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# **It's a Wonderful Life - The Musical**

Book and lyrics by  
JAMES W. RODGERS

Music by  
JOHN G. HIGGINS

Based on the film by  
FRANK CAPRA

*It's a Wonderful Life* is based on the story  
*The Greatest Gift* by  
PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN

**Dramatic Publishing Company**  
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(IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE - THE MUSICAL)

ISBN: 978-0-87129-963-5

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**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, THE MUSICAL** was first presented by the Woodford County Theatrical Arts Association in Versailles, Ky., on December 11, 1997. It was directed by Beth Kirchner with arrangements and musical direction by Dan Sparrow, set design by Damon Farmer, lighting design by Ron Ruby, costume design by Darlene Drayer and sound design by Bruce Helfrich. The stage manager was Alberta Labrillazo. The cast was as follows:

George Bailey .....	BOB KLIER
Clarence .....	MATT MERRILL
Mary Hatch .....	RACHEL ROGERS
Mother Bailey .....	DEBBIE BRANHAM
Uncle Billy .....	JOHN LONG
Aunt Tilly .....	KATHY JONES
Violet Peterson .....	EMILY POLLOCK
Henry Potter .....	DAVID BRANTLEY
Mr. Gower .....	GREG JONES
Young George .....	PAUL HARTSELL
Harry Bailey .....	ALEC NEEL SPENCER
Bert .....	STEVE MCWHORTER
Ernie .....	DAMON GREENE
Mrs. Hatch .....	KATHY SPARROW
Sam Wainwright .....	DAVID COMER
Miss Andrews .....	ROBIN DICKERSON
Mrs. Thompson .....	WANDA RODGERS
Mr. Martini .....	RUSS D. MCGEE
Mrs. Martini .....	DONITA LODMELL
Miss Carter .....	CRYSTAL WEBBER
Johnny .....	AARON SMITHER
Mr. Welch .....	DENNY COMER
Miss Twitty .....	SARAH WATKINS
Pete Bailey .....	NATHAN CHOWNING
Tommy Bailey .....	ADAM BOWLING
Janie Bailey .....	DANIELLE DRAYER
Zuzu Bailey .....	ANNIE GROSSMAN

The first high school production of **IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, THE MUSICAL** was presented by Shawnee Mission South High School Repertory Theatre in Overland Park, Kan., on December 2, 1998. It was directed by Mark Swezey, with musical direction by Kristi Mitchell, choreography by Michelle Gaumé, sound design by Jerrod Johnson. The stage manager was Kyle Johnson. The cast was as follows:

George Bailey . . . . .	DAVID BEDNARCZYK
Clarence Odbody . . . . .	DAVID KOBZANTSEV
Mary Bailey . . . . .	LAUREN HUSSEY
Mother Bailey . . . . .	ANDREA DEEVER
Uncle Billy . . . . .	ANDREW ZIMMERMAN
Aunt Tilly . . . . .	JESSI CAMPBELL
Violet Peterson . . . . .	KELLEY APPELYARD
Henry Potter . . . . .	STEPHEN DEEVER
Mr. Gower . . . . .	ALEX PERRY
Harry Bailey . . . . .	ANDY PORTWOOD
Bert . . . . .	JAKE MOONEY
Ernie . . . . .	JOSH WEST
Mrs. Hatch . . . . .	SARAH HOMAN
Sam Wainwright . . . . .	AARON BOWERS
Miss Andrews . . . . .	ANNA POLLMAN
Mrs. Thompson . . . . .	GRETCHEN MAIS
Mr. Martini . . . . .	DEREK CROCKER
Mrs. Martini . . . . .	KATE SIRRIDGE
Miss Carter . . . . .	CARRINE SPINKS
Mr. Welch . . . . .	JASON JOHNS
Miss Crabtree . . . . .	CATHERINE LEWIS
Pop Bailey . . . . .	JEFF LEWANDOWSKI
Young George . . . . .	DANNY BEERY
Johnny . . . . .	BRENTON KIMMI
Pete Bailey . . . . .	BRENDON REILLY
Tommy Bailey . . . . .	QUINN REILLY
Janie Bailey . . . . .	COURTNEY HEAVEY
Zuzu Bailey . . . . .	LIZZY MYERS

## CHILDREN

Julia Bauer, Danny Beery, Greg Berry, Brandon Boyer, Rachel Cathey, Crosby Cooper, Kelsey Cooper, Christine Crocker, Amy Dall, Anne Dunning, Caitlyn Estep, Megan Fracokl, Ivy Gagnon, Courtney Heavey, Elizabeth Jacques, Laura Kaufman, Brenton Kimmi, Lauren Kirdendoll, Lilly Kizer, Stephanie Lanning, Stephanie Larson, Ashley Lerner, Shannon Lindgren, Hillary Pontier, Sarah Pontier, Brendan Reilly, Moira Reilly, Molly Reilly, Quinn Reilly, Lauren Ripple, Bailey Roberts, Lauren Sikes, Tara Smith, Andrew Vogliardo, Joe Wheeler, Jordan White, Harrison King, Jessica Kizer

## CHORUS

Ben Baellow, Anne Baker, Aaron Bowers, Tess Bricker, Jessi Campbell, Derek Crocker, Lauren Farmer, Nichole Friling, Diana Hickey, Lindsay Holland, Sarah Homan, Heather Jones, Jeff Lewandowski, Catherine Lewis, Sara Magariel, Gretchen Mais, Kelly Michale, Andrew Zimmerman, Susan Monahan, Marcia Monroe, Jake Mooney, Matt Morgan, Alex Perry, Lisa Picasso, Anna Pollman, Andy Portwood, Julie Schlacter, Kate Sirridge, Carrine Spinks, Kenny Unruh, D'Ann Wadsworth, Josh West, Meghan Wilk, Ali White, Alissa Vanderloo



## SONG SELECTIONS

### ACT ONE

Find and Protect Him . . . . . Mary, Children, Townspeople  
Muster Up a Little Courage . . . . . Clarence  
George's Send-off . . . . . Townspeople  
I Love to Dance . . . . . Violet & Men  
Something Important . . . . . George  
Whoops! Another Year's Gone By . . . . . Uncle Billy, Aunt Tilly  
Sliver of the Moon . . . . . George & Mary  
There Is a Time/Light of My Life . . . . . Townspeople  
My Boys! . . . . . Mother Bailey  
Suddenly! . . . . . George, Mary, Townspeople  
We Need a Little Magic . . . . . George, Mary, Uncle Billy, Aunt Tilly

### ACT TWO

In Bailey Park . . . . . Townspeople  
The Bailey Blessing . . . . . Ernie  
Easy Living . . . . . Potter & George  
Quiet Wishes; Simple Dreams . . . . . Mary  
Listen to the Bells . . . . . Children  
Look at You! . . . . . Potter  
A Christmas Greeting . . . . . Townspeople  
I Want to Fly . . . . . Clarence  
A Christmas Greeting—Reprise . . . . . Men  
The Greatest Gift . . . . . Clarence & Townspeople  
A Christmas Greeting—Reprise . . . . . Company  
Listen to the Bells—Reprise . . . . . Company  
It's a Wonderful Life . . . . . Company

# IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

A Musical in Two Acts

For 12 men, 10 women, 2-4 boys, 2 girls\*

## CHARACTERS

GEORGE BAILEY..... the Everyman of Bedford Falls  
CLARENCE ODBODY, A-S-2 (Angel Second Class);

George's guardian angel

MARY HATCH BAILEY ..... George's wife

MOTHER BAILEY ..... George's mother

POP BAILEY ..... George's father

UNCLE BILLY ..... George's uncle and business partner

AUNT TILLY..... Uncle Billy's wife

VIOLET PETERSON..... proprietor of a beauty salon

HENRY POTTER..... bank president,

owns practically the entire town

MR. GOWER ..... proprietor of the corner drug store

YOUNG GEORGE..... age 12

HARRY BAILEY..... George's younger brother

BERT..... a patrolman

ERNIE..... a mail carrier

MRS. HATCH ..... Mary's mother

SAM WAINWRIGHT ..... young man smitten on Mary

MISS ANDREWS ..... a townspeople

MRS. THOMPSON ..... a townspeople

MR. MARTINI..... proprietor of a bar

MRS. MARTINI..... his wife

MISS CARTER ..... a bank examiner

JOHNNY..... the newspaper boy, age 10

MR. WELCH ..... the schoolteacher's husband

**MISS CRABTREE** . . . . . Mr. Potter's secretary  
**PETE BAILEY** . . . . . age 12  
**TOMMY BAILEY** . . . . . age 10  
**JANIE BAILEY** . . . . . age 9  
**ZUZU BAILEY** . . . . . age 7

**Plus additional Townspeople, if desired.**

**\*Doubling possible for: Young George and Pete Bailey  
Tommy Bailey and Newsboy**

**SETTING: Christmas Eve, Bedford Falls, 1945.**

## **DESIGN NOTE**

**This musical needs to flow without breaks or pauses for either set or costume changes. It is strongly recommended, therefore, that the design be kept minimal and suggestive rather than literal and realistic. Let less say more.**

# ACT ONE

## (CUE #1: OVERTURE)

*SCENE: Early evening on a dark, cold and snowy Christmas Eve in Bedford Falls, circa 1945. Selected platforms and minimal set pieces suggest various locations. On one side of the stage is an area suggesting a part of a bridge overlooking a body of water. During the last part of the overture all members of the cast except GEORGE, CLARENCE ODBODY, MR. POTTER and MISS CRABTREE can be seen moving about the city with concern and urgency. It is obvious that they are looking for someone. By the end of the overture they are arranged in small groups.*

## (CUE #2: "FIND AND PROTECT HIM")

*(Music under. The following lines are spoken.)*

ERNIE. Have you seen him?

BERT. Who?

ERNIE. George. George Bailey.

BERT. Isn't he down at the Building and Loan?

ERNIE. No. He left there hours ago.

MRS. HATCH. Any word yet, Mary?

MARY. I've called nearly everyone we know.

MRS. HATCH. We've got to pray. We've all got to pray.

VOICE ONE (*singing*).

**There's a soul that's lost tonight.**

MISS ANDREWS. Someone said they saw him go into the bank.

MRS. THOMPSON. To see Potter? Why would he do that?

MISS ANDREWS. Haven't you heard?

MRS. THOMPSON. Heard what?

VOICE TWO (*singing*).

**Somewhere out in the cold tonight.**

UNCLE BILLY. I checked all the stores on Main Street.

AUNT TILLY. Someone said they saw him go into Nick's.

MR. MARTINI. Yes, but he left hours ago. He looked terrible.

ERNIE. Heard he got into a fight.

VOICE THREE (*singing*).

**Find and protect him tonight.**

JANE. Do you see him?

TOMMY. Why isn't he home?

VOICE FOUR (*singing*).

**Guide and direct him out in the cold**

**There's a soul that's lost tonight.**

PETER. Where's Daddy?

ZUZU. I want my Daddy!

WOMEN (*singing*).

**Tonight.**

MEN (*singing*).

**Find and protect him.**

MARY (*singing*).

**There's a soul that's lost tonight**

**Somewhere out in the cold tonight.**

**Find and protect him; guide and direct him;**

**Please hear my prayer.**

*(MARY's tune is repeated three times by the COMPANY as a round.*

*During the above, GEORGE BAILEY enters upstage, walks through the grouping to a downstage area that suggests either a part of a bridge or the edge of a cliff on the outskirts of the city limits. He is obviously depressed and totally oblivious to the prayers that are being sung on his behalf. GEORGE steps to the edge of either the bridge or the cliff, as if he is about to throw himself off into the water, when a delightful and angelic little old man, CLARENCE, appears out of what seems to be nowhere. The lights fade on the TOWNSPEOPLE and they exit as CLARENCE speaks.)*

CLARENCE. I wouldn't do that if I were you.

GEORGE. Wouldn't do what?

CLARENCE. What you were thinking of doing.

GEORGE. How do you know what I was thinking?

CLARENCE. Oh, we make it our business to know lots of things.

GEORGE. Look, whatever you're selling, I'm not interested. Please, just leave me alone!

CLARENCE. No, you don't understand. I've got a job to do here.

GEORGE. Not with me you don't. Just leave me alone.

CLARENCE (*turning and moving away from GEORGE, glances up to Heaven*). This isn't going very well. (*Responding to someone above that we neither see nor hear.*) I know, you said it wasn't going to be easy but... (*Interrupted by the unheard voice from above.*) You don't understand. He won't listen. (*Another beat.*) I know, I know. If at first you don't succeed...blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. (*Again, gathering his thoughts and courage, CLARENCE returns to GEORGE. He pulls a small red and leather bound book from his pocket.*) Have you ever read Tom Sawyer?

GEORGE. What?

CLARENCE. Now there was an industrious young man, and when the chips were down, he never gave up. And do you remember why?

GEORGE. Who cares?

CLARENCE. He kept thinking about others, George. Not about himself but about all the folks who needed him.

GEORGE. You called me George just now. How do you know my name?

CLARENCE. Oh, I know all about you. I've watched you grow up from a little boy.

GEORGE. How could you? I've never seen you before.

CLARENCE. You haven't needed to 'til now. How's the lip? Looks like it's stopped bleeding.

GEORGE (*sarcastically*). That's the answer I got to a prayer a little bit ago.

CLARENCE. Oh, no—no—no, George, I'm the answer to your prayer.

GEORGE. Who are you?

CLARENCE. Clarence Odbody, A-S-2.

GEORGE. Odbody ... A-S-2? What's that A-S-2?

CLARENCE. Angel, Second Class.

GEORGE. Now I know I've lost my mind.

CLARENCE. Not yet. But you are well on your way. That's why they sent me down here. Besides, it's ridiculous to think of killing yourself for a measly eight thousand dollars.

GEORGE. How did you know that?

CLARENCE. I've been trying to tell you. I'm your guardian angel. I know everything about you.

GEORGE. Well you look like the kind of angel I'd get, I'll give you that much. Sort of a ... fallen angel. What happened to your wings?

CLARENCE. I haven't earned them yet. That's why I'm an Angel, Second Class. But you're going to change all that.

GEORGE. I am. How?

CLARENCE. By letting me help you.

GEORGE. Only way you can help me is to get me eight thousand bucks before the clock strikes twelve.

CLARENCE. Sorry, but we don't use money in Heaven.

GEORGE. Well, down here you can't live without it. And if the truth be known, I'm worth a lot more dead than alive.

CLARENCE. Now look, you mustn't talk like that. You can't put a price tag on life! It's worth too much. So, come on, now, and...



**(CUE #3: "MUSTER UP A LITTLE COURAGE")**

**CLARENCE** (*singing*).

**Muster up a little courage, George,  
Spruce up and find your pride.  
Keep holding to your vision  
And be glad that you're alive.**

**Learn to listen to your heart, son.  
Don't get tangled up instead  
With all the "ifs" and "buts" and "therefores"  
That go messing up your head.**

**Best to concentrate on "maybes"  
On "Don't you wish?" and "Wouldn't it be nice?"  
Instead of "It just can't be!"  
And, "You're gonna pay the price!"  
There's always someone out there judging  
Tearing up, putting down.  
You can't let their deep begrudging  
Turn your life clean upside down.**

**Just muster up some courage, George  
Hold tight to what you find  
Of all the precious dreams  
You've almost left behind.  
'Cause when you come out on the far end  
Beaten down, a little worn  
You're gonna find it's all been worth it,  
All the effort; all the scorn**

**If you muster up some courage, George  
Find a little patience, George  
Have the faith that you'll survive  
And be grateful that you're still alive!**

CLARENCE (*spoken*). You don't realize how much you're worth, George. Why, if it hadn't been for you...

GEORGE. If it hadn't been for me, everybody I know would be a lot better off. Everybody! My wife, my kids, my friends.

CLARENCE. You sure have got a lot a friends, I'll say that for you. Why, do you know they've jammed up all our air waves for over an hour now?

GEORGE. What are you talking about?

CLARENCE. Prayers. When they're heartfelt, they're mighty powerful missiles. And the ones for you... why, they've lit up our whole celestial system.

GEORGE. Why? How?

CLARENCE. Because you're such an important influence in so many people's lives, George. Always have been.

GEORGE. Since when?

CLARENCE. Ever since that day you saved your little brother from drowning when he fell through the ice. Remember?

GEORGE. That was instinct. Besides, I was only twelve.

CLARENCE. There were other boys there that day, some of them older and better swimmers. They didn't follow their instincts. Only you did.

GEORGE. He was my brother.

CLARENCE. I know. But what about Mr. Gower when you saved *him* from ruin.

*(We hear a telephone ring. The lights fade up on the opposite side of the stage to reveal the back room of a pharmacy, circa 1917. MR. GOWER is speaking on the phone.)*

CLARENCE. That wasn't instinct. That was courage. Deep-seated and wrenched-full-of-guts courage. And courage, well that's the nephew of endurance.

GOWER. George, are you there?

GEORGE. But just a week before he had received a telegram telling him his son had died.

CLARENCE. Yes, and he had turned mean through and through from drowning his sorrow in a bottle. Remember?

*(Lights fade down but not out on GEORGE and CLARENCE. Lights fade up brighter on MR. GOWER area.)*

GOWER *(calling off, drunk and impatient)*. George! *(Into phone.)* I'm sorry, Mrs. Blaine, that medicine should have been there an hour ago. I promise you, it'll be over in five minutes.

*(He hangs up the phone and turns to YOUNG GEORGE who has entered and is standing next to MR. GOWER.)*

GOWER. Where is Mrs. Blaine's box of capsules? Why didn't you deliver them like I told you to?

YOUNG GEORGE. I couldn't. *(MR. GOWER grabs him by the shirt and begins hitting him about the head with*

*his open hand. YOUNG GEORGE tries to protect himself.)*

GOWER. Why couldn't you? What kind of tricks are you playing, young man? Don't you know the Blaine boy's very ill?

YOUNG GEORGE. You're hurting my ear, Mr. Gower.

GOWER (*hitting him again*). You lazy loafer!

YOUNG GEORGE. No, Mr. Gower. You don't understand. You put something wrong in those capsules.

GOWER. What are you talking about?

YOUNG GEORGE. I know you're unhappy, Mr. Gower. You got that telegram last week and it upset you. I understand that. But you put something bad in those capsules. I'm sure you did.

GOWER. How do you mean?

YOUNG GEORGE. Just look and see for yourself. (*Pulls out the box of capsules.*) I tried to tell you when you were filling the order but you wouldn't listen. But look at the bottle that you took the powder from. It's not right. I swear it isn't. (*MR. GOWER grabs the box of capsules out of YOUNG GEORGE's hand, shakes the powder out of one of the capsules, and cautiously tastes it.*)

GOWER. Oh no ... no ... no ...

YOUNG GEORGE. Don't hurt my ear again! (*MR. GOWER falls to his knees in front of him, holds him fast and begins sobbing.*) I won't tell anyone, Mr. Gower, I promise. I know what you're feeling, I won't ever tell a soul. Hope to die, I won't.

GOWER (*sobbing*). Oh, George.

*(Lights fade on YOUNG GEORGE and MR. GOWER and come back up full on CLARENCE and GEORGE.)*

CLARENCE. And you never did tell. Not to this day.  
That's remarkable!

GEORGE. He's always cared about young people. Gave lots of us our first jobs.

CLARENCE. Well, he never stopped caring about you, that's for sure. Remember that handsome suitcase he bought you when you thought you were finally heading off for college?

GEORGE. That was a thousand years ago.

CLARENCE. Not really.

**(CUE #4: "GEORGE'S SEND-OFF")**

*(Lights fade up center stage as MR. GOWER, MOTHER, POP and HARRY BAILEY, AUNT TILLY, UNCLE BILLY, BERT, ERNIE, VIOLET PETERSON and other TOWNSPEOPLE circa 1925, rush on singing. NOTE: The teenagers are dressed for a formal dance. MR. GOWER is holding a new suitcase, and everyone is singing to GEORGE as he enters. CLARENCE observes the scene until it is established and then exits offstage.)*

TOWNSPEOPLE *(singing)*.

**Here's to you, dear buddy, my pal and my friend  
Let your dreams hold fast and your luck not end.**

**May the good Lord protect ya 'til we meet once  
again**

**And bless you, dear buddy, my pal and my friend.**

**Here's to you, dear buddy, my pal and my friend  
May your work and your play be a perfect blend.  
Let the knowledge you take match the love that  
we send  
Off with you, dear buddy, my pal, and my friend.**

TOWNSPEOPLE (*spoken*). Hip, hip, hurrah!

(*MR. GOWER steps forward with suitcase and stands next to GEORGE.*)

GEORGE. Mr. Gower, what's this?

GOWER (*handing GEORGE the suitcase*). Just a little going-away present. May you always use it in good health.

GEORGE. How can I thank you, Mr. Gower?

GOWER. By graduating with honors. That would make us all very proud.

HARRY. Fat chance.

GEORGE. Lay you a bet, little brother.

HARRY. Haven't got time. I'm off to my dance. How do I look?

GEORGE. Like a goon in a penguin suit. Where's the funeral?

MOTHER BAILEY. That's enough, you two. You look very nice, Harry.

GEORGE. Of course he does. It's my tux.

HARRY. And what's *your* verdict, Aunt Tilly? Do I look good enough to eat?

AUNT TILLY. If you lay a hand on me, young man, I'll hit you with my purse.

HARRY. Aunt Tilly, I'm in love with you and there's a full moon out tonight.