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# The Armonk Players

PRESENTS

# I LOVE YOU BECAUSE

a modern day musical love story



Book and Lyrics by Ryan Cunningham  
Music by Joshua Salzman

**June 6, 7, 12, 13, & 14 at 8pm & June 8 at 4pm**

**DIRECTOR  
PIA HAAS**

**MUSICAL DIRECTOR  
WILL RICH**

**CHOREOGRAPHER  
JILL PAGANELLI**

Whippoorwill Theatre • 19 Whippoorwill Road East • Armonk, NY • armonkplayers.org

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# The Armonk Players

PRESENTS

# I LOVE YOU BECAUSE

a modern day musical love story

BOOK & LYRICS BY  
RYAN CUNNINGHAM

MUSIC BY  
JOSHUA SALZMAN

## FEATURING

Austin Bennet .....	ANTHONY MALCHAR
Jeff Bennet .....	DAVID BAZZANO
Marcy Fitzwilliams .....	JAMI DECLERCK
Diana Bingley .....	CLAUDIA RACHELLE
NYC Woman .....	NICOLE HEPBURN
NYC Man .....	CHRIS MANETAKIS

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Director .....	PIA HAAS
Musical Director .....	WILL RICH
Choreographer .....	JILL PAGANELLI
Stage Manager .....	RICHIE LAURIA
Assistant Stage Manager .....	KRISTA GAFFNEY
Assistant to the Director .....	DENNY NIKOLOPOULOS
Producer & Production Manager .....	SAM RUDY
Casting Director .....	ANTHONY MALCHAR
Technical Director & Light Board Operator .....	DANIEL SCHERER
Lighting Design .....	ANTHONY SANTORA
Sound Design .....	JOSEPH CAROZZA
Costumer .....	COLLEEN AMMIRATO
Props .....	VIVIEN CORD, JOAN KUHN & PHYLLIS SEDERBAUM
Set Construction .....	DANIEL SCHERER & RICHIE LAURIA
Scenic Designer & Set Decorator .....	RICHIE LAURIA
Backstage .....	Denny Nikolopoulos, Hexcel Robinson, Penny Kriebel & Jacob Ruiz
Program & Social Media .....	REBECCA TOOLSIDASS
Publicity & Promotion .....	KIM SINISTORE
Intimacy Coordinator .....	JACOB RUIZ
Treasurer .....	CHRIS RUDY
Front of House .....	SUSAN GEFFEN

**I LOVE YOU  
BECAUSE  
ORCHESTRA**

Music Director / Keyboard 1 .....	WILL RICH
Keyboard 2 .....	STEPHEN FERRI
Reeds .....	DONALD MOY & JAKE WASSERMAN
Drums / Percussion .....	ERIC WAGNER
Bass .....	DON COOKSEY

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In times of uncertainty, we turn to the arts—not just for escape, but for connection, reflection, and a reminder of what makes us human. *I Love You Because* may be a romantic comedy, but its heart beats with something deeper: the courage it takes to open ourselves to love, especially when the world around us feels unpredictable.

Loosely inspired by *Pride and Prejudice*, which Jane Austen wrote to critique and satirize 19th-century courtship norms, *I Love You Because* humorously reflects on modern dating culture, expectations, and emotional baggage. It's about the push and pull between who we think we should be and who we are when we let our guard down. It reminds us that love doesn't require perfection—it asks only for presence, honesty, and the willingness to try again.

Thank you for joining us. The Arts matter. Love matters. And both are needed now more than ever.

– PIA HAAS

## SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Hergenhan Community Center

Rodd Berro

Keith DiBuono, *for the neon signs!*

Luddy Malchar

Suzanne Hall-Fritsch

Diane Bradsell

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**PRODUCING THEATER IN  
ARMONK SINCE 1997!**

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Please visit [armonkplayers.org](http://armonkplayers.org) for information about our history and past productions, upcoming shows and events, and to add your name to our mailing list. We welcome all actors, directors, producers, backstage hands and technicians who are interested in volunteering!



[facebook.com/armonkplayers](https://facebook.com/armonkplayers)



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## PRODUCTION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

**Pia Haas (Director):** Most recently, Pia was the Director of Press and Public Relations at Westchester Broadway Theatre. Currently, she is Artistic Director of The Armonk Players. Her favorite directorial efforts for the Players: *Desperate Measures*, *The Foreigner*, *Something's Afoot*, *A Flea In Her Ear*, *Fools*, *Lend Me a Tenor*, and *Time Stands Still*. Many thanks to the cast and crew for their generosity in sharing their extraordinary talents with us. Kudos to all the dedicated volunteers who make theatre magic at The Armonk Players!

**Will Rich (Musical Director):** Will is a music director, pianist, and vocal coach from Rockland County. Recent credits include Old Library Theatre (*Rock of Ages*), Armonk Players (*Desperate Measures*), Bergen County Players (*Rent*, *Godspell*), and Star Royal Theatre (*Spamalot*, *Rock of Ages*). He has performed in pit orchestras and accompanied singers and instrumentalists throughout Rockland, Westchester, NYC, and northern NJ. This production of *I Love You Because* is his second with The Armonk Players and he has greatly enjoyed working with such a fantastic cast and creative team. Will currently resides in Nyack, NY.

**Jill Paganelli (Choreographer):** Jill is delighted to return to The Armonk Players after choreographing last year's spring production of *Desperate Measures* and their Christmas cabaret. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Actors Conservatory Theatre, where she is the Choreography Assistant & Dance Captain for the Main Stage & Jr. Troupe productions. Dance training includes Sleepy Hollow Performing Artists, Westchester Dance Academy, and Muhlenberg College. Big thanks to Anthony, Richie, Pia, Will, and this incredible cast and crew for their trust and support. To b, for all of the things. Always for, and because of, her trailblazer grandmother, Arlene Wendt.

**Richie Lauria (Stage Manager):** Richie is excited to join The Armonk Players for their production of *I Love You Because*. With over ten years in theater, he's found steady purpose in the discipline, timing and collaboration that the stage demands. From ensemble work to character-driven roles, Richie values the structure and unpredictability of live performance. His experience includes acting, directing and technical support - all driven by a love of storytelling. For Richie, theater is about process: the table reads, the missed cues, and the quiet bonds backstage. He approaches each production with consistency and care, always aiming to serve the work and the team. One day, Richie hopes to build a company of his own - and he'd be honored if you joined him when that curtain rises!

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### ACT I

"Another Saturday Night in New York" .....	Company
"Oh What a Difference" .....	Austin and Jeff
"The Actuary Song" .....	Marcy and Diana
"...But I Don't Want to Talk About Her" .....	Austin and Marcy
"Coffee" .....	Marcy and Austin
"The Perfect Romance" .....	NYC Man and NYC Woman
"Because of You" .....	Austin and Marcy
"We're Just Friends" .....	Diana and Jeff
"Maybe We Just Made Love" .....	Austin
"Just Not Now" .....	Marcy

### ACT II

"Alone" .....	Marcy, NYC Man, and NYC Woman
"That's What's Gonna Happen" .....	Jeff, Austin, NYC Man and Diana
"Even Though" .....	Marcy
"But I Do" .....	Austin, Jeff, Marcy and Diana
"What Do We Do It For?" .....	NYC Man, NYC Woman, Marcy and Diana
"Marcy's Yours" .....	Diana, Jeff and Austin
"Goodbye" .....	Austin
"I Love You Because" .....	Austin and Company

### SETTING

*Time:* Present Day

*Place:* New York City

*THERE WILL BE ONE 10-MINUTE INTERMISSION.*

Produced through special arrangement with TRW. [www.theatricalrights.com](http://www.theatricalrights.com)



The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited. Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones, tablets and watches.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



**David Bazzano (Jeff):**

David is beyond grateful to make his debut at The

Armonk Players. This is an incredible cast and crew! David recently played Caiaphas and King Herod in *Jesus Christ Superstar* with the American Arts Players at the Crystal Theater. Prior roles with his hometown Yorktown Stage include Franz in *The Sound of Music*, Park Keeper/Northbrook in *Mary Poppins* as well as the Leather Apron in *1776*. Other credits: *Pirates of Penzance*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Anything Goes*, *The Boyfriend*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Love to nephews John Tyler, Dylan, Cole and Family/Friends. And finally, all of the support from Billy and Melissa at “Club 404.”



**Jami Declerck (Marcy):**

This is Jami’s first show with The Armonk Players!

Jami is excited to present such a fun story with this talented team! Since moving to New York from Australia, they’ve starred as Chuck in *Staten Island!: The*

*Musical* and as Moritz in *Spring Awakening*. They’d like to thank their beautiful friends for all their support and hope you enjoy the show! Instagram: @jami.declerck



**Nicole Hepburn (NYC Woman):**

Nicole is thrilled to be making her Armonk Players

debut! Nicole is an NYC-er who was most recently seen at The Heights Players (Brooklyn, NY) in *The Prom* as Kaylee. Other favorite roles include *Carrie* (*Carrie*), *Gypsy* (June), *Seussical the Musical* (Gertrude McFuzz), and *Into The Woods* (Little Red). Thanks to Mom, Dad, and Jason for their continued support and Matt, who “I love you because.”



**Anthony Malchar (Austin):**

Anthony is excited to be back here with The Armonk

Players! You may recognize him as Johnny Blood from last year’s *Desperate Measures*, the “Glimpse of Christmas” shows and *Next to Normal* back in 2018. Anthony also helped as Casting Director for this production! Some favorite credits include *Evita* (Che), *Rock of Ages* (Stacey Jaxx), *The Who’s Tommy*

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

(Tommy), *Big River* (Huck Finn), and his award-winning portrayal of Eugene in *Broadway Bound*, which earned him Best Leading Actor in a Professional Play. He’s a full-time balloon artist and a Disney fanatic! Thank you to Pia, Jill, Will, everyone involved, and his favorite librarian! – @balloonsbyanthony



**Chris Manetakis (NYC Man):**

Chris is making his Armonk Players debut, but he’s no

stranger to the local theatre scene. He is the founder and President of Local Celebrity Theatre (which is currently searching for a new home). He has over 20 years of directing experience. Some of his favorite directorial endeavors include *Anything Goes* at Iona University, *Gypsy* at Lehman HS, *Little Shop of Horrors* at Salesian HS, *The Addams Family* at White Plains HS, *Steel Magnolias* at the Pelham Manor Club, and *The Outsiders*, *Hairspray* and *Newsies* with LCT. Chris is the co-author of the original Christmas Spectacular, *Telethon for Santa*, which he hopes to bring back to the stage soon! You may have seen him on stage recently at ACT as Curtis in *Sister Act* and JoJo the Whale in *A Bronx Tale*, but his favorite role of all time was Malcolm in *The Full*

*Monty* (and yes, he really did strip!). He’d like to thank the cast and crew of *I Love You Because* for a great time and wants to give endless amounts of compliments to Jill and Richie, who are both incapable of accepting them.



**Claudia Rachelle (Diana):**

After taking a brief hiatus from the stage to raise her

1-year-old son, Brady, Claudia is thrilled to be back under the lights for her Armonk Players debut. She has trained and performed throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and New York City with organizations such as American Conservatory Theater (ACT), Broadway Artists Alliance, The AlphaNYC, and more. Favorite/recent credits include Ilona in *She Loves Me*, Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, Wendla in *Spring Awakening*, Hope Cladwell in *Urinetown*, Rizzo in *Grease*, and Grace Farrell in *Annie*. When she’s not on stage, Claudia teaches others to lift, tone, and burn at Pure Barre. Endless thanks to her husband, Isaac, and her family for their love and support!