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The Clean House

A Bold and Emotionally Rich Comedy, Runner up for the Pulitzer Prize



By Sarah Ruhl
Directed by Michael Barakiva

ARCHBOLD THEATRE at SYRACUSE STAGE
Running Dates: May 4 - 22
Press Opening: Friday, May 6 at 8:00 p.m.

“One of the finest and funniest new plays you’re likely to see.” - *The New York Times*

(Syracuse, NY)—Matilde (pronounced Ma-chil-gee) has a problem: she’s a cleaning lady who doesn’t like to clean. She’d rather think up the perfect joke. Now that her parents (once the funniest people in Brazil) are dead—her mother died laughing—she is the funniest person in her family. Matilde works for a doctor named Lane, who has a problem: Lane’s husband Charles, a surgeon, has found his soul mate, and it’s not Lane. It’s Ana, a vibrant Argentinean woman, who is dying, and that is Charles’s problem. Sarah Ruhl is an exceptional playwright and MacArthur Foundation Fellow whose work has garnered Pulitzer nominations and justified recognition from Broadway to theatres across the country. *The Clean House* is one of her best, a compassionate, theatrically bold, and emotionally rich comedy.

The Clean House runs May 4-22 at Syracuse Stage. Tickets range \$16-\$48, available at 315-443-3275 or www.SyracuseStage.org. *The Clean House* is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, Upstate Medical University, the Syracuse Stage Board of Trustees,

and Residence Inn Marriott. Media sponsors are WAER and WCNY. Syracuse Stage season sponsors are *The Post-Standard* and Time Warner Cable.

The Clean House will feature five professional actors with significant Broadway credits: David Adkins as Charles (Broadway: *Next Fall*), Gisela Chipe as Matilde (Off-Broadway: *Emancipation*), Alma Cuervo as Ana (Broadway: *Beauty and the Beast*, *Cabaret*, *Titanic*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *Ghetto*, *Quilters*), Carol Halstead as Lane (Broadway: Gore Vidal's *The Best Man*), and Linda Marie Larson as Virginia (Broadway: *Deuce* with Angela Lansbury, *Jackie: An American Life*, *Mornings at Seven*).

In *The Clean House*, playwright Sarah Ruhl takes an expansive view of cleaning. "We often dismiss the question of cleaning, as if it were something trivial," said Ruhl in an interview with *American Theatre Magazine*. "But if you really start to talk to people about their relationship to cleaning, it reveals so much about our attitudes towards death and mortality and decay."

"A house, like a soul, naturally accumulates things," said Director Michael Barakiva. "Cleaning is the process of upkeep. You think if you start down the right path, things will take care of themselves. But it doesn't work that way. Everything requires upkeep. Each character must learn how to maintain his or her soul."

In *The Clean House*, Ruhl accomplishes interplay of ideas, emotion and comedy by employing moments of "magic realism." Barakiva compares this to musicals: "In a musical, when emotions get so high, the characters break out into song. In magic realism, heightened moments are created when willpower bends the rules of reality."

The scenic design, in particular, helps to create a sense of magic in *The Clean House*. The white-on-white design is meant to symbolize the interior of a hospital, the states of Alaska and Connecticut (where the play's action takes place), and the amount of energy it takes to keep white things clean. An iceberg coffee table is a reminder of how things in life can become frozen/thawed, and a curved staircase is the only separation between Lane's home and Ana's home (presumably across town).

Within this environment, Matilde, a Brazilian maid who doesn't like to clean, starts the show with what Barakiva calls an "infusion of color, a colorful invasion of South America," and her quest for the perfect joke begins.

After its acclaimed run at Yale Repertory Theatre, *The Clean House* was produced with equal acclaim at several major theatres coast to coast before winding up off Broadway at Lincoln Center, where it received an extended run.

Sarah Ruhl is a young American playwright based in New York City whose work has been produced across the country to much acclaim. Her plays include *In the Next Room* (or *The Vibrator Play*—Tony Award nominee, 2010, finalist for Pulitzer Prize, 2010, Glickman Prize, 2009), *The Clean House* (Susan Smith Blackburn award, 2004, finalist for Pulitzer Prize, 2005), *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Helen Hayes award for best new play), *Demeter in the City* (nominated for 9 NAACP awards), *Eurydice*, *Melancholy Play*, *Orlando*, a new version of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, and *Passion Play* (Kennedy Center Fourth Forum Freedom Award).

DOCTORS IN THE CLEAN HOUSE

Approximately 150 medical students and residents from Upstate Medical University will attend Syracuse Stage's upcoming production of Sarah Ruhl's *The Clean House* as part of a class called Bioethics at Bedside. The aim of the class is to use the performances to generate awareness and discussions about physician-patient relationships. Professors from Upstate Medical University will lead the students in post-show discussions about the issues raised in the play.

Steven J. Scheinman, Dean of the College of Medicine at Upstate, said, "*The Clean House*, a play that is both funny and poignant, explores the relationship between doctor and patient, and between doctors, as well as the limits of what medicine can do, and how healing involves more than just treating. We are thrilled to be supporting this production and grateful to the Stage for creating opportunities like this for broadening the medical education we offer."

"This represents another example of what can be accomplished when organizations work together," said Jeff Woodward, Stage's Managing Director. "We hope it proves to be a worthwhile and enjoyable experience."

Two characters in *The Clean House* are physicians and one character is battling cancer. Playwright Sarah Ruhl has dedicated the play "to the doctors in my life."

SPECIAL EVENTS

Prologue: One hour before every performance (except the Wednesday matinee) a cast member will offer an insightful and entertaining talk about the play. Supported by the Grandma Brown Foundation.

M&T Bank Pay-What-You-Can Series: Tuesday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m. to watch the final dress rehearsal. \$9 suggested donation, tickets available at the door 2 hours prior to curtain.

LIVE in the Sutton Series: Friday, May 6, live music following the 8:00 p.m. curtain.

Happy Hour Series: Thursday, May 12, one hour before the 7:30 p.m. performance. Half-price bar drinks and complimentary snacks.

Welch Allyn Sign Interpreted Performance Series In Memory of Susan Thompson: Saturday, May 14 at 3:00 p.m.

Audio-Described Series (NEW!): Sunday, May 15 at 2 p.m. Patrons who are blind or visually impaired may reserve an audio headset to hear a live narrator who will verbalize visual details throughout the show. The pre-performance description of sets and costumes begins at approximately 20 minutes prior to curtain. When contacting the Box Office, please be sure to reserve a headset (at no additional fee).

Actor Talkback Series: Sunday, May 15 following the 7:00 p.m. performance.

Wednesday @ 1 Lecture Series: Wednesday, May 18 at 1 p.m. before the 2 p.m. matinee. Guest Lecturer for *The Clean House* will be Deirdre Neilen from the Center for Bioethics and Humanities at Upstate Medical University.

Open Captioned Series: Wednesday, May 18 at 2 p.m. and Sunday, May 22 at 2 p.m.

**Special event programs are additionally funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the National Organization for the American Theatre.*

DIRECTOR

Michael Barakiva is an Armenian/Israeli director based in New York City. He has worked in New York and around the country, developing new works and staging classics. Most notably, he has directed the premieres of Wendy Wasserstein's *Welcome To My Rash* and *Third*, the first workshop of . . . *Spelling Bee* by William Finn, *Up* by Bridget Carpenter at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov at the Blue Heron. Most recently, he directed the premiere of *White People* by Neil Cuthbert at the Ensemble Studio Theatre. Michael is the Resident Director of the Lake George Theatre Lab. He has directed readings or workshops at the Roundabout Theatre, Arena Stage, Williamstown Theatre Festival, ACT, New York Theatre Workshop, New Dramatists, Ars Nova and the Rattlestick Theatre. He was also featured on an episode of MTV's *Made*, in which he coached two high school students through the process of writing, directing and producing a play. He is writing his first full-length play, currently titled *Work*. Awards/Affiliations: Phil Killian Fellow at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Drama League Summer Fellowship, David Merrick Prize in Drama, Lincoln Center Directors' Lab. Education: The Juilliard School (Andrew W. Mellon Directing Fellow), Vassar College. Proud member of SDC. Upcoming: Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw* at Syracuse Stage. Michael will spend the fall semester of 2011 at UC Davis as the Granada Artist-in-Residence. He will spend the spring of 2012 in Beijing, where he will direct a production of *Phedre* and teach at the University of Peking.

DESIGNERS

John Iacovelli (*Scenic Design*) received an Emmy Award for *Peter Pan Starring Cathy Rigby* (on A&E). Other Broadway: *The Twilight of The Gods*, National Tour of *Camelot*. Regional: over 300 productions at theatres including The Mark Taper Forum, Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, Geva Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, The Globe, Berkeley Rep, Magic, Dallas Theatre Center, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Stage, San Jose Rep, San Diego Rep, Walnut Street Theatre, La Mirada Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company. Iacovelli designed the world premiere of Wole Soyinka's adaptation of *Oedipus at Colonus* for The Cultural Olympiad in Greece and the world premiere of a full-length dance based on Warner Brothers' classic film *Casablanca* at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Film: Production Designer on *Ruby in Paradise* starring Ashley Judd in her film debut. Art Director on *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids!* TV Production Design: *Beckett Directs Beckett: Endgame* with The San Quentin Drama Workshop, *The Old Settler* starring Philycia Rashad & Debbie Allen, *The Gin Game* starring Mary Tyler Moore & Dick Van Dyke, *Ed* on NBC, *Babylon 5*, *Resurrection Boulevard*, *Lincoln Heights*. Awards: LA Drama Critics Circle for Lifetime Achievement in Scenic Design. He is on the Design Faculty in the Department of Theatre & Dance at the University of California (UC Davis), and he is a visiting professor at the Shanghai Drama Academy. Website portfolio: www.iacovelli.com

Oana Botez-Ban (*Costume Designer*), a native of Romania, has designed for major theatre, opera and dance companies including The National Theatre of Bucharest, and has worked with several international theatre festivals including the Quadrennial Scenography Show in Prague.

Oana is part of the first Romanian theatre design catalogue, Scenografica. Since 1999, when she moved to New York, her collaborations in theatre, opera, film and dance include collaborations with Robert Woodruff, Richard Foreman, Maya Beiser, Richard Schechner, Blanka Zizka, Brian Kulick, Zelda Fichlander, Annie-B Parson & Paul Lazar, Razvan Dinca, Karin Coonrod, Jay Scheib, Evan Ziporyn, Eduardo Machado, Gus Solomon Jr. & Paradigm, Carmen De Lavallade, Michael Barakiva, Daniel Alexander Jones, Dusan Tynek, Rania Ajami, Gisela Cardenas, Tony Speciale, Pavol Liska & Kelly Copper, Matthew Neenan, Molissa Fenley, Zishan Ugurlu, Michael Sexton, Pig Iron Company, Play Company, Charles Moulton, Ripe Time. MFA in Design from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts. Princess Grace Recipient, NEA/TCG Career Development Program 2009-2011.

Thomas C. Hase (*Lighting Designer*) is pleased to be back in Syracuse after designing last season's *The Price* and this season's *Radio Golf*. His work in the United States includes Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera, BAM, Seattle Opera, The Minnesota Opera, Dallas Opera, Florida Grand Opera, The Goodspeed Opera, Portland Opera, New Orleans Opera, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Center Stage Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Dallas Theatre Center, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Maine State Music Theatre, and Geva Theatre Center, John Doyle's *Company* on Broadway & DVD Release, Rufus Wainwright's *Prima Donna* at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at Los Angeles Opera & DVD Release, Riverdance's *Magik Macabre* in Dublin, and the European revival of *The Wiz* for Stage Holdings in Holland. International work includes: The Barbican & Sadler's Wells Theatre in London; The Abbey Theatre in Dublin; The Finish, Columbian & Dutch National Operas; Opera North, UK; Malmo Opera in Sweden; The Canadian Opera Company; The Luminato Festival Toronto; Opera de Marseille; Staatstheater Kassel; Theatre Erfurt; The Bavarian State Opera; The Vancouver Opera; The Singapore Arts Festival; Tokyo Metro Arts Center; and over one hundred designs for theatre, opera and ballet at the Stadttheater Giessen, Germany. As Ping Chong's lighting designer his work has been seen worldwide. Concurrent with his many freelance projects, Mr. Hase is the resident Lighting Designer & Director for the Cincinnati Opera. More information about Mr. Hase is available at Haseltd.com.

Ryan Rumery (*Music and Sound*). Broadway: *Thurgood*. Off-Broadway scores include *Urge for Going* (Public Theatre); *Three Sisters*, *Orlando*, *The Forest*, and *Uncle Vanya* (Classic Stage Company); *A Bright New Boise* (Wild Project); *Now Circa Then* (Ars Nova); *The Emperor Jones* (Irish Rep.); *Precious Little* (Clubbed Thumb); *End Days* (Ensemble Studio Theatre). Sound design credits include *Blind* (Rattlestick Theatre); *Urge for Going* and *Neighbors* (The Public); *Gruesome Playground Injuries* and *Let Me Down Easy* (Second Stage); *Back Back Back* and *Based on a Totally True Story* (Manhattan Theatre Club); and *Beauty on the Vine* (Epic Theatre Center). Regional theatre credits include Arena Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Centerstage, Kennedy Center, Kansas City Rep, Long Wharf Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, Hartford Stage, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Alley Theatre, Trinity Rep, Geffen Playhouse and Eugene O' Neill Theatre Center. His film credits include *SynchrNYCity*. For more info www.ryanrumery.com.

Kate Freer (*Projections Designer*) is a Brooklyn-based video artist and theatrical designer. She began her love affair with the image as a documentary filmmaker. Her work in both installation and theatrical projections focuses on spatial mapping and context-specific content generation. In 2007 she and partner Dave Tennent founded Room 404 Media, a new media and interactive design collective. Selected Theatrical Designs: *John Faustus and the Overclocked Death Drive* (45th Street Theatre, dir. Andrew Scoville), *Seed*

(Hip Hop Theatre Festival, Classical Theatre of Harlem, dir. Niegel Smith), *Neither Heaven Nor Earth* (New School Theatre, dir. John Hansen-Brevetti), *Wanted* (PS 122, solo NOVA Festival, dir. Kamilah Forbes), *The Office and the Metal Blob* (The Cherry Lane Theatre, dir. Andrew Scoville), and *The Footage* (The Flea). www.room404media.com

David Tennent (*Projections Designer*) is a freelance interactive developer and co-founder of Room404 Media. His work is influenced by his background in theatre and cinema as well as his experience as an interactive developer. He has taught a number of workshops on media in theatre at NYU, Playwrights Horizons Theatre School. Additionally he has taught workshops in Flash development at Parsons School of Design. Selected Theatrical Designs: *John Faustus and the Overclocked Death Drive* (45th Street Theatre, dir. Andrew Scoville), *Wanted* (PS 122, soloNOVA Festival, dir. Kamilah Forbes), *The Legend Of Flowers* (Lincoln Center, dir. Rob Heller), *The Office and the Metal Blob* (The Cherry Lane Theatre, dir. Andrew Scoville), and *The Footage* (The Flea). www.room404media.com

TICKETS

Adults: \$25-\$48
40 & Under: \$25
18 & Under: \$16
Student Rush: \$15

**Rush tickets available day of performance, by phone (\$5 fee) or in person (no fee)*

**Discounts available for seniors, students, groups and subscribers*

Online: www.SyracuseStage.org

Call: 315-443-3275

In person: 820 East Genesee Street

Groups (10 or more): 315-443-9844

SYRACUSE STAGE

Syracuse Stage is Central New York's premier professional theatre. Founded in 1974, Stage has produced more than 235 plays in 38 seasons including a number of world, American, and East Coast premieres. Each season 90,000 patrons enjoy an adventurous mix of new plays and bold interpretations of classics and musicals featuring the finest theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves over 30,000 students from 24 counties. A solid core of subscribers and supporters helps keep Syracuse Stage a vibrant artistic presence in Central New York. Additional support comes from the government, foundations, corporations and Syracuse University. Syracuse Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and a member of the Arts and Cultural Leadership Alliance (ACLA), the University Hill Corporation and the East Genesee Regent Association. Syracuse Stage is a member of The League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the largest professional theatre association in the country.

Fact Sheet

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By Sarah Ruhl

Directed by Michael Barakiva

ARCHBOLD THEATRE at SYRACUSE STAGE

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SYRACUSE STAGE SEASON SPONSORS:

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SPONSOR:

National Endowment for the Arts

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DESIGNERS:

John Iacovelli (*Scenic Design*)

Oana Botez-Ban (*Costume Designer*)

Thomas C. Hase (*Lighting Designer*)

Ryan Rumery (*Music and Sound*)

Kate Freer (*Projections Designer*)

David Tennent (*Projections Designer*)

CAST

David Adkins (*Charles*)

Gisela Chipe (*Matilde*)

Alma Cuervo (*Ana*)

Carol Halstead (*Lane*)

Linda Marie Larson (*Virginia*)

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Stuart Plymesser

The names in bold are actors and stage managers who are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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SHOW CALENDAR: May

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 7:30 PWYC	4 7:30 P	5 7:30 P	6 8:00 O	7 3:00 8:00
8 2:00	9	10 7:30	11 7:30	12 7:30	13 8:00	14 3:00 S 8:00
15 2:00 AD 7:00 D	16	17 7:30	18 2:00 W, OC 7:30	19 7:30	20 8:00	21 3:00 8:00
22 2:00 OC						

PWYC=Pay What You Can Night (Final Dress Rehearsal)
P=Preview O=Press Opening, LIVE in the Sutton Series S=Signed Performance Series
AD=Audio Described Series OC = Open Captioning D=Actor Talkback Series
W=Wednesday @ 1 Lecture Series

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Syracuse Stage | Producing Artistic Director: Timothy Bond | Managing Director: Jeffrey Woodward
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