Go! Wednesday

Your guide to getting out, brought to you by the staff of SouthFlorida.com

‘Silver Balls’ a holiday comedy, in drag

By Rod Stafford Hagwood
Staff writer

It takes a while to get your bearings with the drag-a-licious Christmas comedy “Silver Balls: A Life in Dragee.”

That’s because the one ... um ... er ... “woman” show is really a cabaret performance, better suited for a nightclub, but here produced as theater at Empire Stage in Fort Lauderdale.

But if you like your comedy campy and your holiday tunes with a twisted-twist, then you’ll eventually settle right in and let all the snowbiz charm you.

Written by Garet Scott, co-owner of Empire Stage, the story centers on Francie Silver, the globe-trotting heiress to a candy fortune – specifically those tiny silver balls called dragee. Get it?

Francie is played by Brooks Braselman, an actor who has carved out a niche playing faux femmes at Empire Stage in spoofs such as “Mommie Queerest” and “The Silence of the Clams.” He is more than capable of filling Francie’s pumps, playing the Southern socialite turned cabaret singer as a wacked-out send-up of Eve Arden, Joan Crawford and (admittedly I’m just spitballing here) Charles Nelson Reilly, all mashed up together.

To tell you the adventures that Francie relates to the audience in one story after another seamlessly woven into a narrative would be a criminal spoiler. Suffice to say the story winds from the candy factory floor and the Queen Mary (the cruise ship, not HRH) to the Village in New York and the Panama Canal. The meandering “plot” is peppered with eight Christmas songs, ranging from “Let It Snow” and “A Winter Wonderland” to “Feliz Navidad” and “Frosty the Snowman,” with a weird but wonderful “I’ve Got A Lovely Bunch Of Coconuts” thrown in for good measure.

Braselman plays his broad broadly. Blithely oblivious, Francie’s persona seems to have gathered every tick from every Barbara Stanwyck, Jane Wyman, Lana Turner melodrama ever made: side-eye glares; twirling entrances; hitch kick-steps; snickering laughs; coiffure pats; jaw-clenching dressing downs.

It’s an impressive performance; kind of like watching a living pop-up book of female impersonating actors Charles Busch, Varla Jean Merman, Dame Edna, Charles Pierce, Coco Peru, Craig Russell and Danny La Rue.

But at around 80 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission, “Silver Balls” still feels a little scant; for theater, not a cabaret act.

“Silver Balls: A Life in Dragee” runs through Dec. 21 at Empire Stage, 1140 N. Flagler Drive, Fort Lauderdale. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 5 p.m. Sundays. Tickets cost $30. To order, call 954-678-1496 or go to EmpireStage.com.

ARTS GARAGE/COURTESY

Arts Garage Radio Theatre is a trip back in time created by live actors and a multitude of sound effects, manned here by Lou Tyrrell, artistic director of the Theatre at Arts Garage, right, and production manager Mark Kirschenbaum.

A very teary Christmas

Radio-play version of ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ in Delray Beach will touch on the emotion of the season.

By Ben Crandell
Staff writer

The simple stop-and-smell-the-Christmas-tree virtues of the holiday chestnut “It’s a Wonderful Life,” lessons about gratitude, community, friendship and family, never fail to pay off in the raw emotion of its final scenes, guaranteed to warm the heart and moisten the eye.

“I’ve never watched the movie without crying at the end,” says Caroline Breder-Watts, host and producer of WLRN’s “Sunday Breakfast With the Arts.” “No matter how many times I’ve seen it, I say, ‘Oh, come on, this old warhorse, I’m not going to cry.’ But when they start singing ‘Auld Lang Syne,’ and [saying] he’s the richest man in town, I just dissolve.”

This week, the story will be made all the more sugary and nostalgic with the live radio-play version put on Wednesday through Friday by Arts Garage Radio Theatre in downtown Delray Beach. The production is part of a series of Arts Garage radio plays created by Breder-Watts and husband John Watts, who use live actors and a carnival of sound effects to make snowy Bedford Falls come to life.

“It’s a Wonderful Life” sold out its two 2013 performances at the 125-seat Arts Garage, and a third show is being offered this year.

“There’s such a freshness about it when you see it on a stage, being performed live, particularly with all the fun sound effects, and it really is an emotional experience,” says Breder-Watts, also a member of the cast that includes Cliff Burgess, John Felix, Dan Leonard, Barry Tarallo, Steve Anthony, Leah Sessa and WLRN on-air voice Christine DiMattei. Breder-Watts’ 11-year-old daughter, Victoria, as Zuzu, will tell us what happens every time a bell rings.

The audiences for Arts Garage Radio Theatre productions have always impressed Breder-Watts for their multigenerational makeup, and she expects “It’s a Wonderful Life” to be especially popular with families.

While the holiday season may make us more susceptible to a good cry, Breder-Watts believes the story of George Bailey earns its moments of catharsis by taking viewers into fairly bleak existential gloom.

“It’s a dark story,” says Breder-Watts, who produces the online Arts Radio Network with her husband and leads frequent discussions and lectures on film across South Florida. “This man, George Bailey, goes through the emotional wringer. He’s driven practically to suicide. He is really in his depth when the angel comes along.

“That’s unusual for holiday movies,” she says. “Certainly, they can be emotional and touching and whatnot, but this really goes to a dark place. But that’s what’s so great, when he realizes life is suddenly worth living, forgetting all the stuff he thought was important. That’s something we all can identify with.”

“It’s a Wonderful Life” will be performed 7:30 p.m. Dec. 17-19 at the Arts Garage, 180 NE First St., in Delray Beach. Tickets cost $20, $25 and $30. Call 561-450-6357 or visit ArtsGarage.org.

Today

Music

Breeze: The classic rock and folk tribute band plays faithful covers of your favorite songs by Jethro Tull, Moody Blues, Neil Young, America, Chicago, Beatles, Rolling Stones, Allman Brothers, Deep Purple, Doobie Brothers, Van Morrison, Santana and Pink Floyd. 8 p.m., Funky Biscuit, 303 SE Mizner Blvd., Boca Raton, $5, $10, 561-395-2929, funkybiscuit-.com.

Lee: The soulful singer/songwriter performs a live set. Also appearing are The Neighbors, a new project from local DJ’s Sire and Methods, 10 p.m., Bardot, 3456 N. Miami Ave., Miami, free, 305-576-5570, bardotmiami.com.

Art

Clyde Butcher Exhibit: “Clyde Butcher: Cuba the Natural Beauty,” is a series of black and white photographs of Cuba’s landscape. 9 a.m., Boca Raton Downtown Library, 400 NW Second Ave., free, 561-393-7962, bocalibrary.org.

Comedy

Vic DiBitetto: The frenetic comedian is best known for his word-free mannequin-head bit. He was the winner of ABC’s “America’s Funniest People” and has appeared on VH1’s “Stand-Up Spotlight,”. 8 p.m., Delray Beach Center for the Arts, 51 N. Swinton Ave., $40, delraycenterfortheart-s.org.

Theater

When You’re in Love, the Whole World Is Jewish: “Seinfeld” star Jason Alexander is in South Florida to direct the comedy revue, 3 p.m.Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center, 201 Plaza Real, Boca Raton, $50-$70, 561-910-7727, worldisjewishtheplay.com.

Mame: Veteran Broadway, film and television actress Leslie Uggams stars in the story of the eccentric diva and her young nephew. Composer Jerry Herman’s beloved musical score includes the memorable tunes “We Need a Little Christmas,” “It’s Today” and “Bosom Buddies,” 2 and 7:30 p.m., Wick Theatre, 7901 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton, $72, 561-995-2333, thewick.org.

The weather

Latest updates and radar at **SunSentinel.com/weather**

Forecast for Wednesday

High: **78°** RealFeel **84°**

7 a.m.	Noon	5 p.m.	9 p.m.
58	**75**	**74**	**68**

Winds: **N 3-6 mph**

Overnight low: **61°**

John Matthews’ outlook

Today will be sunny with light cloudiness and breezy periods. Look for partly cloudy skies this evening that will clear later on.

WPEC chief meteorologist, PO Box 198512, West Palm Beach, FL 33419. Email: jmatthews@cbs12.com

Thursday

Day: High **78**, Comfortable with plenty of sun

Night: Low **63**

Winds: **SE 3-6**

Friday

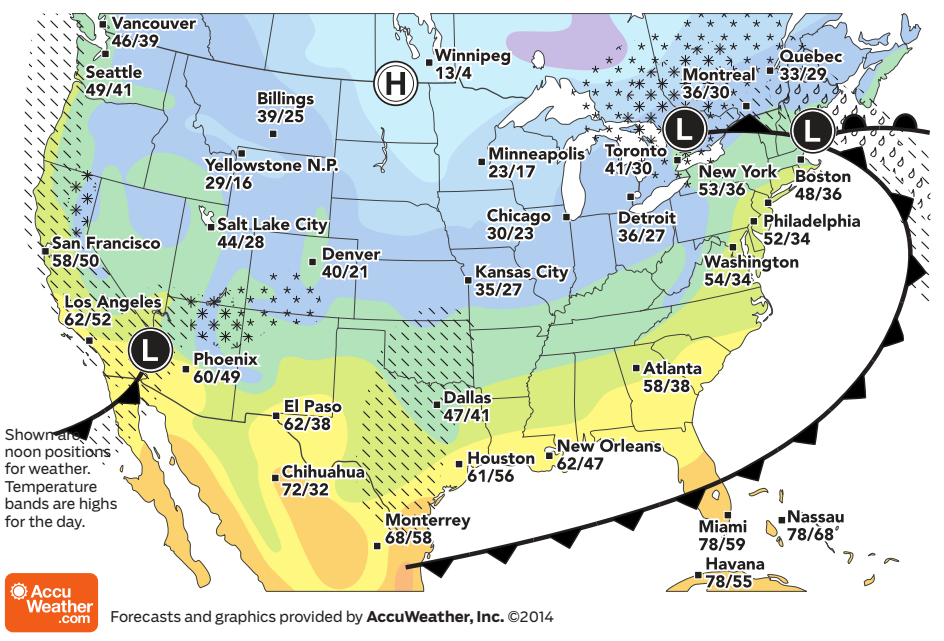
Day: High **77**, Mostly sunny and nice

Night: Low **66**

Winds: **ENE 6-12**

Showers, T-Storms, Rain, Flurries, Snow, Ice, Cold, Warm, Stationary, (L) Low, (H) High

-10s -0 0s 10s 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s 90s 100s 110s



Shown are noon positions for weather. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

AccuWeather.com Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2014

OUTDOOR PLANNER

Southeast Florida tides

Wednesday	High		Low	
Bahia Mar Y.C.	4:23a	4:30p	10:51a	11:12p
Bkrs Hlvr-Inside	5:25a	5:32p	11:55a	---
Boca Raton	4:51a	4:58p	11:25a	11:46p
Boynton Beach	5:33a	5:40p	12:25p	---
Delray Beach	5:52a	5:59p	12:25p	---
Fort Pierce	4:14a	4:21p	10:17a	10:38p
Hillsboro Inlet	4:12a	4:19p	10:21a	10:42p
Hollywood Beach	5:05a	5:12p	11:59a	---
Jupiter Inlet	4:18a	4:25p	10:09a	10:30p
Lake Worth Inlet	3:43a	3:50p	9:59a	10:20p
Laud-by-the Sea	3:54a	4:01p	10:05a	10:26p
Port Everglades	3:59a	4:06p	10:09a	10:30p
Thursday				
Bahia Mar Y.C.	5:18a	5:23p	11:41a	11:59p
Bkrs Hlvr-Inside	6:20a	6:25p	12:16a	12:45p
Boca Raton	5:46a	5:51p	12:15p	---
Boynton Beach	6:28a	6:33p	12:46a	1:15p
Delray Beach	6:47a	6:52p	12:46a	1:15p
Fort Pierce	5:09a	5:14p	11:07a	11:25p
Hillsboro Inlet	5:07a	5:12p	11:11a	11:29p
Hollywood Beach	6:00a	6:05p	12:20a	12:49p
Jupiter Inlet	5:13a	5:18p	10:59a	11:17p
Lake Worth Inlet	4:38a	4:43p	10:49a	11:07p
Laud-by-the Sea	4:49a	4:54p	10:55a	11:13p
Port Everglades	4:54a	4:59p	10:59a	11:17p

Boating conditions

Area	Wind	Seas	Cond.
St. Aug to Jupiter Inlet	NW 8-16	3-5	Mod.
Jupiter Inlet to Key Largo	N 3-6	1-2	Light
Key Largo to Dry Tortugas	ENE 6-12	1-3	Light
C. Sable to Tarpon Sprgs	WNW 3-6	0-1	Light

UV Index

5 **Moderate** 45 minutes to burn

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

Beach Info

Boca Raton	561-393-7989
Boynton	561-742-6775
Deerfield	954-480-4413
Fort. Laud	954-828-4597
Haulover	305-947-3525
Hollywood	954-921-3334

Pollen level

9 **low** **CAUSE:** Palm trees

Source: Florida Center for Allergy & Asthma Care

Air Quality

20 **good** **CAUSE:** Ozone

Source: www.airnow.gov

Lawn-watering restrictions

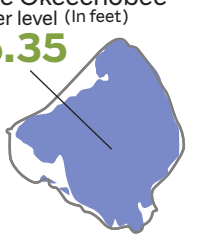
Hallandale Beach and Lake Worth
Water once per week Odd address: Monday; Even address: Thursday

Rest of Broward and Miami-Dade counties
Water twice per week Odd address: Wed., Sat.; Even address: Thur., Sun.

Palm Beach County
Water twice per week Odd address: Wed. and Sat.; Even address: Thur. and Sun.

Lake Okeechobee water level (In feet)

15.35



Sun & Moon

NEW:	FIRST:	FULL:	LAST:
Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 13

Sunset ton.	5:32 p.m.
Sunrise tom.	7:02 a.m.
Moonrise tod.	2:34 a.m.
Moonset tod.	2:15 p.m.

AROUND FLORIDA

	Today	Thursday
Daytona Beach	69/45/pc	69/48/s
Ft. Myers	76/54/s	75/52/s
Gainesville	68/38/s	69/40/s
Jacksonville	65/38/s	67/40/pc
Naples	75/55/s	74/54/s
NASA	68/46/pc	69/49/s
Orlando	71/46/pc	71/48/s
Pensacola	61/42/s	66/48/pc
Tallahassee	66/36/s	68/40/pc
Tampa-St. Pete.	71/49/s	69/50/s
Vero Beach	73/48/s	72/48/s

US CITIES

Anchorage	30/22/c	Los Angeles	62/52/sh
Atlanta	58/38/s	Miami	78/59/s
Atlantic City	52/36/pc	Milwaukee	31/23/c
Baltimore	52/31/pc	Minneapolis	23/17/pc
Boston	48/36/r	New York City	53/36/pc
Buffalo	41/31/sf	Norfolk	55/36/s
Burlington, Vt.	40/32/sh	Oklahoma City	41/37/sh
Charlotte	59/32/s	Philadelphia	52/34/pc
Chicago	30/23/pc	Phoenix	60/49/sh
Cincinnati	39/27/s	Pittsburgh	39/27/c
Cleveland	36/29/c	Portland, Ore.	47/39/c
Dallas	47/41/r	Raleigh	57/33/s
Denver	40/21/c	Richmond	57/32/s
Des Moines	30/22/pc	Rochester, N.Y.	43/33/sf
Detroit	36/27/c	St. Louis	38/31/pc
El Paso	62/38/pc	Salt Lake City	44/28/c
Hartford, Conn.	50/34/r	San Diego	64/53/sh
Honolulu	82/71/pc	San Francisco	58/50/c
Houston	61/56/c	San Jose	57/43/c
Indianapolis	33/25/s	Santa Fe	44/23/c
Kansas City	35/27/pc	Seattle	49/41/c
Las Vegas	50/39/sh	Wash., D.C.	54/34/pc

AROUND THE WORLD

Latin America		Canada	
Acapulco	86/74/pc	Calgary	38/25/s
Bogota	67/48/pc	Edmonton	18/11/s
Buenos Aires	84/63/pc	Halifax	43/38/c
Cancun	80/65/s	Montreal	36/30/sn
Caracas	87/72/pc	Ottawa	35/28/sn
Guadalajara	77/44/s	St. John’s	34/30/c
La Paz	75/56/s	Toronto	41/30/sn
Mexico City	72/46/pc	Vancouver	46/39/sh
Monterrey	68/58/c	Winnipeg	13/4/s
Panama City	88/75/pc		
Rio de Janeiro	83/70/pc	**International**	
Santiago	83/51/s	Athens	62/49/r
Sao Paulo	82/65/pc	Baghdad	66/46/s
Veracruz	80/64/s	Beijing	41/18/s
		Berlin	40/39/sh
Caribbean		Budapest	44/31/r
Philipsburg	83/76/sh	Cape Town	81/60/s
Bermuda	73/65/sh	Dublin	54/51/r
Bridgetown	86/76/pc	Geneva	42/41/r
Curacao	87/78/pc	Helsinki	36/27/sn
Freeport	75/63/s	Jerusalem	62/47/pc
Georgetown	79/71/s	London	55/53/sh
Havana	78/55/s	Madrid	56/35/pc
Kingston	86/75/t	Moscow	36/31/sn
Montego Bay	83/75/t	Paris	52/52/r
Nassau	78/68/s	Rome	59/44/c
St. Domingo	85/68/pc	Seoul	21/14/s
St. Maarten	83/75/sh	Stockholm	33/26/c
St. Thomas	83/74/sh	Sydney	75/66/s
San Juan	83/73/t	Taipei	56/51/c
Trinidad	87/74/sh	Tokyo	46/35/s

Weather: **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **i**-ice, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **tr**-trace