



PURPLE BENCH PRODUCTIONS  
WWW.PURPLEBENCHPRODUCTIONS.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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PURPLE BENCH DEBUTS WITH SHANLEY'S *THE BIG FUNK*  
*September 7 - September 16*

Purple Bench Productions proudly presents *The Big Funk*, the biting, ethereal, and caustic play by Oscar winner (for *Moonstruck*) John Patrick Shanley. Daring to take audiences away from the humdrum state of the world in which humanity finds life drearily dulling away, Purple Bench offers a spin on Shanley in which the characters are aware that they and their circumstances are created, existing as dramatic conventions waiting to be used by the audience – indeed, needing to be used. *Be warned*, fair audience: you are a part of the show...and the living characters know you're there.

Existing in a space where there are no boundaries between characters and writers, actors and audience, four humans intersect both on the page and on the stage as they hash out the existential stuff that is life. In the midst of the humdrum enters a fifth, Gregory, a villain (or perhaps just another *human?*) who insists on showing beautiful, hot-shot Jill just how greasy she and her life are – by dousing her ritually with an entire jar of petroleum jelly. She is saved by Austin, who takes her to a dinner party, where she is met by Fifi and Omar, a newly wedded couple with twins on the way. As dinner progresses, the soap boxes are pulled out...and so are the knives.

Performed by Indiana University graduates Kevin Anderson, Brenden Hill, Allison Minniear, and Lauren Skirvin, the production is lead by director Christian Schmitt. Lighting design is by Jesse Portillo and scenic design is by Gordon Strain. Jennifer Harber and Matthew Zaradich proudly serve as Producers.

*The Big Funk* runs September 7 - September 16, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3:30 p.m. at Bailiwick Arts Center - Studio Theatre, 1229 West Belmont Avenue, in Chicago. General admission tickets are \$12. A \$10 preview night will be held Thursday, September 6. Ticket reservations can be made by phoning Bailiwick Arts Center at 773.883.1090. Media comps, with appropriate credentials, may be obtained by emailing [purple.bench.productions@gmail.com](mailto:purple.bench.productions@gmail.com) for reservations. Please visit Purple Bench on the web at [www.purplebenchproductions.com](http://www.purplebenchproductions.com).



## ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Purple Bench Productions may be contacted...

*...via phone at:*

Brenden Hill, ARTISITIC DIRECTOR: **317.414.1982**

Jennifer Harber, COMPANY CO-DIRECTOR: **865.604.2485**

Christian Schmitt, COMPANY CO-DIRECTOR: **901.237.2879**

Matthew Zaradich, COMPANY CO-DIRECTOR: **219.588.4493**

*...via email at:*

General information & Press/Media Inquiries:

[purple.bench.productions@gmail.com](mailto:purple.bench.productions@gmail.com)

*...via post:*

Purple Bench Productions

664 W. Barry Ave #2E

Chicago, Il 60657

*...via website:*

[www.purplebenchproductions.com](http://www.purplebenchproductions.com)

### MISSION STATEMENT

With courage to reveal the ordinary within the extraordinary, Purple Bench offers riveting and lucid theatre. This is our art.

### COMPANY BACKGROUND

Purple Bench Productions was formed in early 2007, with founding Artistic Director Brenden Hill and members Jennifer Harber, Christian Schmitt, and Matthew Zaradich. All are graduates from Indiana University's Department of Theatre and Drama in Bloomington, Indiana.



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## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

### ENSEMBLE

#### CAST

JILL.....ALLISON MINNIEAR  
FIFI.....LAUREN SKIRVIN  
OMAR.....BRENDEN HILL  
AUSTIN/GREGORY.....KEVIN ANDERSON

#### PRODUCTION STAFF

LIGHTING DESIGN.....JESSE PORTILLO  
SCENIC DESIGN.....GORDON STRAIN  
DIRECTOR.....CHRISTIAN SCHMITT  
STAGE MANAGER.....BRIDGETTE MARCOTTE  
PRODUCER.....JENNIFER HARBER  
PRODUCER.....MATTHEW ZARADICH

#### TITLE:

*THE BIG FUNK*, by John Patrick Shanley

Directed by Christian Schmitt

#### DATES:

Open Friday, September 7 and runs through Sunday, September 16

Runs Thursdays – Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 3:30 p.m.

Preview: Thursday, September 6 at 8 p.m. (\$10 admission)

#### LOCATION:

Bailiwick Arts Center – Studio Theatre

1229 West Belmont Avenue

Chicago, IL

#### TICKETS:

\$12 general admission

Call 773.883.1090 for reservations

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