Neil Simon’s “Rumors” opens November 8 at BLT

Neil Simon is America’s best-known living playwright and possibly the most financially successful dramatist of all time. Beginning with “Come Blow Your Horn” in 1961, Simon has written a long succession of Broadway hit comedies, which have earned him huge audiences and numerous prizes, including four Tony Awards, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. In 1966 Simon had four plays running simultaneously on Broadway, the only author in modern times to accomplish such a feat. Among his better known plays are “Barefoot in the Park (1963), “The Odd Couple (1965), “The Prisoner of Second Avenue (1971), “The Sunshine Boys (1972), and “Jake’s Women” (1992).

“Rumors,” Simon’s 23rd play, which has been called “the first no-holds-barred farce of his career,” opened in New York in 1988 and ran for 531 performances, closing in 1990. In this hilarious play, several affluent couples gather in the posh suburban residence of a couple for a dinner party celebrating their hosts’ tenth anniversary. However, they discover there are no servants, the hostess is missing, and the host—the deputy mayor of New York City—has shot himself through the earlobe. Comic complications arise when, given everyone’s upper class status, they decide they need to do everything possible to conceal the evening’s events from the local police and the media.

The characters are as follows: Chris Gorman (30-40), female, upper middle class and high-strung; Ken Gorman (40-50), male, professional, well-groomed and also high strung; Claire Ganz (30-40), female, Yuppyish Westchester housewife type; Lenny Ganz (30-50), male, not the smartest, but very likeable; Cookie Cusack (40-50), female, gaudy dresser, very dramatic; Ernie Cusack (40-55), male, psychologist, wants everyone to be happy; Cassie Cooper (25-40), female, neurotic, overly excitable; Glenn Cooper (30-50), male, businessman with political ambitions; Officer Welch (30-50), male, imposing burly type; Office Pudney (22-30), female, no nonsense type.

Directed by Mackey Skinner, “Rumors” opens Friday, November 8, with additional performances on November 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, and 24. Auditions are September 15 and 16. Tickets are available and can be purchased at [www.baytown.littletheater.org](http://www.baytown.littletheater.org). Parties of 8 or more should call the box office at 281.424.7617. Other information such as directions or curtain times can also be found on the BLT website.