

MEREDITH COLLEGE THEATRE PRESENTS

SWEET CHARITY

MUSIC BY CY COLEMAN

LYRICS BY DOROTHY FIELDS

BOOK BY NEIL SIMON



DIRECTED BY LORMAREV JONES

PRESENTED IN ARRANGEMENT WITH CONCORD THEATRICALS

Meredith College Theatre
presents

Sweet Charity

by Neil Simon

Presented in arrangement with
Concord Theatricals

Director

Lormarev Jones

**Lighting/Technical
Design**

Jenni Becker

Scenic Design

Sonya R. Drum

Costume Design

LeGrande Smith

Sound Engineer

Michael Betts, II

Assistant Director

Annalee Nelson

Assistant Technical

Director

Sky Symonds

Choreographer

Brittany Mora

Fight Choreographer

Heather Strickland

**Production Stage
Manager**

Caroline O'Dekirk

**Assistant Stage
Manager**

Madelyne Comley

**Assistant Stage
Manager**

Martha-Ann Cates

**Intimacy Coordinator,
Dialect Coach**

Laura Bess Jernigan

Music Director

Mary Kathryn Walston

Sound Designer

Blue Wise

Mic Board Operator

Kerry Desimone

Dance Captain

Autumn Clark

Props Designer

Katie Avants

Wardrobe Supervisor, Wigs Designer

Elena Mulligan

Dressers

Grace Bianco

Abby Brown

Jimena Gonzalez-Salinas

Stitchers

Kristen Bridge

Elena Mulligan

Noelle Smith

Dramaturgy Note

Fun, Laughs, and Good Times

Underneath the bright, bombastic world of Cy Coleman and Neil Simon's *Sweet Charity* lies a very poignant slice-of-life story of our main heroine Charity. Charity Hope Valentine is a dance hall hostess of the fictional Fandango Ballroom, another word for this being 'taxi dancer.' Taxi dancing - getting its name from how taxi drivers are paid on a per-person basis - was a system in the 1920s in which women would attract male patrons to come dance with them for a commission. The makeup of these dancers included financially struggling women who were runaways or came from broken homes, and in some cases, were the sole providers of their families outside the dance hall. These concepts are reflected in one of the musical's most popular songs "Big Spender." The mechanical, bored, and practiced tone of the song demonstrates how this life is just a way to pay the bills for these women, 'paying the rent' being a slang term for carrying out a secret relationship in a taxi dance hall. The lyrics promise 'fun, laughs, and good times' to the refined, distinct men who have entered the dance hall, ready to spend their money on the first woman who catches their eye: To the men, this is another Saturday night, but to the women, this is their lives. In "There's Gotta be Something Better Than This," the women sing about a better, cleaner life in which their idealized life is...a typical 9–5.

Dramaturgy Note

On a lighter note, the 1960s were a big push for women. With second-wave feminism on the rise in the early 60s, a lot of changes swept over America. In 1961, the combined oral contraceptive pill was approved by the FDA a year prior, and made it easier for women to pursue jobs. *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan's book critiquing the nuclear family and women's domestic role, was published in '63. (Note: Although Friedan's book was revolutionary for its time, it also excluded the experiences of women of color, queer women, non-married women, and working class women). Another landmark of the 1960s was Hippie culture, the counterculture of the day. Hippie culture embraced the sexual revolution which sought to normalize the use of contraception, pornography, premarital sex, and other non-heteronormative conventions; it is mostly remembered for the liberal use of marijuana and LSD.

In the musical, Charity is far from the ideal woman by domestic pre-1960s standards: She's an unmarried woman who goes from man to man. However, it is important to note that the text never treats this part of Charity as something to be sensationalized or demonized; it is a challenge but it is part of her life. In the film *Sweet Charity: The Adventures of a Girl Who Wanted to Be Loved*, two endings were created: one where Charity got with Oscar after he accepts her past and one where Oscar leaves Charity because he can't get past the fact that she has been with so many men before him. Bob Fosse, the original director of both the film

Dramaturgy Note

and the stage play as well as the choreographer, had filmed both endings just in case a happier ending was demanded of him...the latter is the ending that sticks.

Despite the fun musical numbers, plucky main lead who literally wears her heart on her sleeve, and fosse dance numbers, this musical is a look into the life of a woman trying to overcome the odds and looking for something a lot of us take for granted.

CAST

Charity Hope Valentine.....Kelsey McCrary

Oscar Lindquist.....Justin Fuko

Helene.....Noelle Smith

Vittorio Vidal.....Will Godby

Herman.....Devin Lackey

Nickie.....Sky Symonds

Daddy Brubeck.....Christopher Inhulsen

Ursula March.....Kristen Bridge

Carmen.....Autumn Clark

Betsy.....Emily Hodge

Ensemble.....Davi Cunningham,

Christopher Inhulsen, Justin Jones, Brianna Long, Olivia

Martinez, Thomas Matrejek, Marshall Moller, Em Neeriemer,

Gabrielle Spehar

Cast Biographies

Kristen Bridge (Ursula) is a senior at Meredith College majoring in Theatre with a minor in Hospitality. She is excited to be a part of *Sweet Charity*! Some previous shows she has been in are *Tartuffe* (Mariana), *The Wolves* (#8), and *Everybody* (5 senses). She would like to thank the theatre department for all the memories made at Merco! Along with the constant support of family, friends, and her kitty Mr.Charlie.

Autumn Clark (Carmen) is a junior majoring in Theatre with a concentration in Musical Theatre. She's recently been in *Carrie: The Musical* (Ensemble), *Freaky Friday* at NRACT (Hannah), and *Tartuffe* (Monsieur Loyal/Officer). She'd like to thank her parents, flatmates, friends, and her pets for their support. Enjoy the show!

Davi Cunningham (Ensemble; Nickie swing) is a young, up and coming actor and stage manager in the Raleigh area. They are a sophomore at Meredith College studying Musical Theatre and English. They have been in many shows, *OhKay!* (2022), *The Wolves* (2022), *Ten Minutes* (2023), and *Carrie: The Musical* (2023), to name a few. They are so happy to be a part of this year's production and they hope you enjoy the show! Their social media handle is @queenangelyls for all socials.

Cast Biographies

Justin Fuko (Oscar Lindquist) is so excited to perform at Meredith College once more. Justin appreciates all the support from his family and friends, who are scattered throughout the audience. Justin loves y'all. Justin wants to shout out his daughters Kiara + Nala who sadly could not make it to the shows. Because they're cats.

Will Godby (Vittorio Vidal) graduated from NC State in May 2023 with a Bachelors in Psychology. He spent his time at NC State active in University Theatre, in productions such as *Muse* (2023), *Urinetown* (2023), *Spongebob* (2022), as well the theatreFEST productions of *Title of Show* (2023) and *Assassins* (2022). Will recently appeared in *Butterfly Wings* (2023) at Burning Coal Theater and *Curtains* (2023) at Raleigh Little Theatre. Will is incredibly excited to be involved in this new production with Meredith College!

Emily Hodge (Betsy) is a junior at Meredith. She was in *Everybody* (Somebody), *Roe* (Norma), *Tartuffe* (Dorine) and wrote the play "Zinnia" presented at *Women at Work*. She was also in the outdoor drama *The Lost Colony* (Ensemble). Emily is happy to be doing musicals again and loves her cast/crew!

Cast Biographies

Chris Inhulsen (Daddy Brubeck) is a Cary native and UNCG senior. Select theatre credits include: *Tartuffe* (Tartuffe) Meredith College; *Assassins* (John Hinckley), *Bright Star* (Jimmy Ray) NC State; *Big River* (Huckleberry Finn) The Temple Theatre; *West Side Story In Concert* (A-Rab) RLT and The Raleigh Symphony Orchestra; *A Christmas Carol* (Ensemble) Theatre in the Park; *Evil Dead: The Musical* (Scott) The Gilbert Theater. He thanks his family and friends for their love and support. Whatever you find yourself doing, keep the Arts part of your life!

Justin Jones (Ensemble; Herman/Daddy Brubeck swing) is thrilled to be joining Meredith once again with *Sweet Charity*. A recent graduate of NC State, his credits include *Carrie: The Musical* (Billy) at Meredith College; *Hands on a Hardbody* (Greg), and *Curtains* (Ensemble), both at Raleigh Little Theatre. Justin would like to thank his friends, family, and wife Brittany for their constant and unwavering support, which makes this possible. Cheers!

Cast Biographies

Devin Lackey (Herman) is excited to be performing in his first show at Meredith College! Select credits: *Fun Home* (NRACT), *Urinetown* (Justice Theater Project), *The Rocky Horror Show* (NRACT), *The Dead Man* (Justice Theater Project), *Away Home* (Honest Pint Theater Company), and *A Little Night Music* (Burning Coal, April 2024). Devin thanks his loved ones for all their support!

Bri Long (Ensemble; Betsy swing) is a junior at Meredith College majoring in Musical Theatre and Psychology. She has been in many shows at Meredith including: *Nuclear Family*, *The Wolves*, *A Grand Night for Singing*, and *Everybody*. She wishes to thank her friends, family, and partner for their unconditional love and support. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Olivia Martinez (Ensemble) is a freshman at Meredith College studying Business Administration and Vocal Performance. Some of her favorite performances she has done are *A Christmas Carol* (Ghost of Christmas Past) at Theater in the Park, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Naphatli) at Cardinal Gibbons High School, and *Once on this Island* (Little Ti Moune) at Raleigh Little Theater.

Cast Biographies

Thomas Matrejek (Ensemble) is thrilled to be back at Meredith working with Lormarev again. Thomas is a Software Developer at Oracle, but spends most of his time designing lights and sound in community theaters. Previous onstage credits include Russ Cochran (*Curtains*, RLT), Big Man/Kieran (*Women at Work*, Meredith), Extra Courtman (*Sleeping Beauty*, Carolina Ballet), George (*Carrie*, Meredith), Plankton (*Spongebob*, NRACT), and Ensemble (*In The Heights*, RLT). As always shout out to my Mom, family and Ms. Trish for all of their support.

Kelsey McCrary (Charity Hope Valentine) is a senior at Meredith College earning a Bachelors degree in Theatre with a Musical Theatre Concentration. Her recent performances include *Tartuffe* (Elmire), *Carrie: The Musical* (Margaret White), and *The Wolves* (#7). A huge thank you to her family, friends, and cat, Disco, for their endless love and support. Enjoy the show!!!

Cast Biographies

Marshall Moller (Ensemble; Oscar Linquist swing) graduated from Indiana University, class of 2021 with a degree in Sales and Marketing. Since moving to North Carolina, he has played Brad Majors in NRACT's production of *The Rocky Horror Show* and Perchik in Cary Player's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Other past credits include *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Bill Slank), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Frollo), and *City of Angels* (Stine).

Em Neeriemer (Ensemble; Carmen swing) is a freshman theatre major and this is her second time on Meredith's mainstage! Recently, she has been in *Tartuffe* at Meredith (2023), along with *Sweeney Todd* (2023) and *Clue* (2022) at Providence High School. She thanks the entire company for being so welcoming!

Noelle Smith (Helene) is a senior at Meredith College, who plans to get her Bachelor's degree in Theatre this coming May. You might have seen Noelle in *Carrie: The Musical* (Frieda), *The Wolves* (#11) and *Madea* (Messenger). Noelle wants to dedicate her performance to her family, Ryan and Disco-man.

Cast Biographies

Gabrielle Spehar (Ensemble; Helene swing) is a freshman here at Meredith College, majoring in Theatre and English. Previous Meredith productions include: *Nuclear Family* (tech: dresser), *Tartuffe* (role: Flipote), and *Directing Scenes* (role: Ruth). Theatre is her home, and as such she would like to give a huge thank you to her new Meredith Theatre family for making her feel so welcome, and to all of her family and friends for endlessly loving and supporting her, and her passion!

Sky Symonds (Nickie) is a senior at Meredith majoring in Theatre with a Musical Theatre Concentration. She has recently played Carrie White in *Carrie: The Musical*, Cleante in *Tartuffe*, and various characters in *Roe*. She is feeling excited yet bittersweet about her last mainstage Meredith show.

Production Team Biographies

Katie Avants (Props Designer) is a Meredith freshman pursuing English and Theatre. Her props experience began with meticulously arranging doll houses with her sister when they were little. Though this show didn't require cotton ball pillows or coins as plates, she loved contributing her creativity to this fabulous cast and crew!

Jenni Mann Becker (Lighting/Technical Designer) is a professional lighting designer, scenic designer, and educator who has been working in the local theatre scene for 20 years. Her design work includes lighting design for *Men on Boats* at Justice Theatre Project; *August: Osage County*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe* and *Significant Other* at Theatre Raleigh; *Life is a Dream* and *Radio Golf* at Deep Dish Theater; and many productions at Meredith College. After a long hiatus, Ms. Becker is excited to return to Meredith.

Production Team Biographies

Michael Betts II (Sound Engineer) is a Durham, NC based podcaster, sound designer, and assistant professor in UNC-Wilmington's Film Studies Department whose work centers on Black & Brown bodies and their existence in white space. A 2011 UNC alumnus, Betts completed his MFA in Experimental and Documentary Arts at Duke University in 2020. Notably, Michael designed for playwright Howard Craft's *The Miraculous and the Mundane*, Sonny Kelly's one-man show, *The Talk*, and *Haunted*. Betts produced the audio version of Dr. LeRhonda S. Manigault-Bryant *New York Times* op-ed, "My Mother Is Busy Getting Ready To Die." Betts also assisted on her award winning film short *death.everything.nothing*. Most recently, he collaborated with John Biewen's Scene on Radio Podcast to produce *Echoes of a Coup* about the Wilmington 1898 Massacre and Coup de'tat its impact on the world today. He is supported and inspired by his partner Carmen, their almost-three-year-old, Xaris, and puppy, Maya.

Martha-Ann Cates (Assistant Stage Manager) is a freshman Theatre and Professional Writing/Digital Communications major here at Meredith! She was recently seen as Damis in *Tartuffe* at Meredith this fall. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Production Team Biographies

Madelyne Comley (Assistant Stage Manager) is a junior majoring in Biology with Minors in Chemistry and Math. She has worked on previous productions including *Carrie: The Musical* and *Nuclear Family* as Lead Dresser; Costume Designer for *Women at Work*; and Assistant Stage Manager for *Tartuffe*. She is excited to work with the theatre department again in a tech role! Enjoy the show!

Kerry DeSimone (Mic Board Operator) is a junior at Meredith College majoring in Interior Design with a minor in Theatre. She has worked on previous productions, including Sound Designer for *The Wolves* and Lead Sound Engineer for *A Grand Night for Singing* and *Carrie: The Musical*. She is thrilled to be part of the Meredith Theatre Community and cannot wait to participate in future productions.

Sonya Leigh Drum (Scenic Designer) is a theatrical designer, visual artist, and arts educator based in Raleigh. For over 24 years, she has designed scenery for Triangle universities and theatre companies big and small. When not designing for the theatre, Sonya works as a Magnet Visual Arts Specialist for the WCPSS.

Production Team Biographies

Laura Bess Jernigan (Intimacy Coordinator, Dialect Coach) received her BA in Theatre from Meredith College (class of '07) and her MFA in Acting from UNCG. She is a performer, director, writer, teacher, and Intimacy Director. She was previously Intimacy Director for Meredith's productions of *Nuclear Family* and *Carrie: The Musical*.

Lormarev Jones (Director) is an '05 Meredith College graduate and an interdisciplinary artist, with specialties in choreography, solo performance, devised theatre and sound design. Lormarev has performed, choreographed, and/or directed for local and regional theatres including Cincinnati Fringe Festival; Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park; Know Theatre of Cincinnati; The Carnegie of Northern Kentucky; Raleigh Ensemble Players; Burning Coal Theatre Company, Deep Dish Theatre, and Raleigh Little Theatre. Last Spring, she became a certified Intimacy Director with Intimacy Directors and Choreographers. She also taught for the Study Abroad in the UK program and saw at least fifteen shows!

Production Team Biographies

Brittany Mora (Choreographer) earned her BA from Meredith College in Dance Education in 2010 and has since taught dance all over the Triangle. After 10 years of dance education experience and curriculum creation for both WCPSS and in local area dance studios, Brittany continued exclusively with private instruction in 2020 with the opening of Silver Shuffles, a mobile dance and fitness studio for adults 55+. She continues to teach Pilates, Yoga and dance across North Carolina with the goal to bring joy and healthy movement to every BODY. She wants to shout out the phenomenal and oh-so-authentic cast and crew: for the fun, laughs, good times and for contributing to such an open and supportive community. And of course to TMora, for tolerating her and all her crazy.

Annalee Nelson (Assistant Director) is a junior majoring in Theatre with K-12 Licensure. Recently, she directed a scene from *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* and performed as Mom/Daughter Understudy in *Nuclear Family*. Additionally, she was an ASM for *Carrie: The Musical*. She thanks her parents and friends for always supporting her!

Production Team Biographies

Caroline O'Dekirk (Production Stage Manager) is a recent graduate from Meredith College with a Bachelors degree in Theatre and a Psychology minor. PSM: *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (Dec 2023) and *Freaky Friday* (June 2023) at NRACT; *Carrie: The Musical* (Feb 2023) at Meredith College. ASM: *Barbecue* (Oct 2023), *The Prom* (Aug 2023), and *City of Angels* (Aug 2022) at Theatre Raleigh. A huge thank you to her family, friends, and her cat for their endless love and support. Enjoy the show! Standby performance...GO!

LeGrande Smith (Costume Designer) is happy to be returning to Meredith College Theatre. Past Meredith designs include *Merrily We Roll Along* (KCTF faculty recognition), *Gypsy*, *Sound of Music* and *Jerry's Girls*. *Light in the Piazza*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Parade* and *Avenue Q* at Theatre Raleigh. *Of Mice and Men*, *Assassins* and *A Christmas Carol* 2016-2023 at Theatre In The Park. LeGrande has a BS in Education from WCU and completed a theatre major at Meredith. Love to Doug, Maggie, Jacobi and Corey for their continued support.

Production Team Biographies

Heather J. Strickland (Fight Choreographer) has worked for over 20 years as a director, actor, and dance/fight/movement/ intimacy choreographer. Recent fight/intimacy choreography credits include: Theatre Raleigh's *The Prom* and *Yellow Face*, NC State University's *Jekyll & Hyde* and *She Kills Monsters*, NRACT's *The View Upstairs*, and Raleigh Little Theatre's *The Mountaintop* and *Pippin*. Favorite projects include: Director for Bare Theatre's all-female *Titus Andronicus* and *EverScape*, Director for RLT's *What We're Up Against*, Choreographer for Justice Theatre Project's *Oliver*, Movement Director for RLT's *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* and Sonorous Road's *The Wolves*.

Mary Kathryn Walston (Music Director) is grateful to be the musical director for her first Meredith show! While at Meredith she earned both a Bachelor and Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy. She is adjunct faculty in the Theatre Department of William Peace University and maintains a private voice studio in North Raleigh. Mary Kathryn has worked as an actor, taught classes and camps, and musical-directed locally at NC Theatre, Theatre Raleigh, Raleigh Little Theatre, North Raleigh Arts and Creative Theatre, Justice Theatre Project, and Cardinal Gibbons High School, among others. Much love and thanks to Lormarev for her support and friendship, and to the outstanding cast and crew for making this such a rewarding experience!

Production Crew

Costume Construction

Katie Avants

MacKenzie Kotch

Kristen Bridge

Ainsley Mengel

Martha-Ann Cates

Gabrielle Sephar

Autumn Clark

Noelle Smith

Kerry Desimone

Sky Symonds

Riley Fay

Blue Wise

Emma K. Johnson

Scenic Construction and Painting

Katie Avants

Em Neeriemer

Martha-Ann Cates

Annalee Nelson

Kerry Desimone

Steven Roten

Sonya Drum

Cheris L. Singleton-Irizar

Emily Hammill

Noelle Smith

Emma K. Johnson

Miyuki Su

Abby Jones

Sky Symonds

MacKenzie Kotch

Orchestra Accompaniment

Alaire Donofrio.....	Cello
Asha Jones.....	Flute
Audrey Fields.....	Bari Sax
Christopher Wood.....	Oboe, Guitar, Keyboard
Joe Wimberley.....	Bass
Jules Pitts.....	Trumpet
Katherine Anderson.....	Keyboard
Lesley Chao.....	Clarinet
Leslie Kramer.....	Violin
Lola Mestas.....	Trumpet
Luke Tilly.....	Trombone
Mary Kathryn Walston.....	Conductor, Keyboard
Mina Velazquez.....	Flute
Natalie Wiese.....	Cello
Tim Wall.....	Percussion/Drums

Special Thanks

Samantha Cibelli

Mary Jane Marchant

Katie Moorehead

Ashley Peak

Courtney White

Bill Brown and Meredith Events

Carol Finley and

Meredith College Dance

Dr. Wo and Meredith College Music

David Jensen and University Theatre

North Carolina Theatre

Theatre in the Park

Upcoming Dance and Theatre Events

**DanceWorks Emerging &
Mainstage Artists**

Concerts

April 19-21

Jones Auditorium