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I

- "Overture"
- "You Should See Yourself" – Charity
- "Big Spender" – Nickie, Helene, and Girls
- "Charity's Soliloquy" – Charity
- "Rich Man's Frug" – Ensemble
- "If My Friends Could See Me Now" – Charity
- "Too Many Tomorrows" – Vittorio
- "There's Gotta Be Something Better Than This"
Nickie, Helene, and Charity
- "I'm The Bravest Individual" – Charity and Oscar

Act II

- "The Rhythm of Life" – Daddy Brubeck & Ensemble
- "Baby, Dream Your Dream" – Nickie and Helene
- "Sweet Charity" – Oscar
- "Where Am I Going?" – Charity
- "I'm A Brass Band" – Charity and Ensemble
- "I Love To Cry At Weddings" – Herman, Rosie,
Nickie, Helene, and Ensemble

COMPANY MEMBERS

Addisen Bairrington (Ensemble) is thrilled to be making her Lyric Stage debut with this production! Addisen is currently a Junior at TCU pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre and minor in Kinesiology. She was most recently seen as Clarise in RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER (Casa Mañana), Rusty in FOOTLOOSE (Plaza Theatre Company), and Swing in RIDE THE CYCLONE (Stage West Theatre). "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."- Romans1:21

Andrew Nicolas (Herman & Ensemble) is so excited to be back at Lyric Stage, and to be performing with such talented individuals in this absolute classic piece! Andrew has been seen across the metroplex in theatres such as Casa Mañana, Stage West, Theatre Three, WaterTower Theatre, Circle Theatre, Theatre Arlington and of course Lyric Stage to name a few. Andrew wants to thank his friends, family and partner for loving and supporting him and he wants to dedicate his performance and every performance to his dad.

Annabelle Woodard (Charity Hope Valentine) is a former TCU horned frog and beyond jazzed to be returning to Lyric Stage! Annabelle is taking a brief leave from her 2-year run as Michael Scott in *The Office! A Musical Parody* Off Broadway in Manhattan to step into the role of Charity. Previous Lyric credits include:

Gaby/choreographer in *Mirette*, Mistress/ensemble in *Evita*, and Fermina/dance captain in *Man of La Mancha*. Other professional credits: Jan in *Grease*, Enid Hoopes in *Legally Blonde*, and Mrs. Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol*. Endless gratitude to her family forever and always!

Anthony J Ortega (Vittorio Vidal) is a Dallas based performer and is excited to be back at Lyric Stage for this production of Sweet Charity! Anthony is a graduate from the University of North Texas with a BA in Theatre Performance. His previous Lyric credits include Frankie in *Plaid Tidings*, The Beadle in *Sweeney Todd*, Hans/Emcee US in *Cabaret*, Harry Houdini/Tateh US in *Ragtime*. Other credits include Moses in *The Prince of Egypt*, Annas in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Robert US in *The Bridges of Madison County*, and Monty US in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*. May we create spaces where love feels safe and laughter comes easy. “

Brandon Wilhelm (Oscar Lindquist) is excited to be back at Lyric Stage in this production after being seen in *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Producers*, *Evita*, and *The Golden Apple*! He has performed with many other theatre companies in the DFW area including Casa Mañana, Jubilee Theatre, Lyric Stage, Theatre Arlington, Garland Summer Musicals, Undermain Theatre

COMPANY MEMBERS

Amphibian Stage Productions, Bishop Arts Theatre Center, Uptown Players, Dallas Children's Theater, and Theatre Three. Brandon works as an actuary by day (#anactingactuary) and is also a trained Man on Fire Stuntman having done over 100 fire stunts. Ubi caritas est vera, Deus ibi est
www.BrandonWilhelm.com

Christopher Nguyen (Ensemble) is so excited to be returning to Lyric Stage for Sweet Charity! You may have seen him previously in Guys and Dolls. His other work includes Mark, A Chorus Line (Theatre Arlington); Terpsichore, Xanadu (Uptown Players); Ensemble, Miss Saigon (Casa Mañana). He would like to thank his friends and family for their constant support.

Daniel Vanegas (Ensemble) is thrilled to return to Lyric Stage, where previous credits include Mamma Mia! A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Cinderella, Cabaret, and Guys and Dolls. Regional credits include West Side Story (Casa Mañana), Damn Yankees and A Chorus Line (Theatre Arlington), The Music Man and Legally Blonde (Garland Summer Musicals), and Aladdin: Dual Language Edition (Firehouse Theatre), among others. His choreography credits include Rent, Lend Me a Chainsaw, Pippin, Mean Girls Jr., The Little Mermaid Jr., and Miss Texas At Large 2024 (Winner). Film credits include 2AM (independent film) and The Gayborhood- Online

series-with the Dallas Voice. Outside of theatre, Daniel is a sculpt and yoga teacher with a passion for mental health and fitness! He would like to thank his immigrant mother for the sacrifices she made and for giving him the opportunities that allow him to live out his dreams today. Daniel is represented by Core talent.

Gabriela Ayala Yarbrough (Ensemble, Dance Captain & Asst Choreographer) is excited to be making her Lyric Stage debut! You may have seen her perform in the DFW area in Everybody's Talking About Jamie (Ensemble/Dance Captain) or The Prom (Ensemble) at Uptown Players, In The Heights (Ensemble/Dance Captain) at Theatre Arlington, Big Love (Lydia) at Hip Pocket Theatre, or Once Upon A Mattress (Ensemble) at Stage West. Gabriela will graduate from TCU with her B.F.A. in Musical Theatre in May. While at TCU, she performed in five mainstage shows, co-choreographed All Shook Up and Bright Star, and recently choreographed TCU's Co-Production of Ride the Cyclone with Stage West. ¡Puro amor!

Grayson Gardi (Ursula & Ensemble) is thrilled to return to Lyric Stage for the second time this season! Previously, Grayson played Jo March in Lyric Stage's production of Little Women. Originally from New York, she is currently a Junior BFA Musical Theatre major at TCU. Grayson's Theatre TCU

COMPANY MEMBERS

credits include *The Odyssey* (Penelope), *Melrose Stories* (Rose Comish), and *Bright Star* (Ensemble, U/S Alice Murphy). Grayson is beyond grateful for her supportive family and friends. Go Frogs!

Johnny Brown (Daddy Brubeck) is thrilled to make his Lyric Stage debut as Daddy Brubeck in *Sweet Charity*. Working across opera, concert, and theatre stages, he has been featured with the Dallas Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Jubilee Theatre, and others. Additional appearances include performances with Verdigris Ensemble, Orpheus Chamber Singers, Dallas Bach Society, Allen Philharmonic, Mansfield Philharmonic, Bombshell Dance Project, and B. Moore Dance Company. Professionally, he is a proud member of the American Guild of Musical Artists and BMI. Johnny remains passionate about making the arts more dynamic, collaborative, and accessible to all communities. He is also occasionally successful at watering his houseplants. Follow along at www.johnnyb-music.com or on IG @johnnyb23_

Jordan Grice (Ensemble) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major at TCU and is thrilled to be performing in his second production here at Lyric Stage. He is grateful for the opportunity to continue growing and collaborating with such a talented artistic community. Previous credits include *Swing* at Stage West and ensemble for

Guys and Dolls at Lyric Stage, as well as appearing in the ensemble of *All Shook Up* and *Bright Star* at Theatre TCU. Jordan would like to thank his friends and family.

Kayla Starr Bryan (Nickie) is thrilled to make her Lyric Stage debut! Select performance credits include: *A Chorus Line* (International Tour/China Premiere), *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (First National Tour); Upright Theatre Company: *Seussical* (Mayzie); Theatre Arlington: *A Chorus Line* (Sheila), *Holiday Inn*; RCT: *The Wedding Singer* (Holly), *9 to 5*, *Legally Blonde*; GSM: *Crazy for You*, *42nd Street*, *Legally Blonde*; GPAC: *Bonnie & Clyde* (Bonnie u/s), *Elf* (Jovie); Hopeful Theatre Project: *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Addams Family*. Thank you to the creative team, friends, and family for their continued support.

Macy-Caroline Matens (Ensemble) is so excited to be making her Lyric Stage debut! Her most recent credits include *Florence / U.S. Mama* in *Bright Star*, Featured Dancer in *All Shook Up* & co-choreographer for *Merrily We Roll Along*. She would like to thank her family and her best friend (her dog) Olive for being her greatest support.

Noelle Saul (Helene) is thrilled to return to Lyric Stage in *Sweet Charity*! This is her second Lyric production, previously appearing in *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* (Ensemble/Urchins U/S)

COMPANY MEMBERS

You've likely seen her running up and down the theatre scene in DFW recently, notably in AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY (Karen), RENT (Ensemble/Roger U/S), and ROMEO & JULIET (Mercutio)! When she's not being tackle-hugged by her favorite kiddos as an RBT, you may find her screaming about Shakespeare, playing indie video games, or reading books about tough girls with tougher swords. She's so excited for you to get up, get out, and SEE THIS SHOW!!!

Paige Huffman (Swing) is thrilled to be making her regional debut at Lyric Stage! She is currently a sophomore at Texas Christian University, pursuing her BFA in Acting. Recent credits include The Wizard of Oz at Plaza Theatre Company and Choreographer's Stage at Theatre TCU. She would like to thank her family, friends, and professors for their continued love and support.

Payton Zemaitis (Ensemble) is thrilled to be making her Lyric Stage debut! In the DFW area, she performs in Cats (Victoria) and West Side Story (Minnie) at Casa Mañana. She is a current sophomore BFA Musical Theatre student at Texas Christian University. At TCU, she has performed in Merrily We Roll Along (Ensemble), The Odyssey (Helen/Ensemble), and All Shook Up (Ensemble). Payton is so thankful to her fruggin' fabulous family and friends for their love!

Rayon Lim (Ensemble) is thrilled to be making his debut with Lyric Stage in Sweet Charity. He is currently pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre at Texas Christian University. Recent credits include Once Upon a Mattress (Ensemble), Pippin (Ensemble), and Fiddler on the Roof (Swing), as well as Damn Yankees (Del) and Anastasia (Count Ipolitov). Other performances include All Shook Up and The Odyssey at TCU.) Rayon is beyond excited to be part of this vibrant production of Sweet Charity.



PRODUCTION STAFF

Penny Ayn Maas (Director) is honored to be working on her 8th show at Lyric Stage, having previously directed & choreographed Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella, Cabaret, I Do! I Do!, Guys and Dolls, Anything Goes (for which she won a Column Award for Best Choreography of a Musical, Equity), Mame, and the regional premiere of The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Prior to coming to Texas, she worked as a professional actress, singer and dancer in New York City for over 20 years. On Broadway she had long, successful runs in three Tony award winning shows: the original cast of Crazy for You, including singing on the cast album, the revival of Damn Yankees, and the acclaimed revival of Cabaret at Studio 54. Recent directing credits include Everybody's Talking About Jamie (Uptown Players), Next to Normal (Riverside Center for the Performing Arts, VA), The Prom (Uptown Players), and Holiday Inn (Theater Arlington). For her day job, she is a Professor of Theatre at Texas Christian University where she teaches Musical Theatre Performance classes. For Theatre TCU she has directed and choreographed All Shook Up, Jesus Christ Superstar, The Wild Party, Sweet Charity, Children of Eden, Bare, Bat Boy: The Musical, Pippin, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas and Spring Awakening. Penny is a proud member of AEA, SAG/AFTRA and an Associate member of SDC.

Hans Grim (Music Director) comes crawling back to Lyric after selling his soul to Sweeney Todd, surviving The Great American Trailer Park Musical, and jingling all the way through Plaid Tidings (returning this Christmas!). Fresh from a summer at Interlochen and moonlighting as adjunct faculty at Dallas College, he also wrangles student choirs for the Dallas Symphony and Alvarado High. Most importantly, he's proud to be known as "Mary Grim's husband"

Scott Guenther (Co-Artistic Director & Designer of Set, Lights and Sound) is excited to be designing another show for Lyric Stage! His work has been seen with other local theatre companies like Uptown Players, Theatre Three, Stage West, Contemporary Theatre of Dallas, Jubilee Theater, Garland Summer Musicals, and WaterTower Theatre, to name a few. Scott serves as Managing & Co-Artistic Director for Lyric Stage and Director of Production for Turtle Creek Chorale. He started his career with The Dallas Opera and The Santa Fe Opera and soon moved on to design for dozens of Theatres, Dance, and Choral companies while managing the technical needs of the Addison Theatre Centre for over 22 Years. Scott is a graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Tricia Guenther (Co-Artistic Director & Choreographer) is thrilled to be returning for her third year with Lyric Stage! She has been creating and sewing costumes for 41 years. Some examples of her work are Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Romeo & Juliet, Don Quixote, Little Shop of Horrors, The Producers, Sweeney Todd, Plaid Tidings, Guys & Dolls, Jekyll & Hyde. Tricia also owned and operated her dance school for 30 years, offering classes in the Aerial Arts, Ballet, Jazz, Hip Hop, Tap, Contemporary, and Lyrical. Tricia serves as Patron Services and Co-Artistic Director for Lyric Stage. Tricia is a graduate of TWU!

Benjamin Doan-Stevens (Stage Manager) is delighted to return to Lyric Stage for The Rocky Horror Show where he serves as Resident Equity Stage Manager for the 25/26 season. Ben also serves as the Production Stage Manager for the world-renowned Turtle Creek Chorale. For a decade, Ben taught theatre at various DFW-area schools, where he was a Lead Director and Technical Director. Currently, Ben serves as the Testing Coordinator at Bill Arnold Middle School. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre from Abilene Christian University, Master of Education in Learning & Technology from Western Governor's University and is pursuing his Doctorate in Organizational Leadership at Abilene Christian University.

Catherine Carpenter Cox (Producer) grew up with a singular dream: to bring stories to life on stage. Born and raised in Boston, she began performing professionally at just 10 years old, captivating audiences at the Boston Children's Theater and Wheelock Family Theatre. That passion took her to New York City, where she earned her BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

As an accomplished actress, Catherine has embraced numerous leading roles across North America, including Off-Broadway and On-Broadway performances in New York City. For the past 21 years, she has proudly called Dallas her home. Throughout her career, she has lent her voice to many concept demos for new musicals, participated in staged readings, and engaged in backer auditions. Her unwavering dedication to the arts shines through her meaningful contributions to New York City Fringe Festival productions, which have blossomed into complete regional and Broadway offerings. Moreover, she has captivated audiences alongside leading orchestras at prestigious venues, such as The Palace Theater in New York City, the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, and Bass Hall in Fort Worth. As a member of the Actors' Equity Association since 2000, Catherine embodies the spirit of collaboration and excellence.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Driven by her passion for the arts and a commitment to supporting non-profit organizations, she became a key figure at Lyric Stage, a celebrated professional theater in Dallas, where she now serves as Producer.

Joining Lyric Stage as a Producer in 2019, Catherine is devoted to preserving and expanding the company's legacy of producing high-quality, locally crafted professional musical theater. She is determined to adapt to the ever-evolving arts landscape, ensuring that future audiences can continue to experience the magic of musical theater. Her work bridges Broadway excellence with community-driven artistry, proving that Dallas can—and *should*—be a national stage for musical theater.

In 2022, Lyric Stage Studios opened its doors in the Dallas Design District, offering an intimate black box and rehearsal space for year-round performances. This venue reflects the company's commitment to delivering diverse artistic experiences to the Dallas arts community.

By 2024, Lyric Stage expanded beyond its historic Majestic Theater home and partnered with The Moody Performance Hall in the Dallas Arts District for some of its larger productions. This strategic collaboration increases the company's reach and reinforces its dedication to high-quality performance.

As she leads Lyric Stage into its next era, Catherine is on a mission to raise awareness, rally support, and secure resources to ensure live theater continues to thrive in Dallas. With a producer's eye and a performer's heart, she invites audiences, donors, and dreamers alike to join her in keeping the curtain raised for generations to come.

