

'Shirley Valentine' explores life beyond kitchen walls



Provided
Cady McClain, who plays Shirley Valentine in the play of the same name, prepares 'egg and chips' for her husband's supper. It is a meal that launches her on a life-changing journey.

By LYNN MARTENSTEIN
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — "Y' know I like a glass of wine while I'm doin' the cookin'," Shirley Valentine says to her kitchen wall while she pours herself a glass of wine as the poignant one-woman show, "Shirley Valentine," opens.

Shirley has reason to talk to the wall. She's a married, middle-aged, working-class woman in Liverpool whose duties as a wife and mother swept away the exciting life of travel and adventure she'd envisioned as a child.

"Shirley Valentine" is an uplifting story about second chances. Running through July 2 at Cape May Stage, the comedy will make spectators laugh and may even make them shed a tear.

Written by British playwright Willy Russell in 1986, the play premiered at London's West End two years afterward and played on Broadway a year later. It was also made into a movie. The show returned to London in a revival this spring.

Despite the show being set in the 1980s, it deals with issues such as loneliness,

courage and the need for personal fulfillment that still resonate deeply today.

"I always said I'd leave him (her husband) when the kids grew up but by the time they'd grown, there was nowhere to go," Shirley says in the play. "Well, you don't start again at 42, do y'?"

The question "Will she or won't she?" hangs over much of the play. In searching for answers, Valentine often turns to her go-to wall.

"Do you remember Shirley Valentine, wall? She used to laugh. A lot. Didn't she? Did somethin' happen, or was it just that nothin' happened?"

A door opens to the possibility of a new life when a good friend — a real friend, not a wall — invites Shirley to join her on a two-week trip to Greece. She even buys a ticket for her. The question for Valentine now is whether her dream is dead and, if not, whether the dreamer is still alive inside her.

Cady McClain is masterful in her portrayal not only of Valentine, but also of her distant husband, friend and a half-dozen other characters that she introduces the

audience to in this not-to-be-missed play.

McClain was only 16 when Russell wrote "Shirley Valentine," but she'd been working in television since she was 9. Her first job was for a Band-Aid commercial in which she sang the "I'm stuck on Band-Aids" song. Future roles included work on "Cheers" and "St. Elsewhere" as a pre-teen, and longer runs on "Days of Our Lives," "All My Children" and "As the World Turns" as a young adult.

She is the only actor to win three Daytime Emmy awards from all three networks. She has also worked in numerous films, including "My Favorite Year" and "Pennies from Heaven."

Having spent several months studying Shirley Valentine's character closely, McClain picked up a few life lessons.

"Shirley has this great attitude about life and an amazing sense of humor," she said. "I think the journey she goes on has been a really important one for me as well. The play prioritizes what's important in life. It's really emphasized for me how essential it is to do the things that make me happy, and theater is definitely one of those things."

The California-born actor had a steep learning curve. Hired in March, she had only two months to memorize a 41-page script whose running time is just under two hours. She also had to deliver her lines in a passable Liverpool accent.

She researched the accent by watching YouTube videos on Liverpool's history and tutorials on proper pronunciation. She also watched old interviews with legendary Liverpoolians Paul McCartney and George Harrison.

Roy Steinberg, producing artistic director at Cape May Stage, thinks Russell's play has aged well.

"Even though 'Shirley Valentine' was written 40 years ago, it's even more relevant today with new sensibilities about identity and gender roles," he said. "Over the course of the play, Shirley learns to eschew the societal roles of wife and mother to start living a larger life."

"Cady McClain is the perfect artist to play this role," he added. "She is also a writer, visual artist, director and producer, and has smashed any preconceptions about juggling multiple roles. We are honored to bring her to Cape May Stage."

Visit capemaystage.org or call (609) 770-8311 for ticket information.

Kick off Your Summer with
NJ Audubon Nature Center of Cape May's
10th Annual
CATCH-OF

CAPE-MAY
Sunday, June 25, 2023
6:00pm - 10:00pm
Cape May Convention Hall - 714 Beach Ave, Cape May, NJ
Tapas, Cocktails, Live Music and Fun!

- Dance the night away to the rhythms of Latin party band *De Tierra Caliente*.
- Dine on the scrumptious array of tapas and more.
- Sip specialty cocktails, local brews and wines.
- Browse and bid on unique experiences, items and art offered in our auction.

All to support the Nature Center's mission of connecting kids to nature and nurturing them to be our environmental leaders of tomorrow!
OVER 21 ONLY PLEASE
Visit WWW.NJAUDUBON.ORG/COCM for complete details and to register or make a donation.
Questions? Call (609) 427-3045
Reserve soon, space is limited!
Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter



Petals
FLORAL DESIGN & GIFTS
202 East Rio Grande Avenue · Wildwood, NJ
www.petalswildwood.com · 609-523-9500



FLIGHT DECK
DINER Fly on in
OPEN DAILY • 7:30am – 2:00pm
Frequent Flyer?
Join our **BREAKFAST CLUB**
Cape May Airport off Breakwater Road
609-886-1105
Flightdeckdiner.com

COUNTRY STORE FARM ANIMALS
BLACKSMITHING POTTERY
VILLAGE BAKERY COUNTRY STORE
COLD SPRING GRANGE RESTAURANT
WEAIVING COUNTRY STORE
COLD SPRING RESTAURANT
BREWERY

Historic COLD SPRING VILLAGE
New Jersey visitnj.org

EARLY AMERICAN OPEN-AIR
NON-PROFIT LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM

THE 1800s COMES TO LIFE!



Military Timeline Weekend
June 17th - 18th, 11am - 4pm
Sponsored by
Clarks Moving & Storage

FOR INFORMATION regarding special weekend events, Ghost Walks, admission prices, advance tickets, and hours of operation, visit hcsv.org and click on the red TICKETS button.

General Admission Tickets are also available at the gate


[f](https://www.facebook.com/hcsv) [i](https://www.instagram.com/hcsv)
[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/hcsv)
Broadcast Yourself™

735 Seashore Road/Rt. 626, Cape May NJ hcsv.org
Proceeds benefit HCSV Foundation a non-profit living history museum

Edward Jones edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

When it comes to your to-do list, put your future first.

To find out how to get your financial strategy on track for your family's future, contact us for a complimentary review.



Allison K Kruse
Financial Advisor
207 Bogden Blvd Suite J
Millville, NJ 08332
856-506-8914

FAP-1966G-A

CAPE MAY STAGE **NOW PLAYING**
June 7 - July 2
Wednesday - Saturday at 7 pm
Sunday at 3 pm

Shirley Valentine

Written by **Willy Russell**
Directed by **Roy Steinberg**



Starring Emmy Award Winner **Cady McClain**

Travel from Liverpool, England, to Greece as you accompany Shirley Valentine on a transformative adventure of a lifetime.

The Robert Shackleton Playhouse
405 Lafayette Street, Cape May, NJ
www.capemaystage.org
609-770-8311

Scan QR Code for Ticket Info



Sponsored by: 