

Awaiting the reviews

By [Susan Rife](#)

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<https://sanbenito.com/awaiting-the-reviews/>



THEATER INSIDERS Waiting for opening night in Limelight Actors Theater's run of 'It's Only a Play.'

Kevin Heath, co-founder of Limelight Actors Theater in Gilroy, had an interesting experience when he requested scripts of Terrence McNally's "It's Only a Play" from publisher Samuel French.

There are two versions of the play, McNally's original 1982 script and an updated and revised script that opened on Broadway in 2014, starring Nathan Lane, Matthew Broderick, Megan Mullally, Stockard Channing and F. Murray Abraham.

"I thought wow, if all these people got together.... I've got to read this script," said Heath. But when he called Samuel French to see about getting the Broadway script, he was told they'd have to sell all their copies of the old script first.

“How many do I have to buy?” Heath quipped.

He didn’t have to go that far, but he was also surprised that the new script had cut a role he’d already discussed with an actor he was thinking of casting.

Awkward.

(The actor had to back out due to family obligations.)

“It’s Only a Play” is a bit of a theater insider’s show, as a group of theater people await the opening night reviews of a new play. The Limelight production will star Jason Harris as the play-within-a-play’s playwright, Peter Mandel as Harris’s best friend, Rachel Perry as a novice producer, Rosalind Farotte as the diva, Bruce Pember as the director, Michael Johnson as a drama critic and Gannon Janisch as a coat check attendant.

Heath, who is directing the show, said he laughed all the way through his first reading of the script, but he did wonder, “If I’m not a theater person, will I get it?”

“With the exception of some of the playwrights (named in the script), everyone’s going to know the names,” he said. “It’s a quality script. We love comedies, but it’s not the only thing we do. When I pick a comedy, I try to pick what I call an intelligent comedy. I think that’s important. My favorite show is a show that will make you laugh and cry.”

The cast includes some newcomers to the Limelight troupe. Johnson has served as musical director for recent shows at Limelight, including “Always... Patsy Cline” and “Tenderly, the Rosemary Clooney Musical,” but “It’s Only a Play” will mark his acting debut.

Mandel, president of the South Valley Civic Theatre board and frequently seen in SVCT productions in Morgan Hill, has been on Heath’s radar for some time.

“He embodies Woody Allen, the humor of Woody Allen,” said Heath.

And the show is Janisch’s debut in an all-adult cast. He’s 15.

The show also has “a little cameo for a dog,” said Heath. “There’s a whole dog gag running throughout the show,” he said.

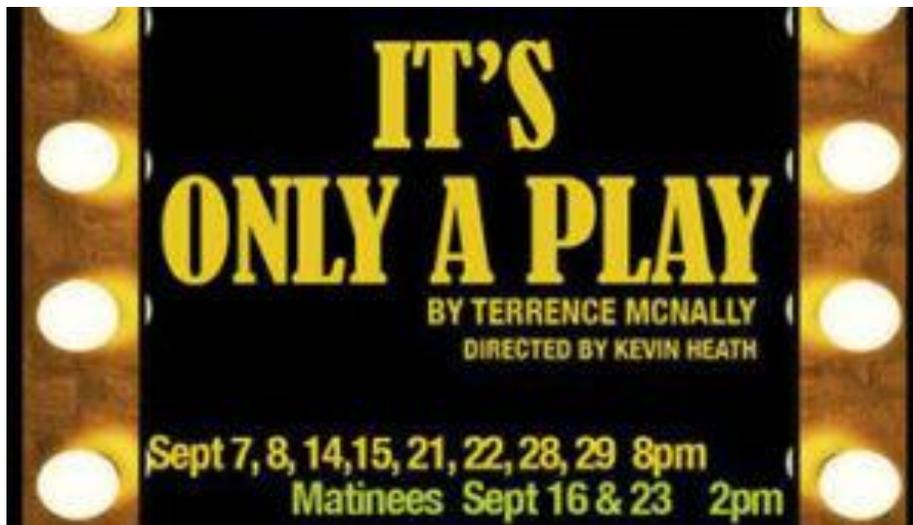
“It’s Only a Play” by Terrence McNally. Limelight Actors Theater. Performances Sept. 7-29 at Gilroy Center for the Arts, 7341 Monterey St, Gilroy. Tickets \$25, \$22 seniors. 408.472.3292; limelightactorstheater.com.

“It’s Only A Play” at Limelight

Show is a laugh-a-minute show that makes gentle fun of the Broadway biz

<https://morganhilllife.com/2018/09/12/curtains-up-theater-review-by-camille-bounds-its-only-a-play-at-limelight/>

By Camille Bounds Published on September 12, 2018 on MorganHillLife.com



“It’s “Only A Play,” written by Terrence McNally and produced by Kevin Heath and Alan Obata, is the 39th production since Limelight Actor Theater’s beginning. First offered in 1978 then redone in 1982 then redone again a number of times to fit the many inside references to then and current day Broadway.

The play tells the wild and crazy story of a group waiting on opening night for reviews of a play they have all

been involved with one way or another. Limelight Director Kevin Heath has gathered for the most part a solid group of his inner circle of actors to bring this upbeat story to the Limelight stage.

The group nervously gathers on the second floor of a Manhattan townhouse, (while the opening night party is going full blast downstairs), of the clueless, wealthy first-time producer, to await the opening night reviews of her new play that opened that night. The writer, director, lead actors, an innocent waiter and critic join her with verbal, tense horseplay hitting out with “in the Broadway business” jokes at big names (some of us won’t recognize or remember).

Peter Mandel, Rosalind Farotte, Rachel Perry, Jason Harris, Michael Johnson, Bruce Pember, Gannon Janisch and we can’t forget Nani Perry as Torch all give enthusiastic performances that keeps the show moving and keeps the audience laughing.

“It’s Only A Play” brings an amusing well done comedy to the Limelight stage that submits consistent good humor. Let’s face it we all need to laugh as much as we can these days.

Guest Column

Published September 4, 2018 on GilroyLife.com

By Kevin Heath

Recently, I was asked about the show “It’s Only a Play” and why I chose it for Limelight Actors Theater’s fall comedy. I was more than happy to share!

In addition to being a script by Terrence McNally, who I like a lot, the show spoke to me about theatre. Sure, it’s based on a Broadway cast after the opening night of their new show, but it rings true for many community theatre folks, too. We might not get to hang out with the playwright (like they do in the play), and local



reviews mean different things to different people, but it has a common denominator that hits home. We’re like a family when we do a show. We struggle through the tough parts, laugh ourselves silly, work our collective butts off and create a magically live moment for our audiences. Sometimes we don’t get along, but in the end we hug, celebrate our work, and to quote Peter Austin...love each other very much. I know the audiences will relate to the the journey McNally has crafted for us and share in the laughter.

“It’s Only A Play” stars Rosalind Farotte, Rachel Perry, Peter Mandel, Jason Harris, Bruce Pember, Gannon Janisch and Michael Johnson.

Actors in “It’s Only a Play” rehearse for the upcoming show.
Photo courtesy Limelight Actors Theater

Kevin Heath is the director of “It’s Only a Play.”