

caitlincoleman

> by Anthony Chase



Why you should know who she is: Caitlin Coleman is one of Buffalo's most powerful, charismatic and comical leading ladies. Strongly associated with Buffalo United Artists, with whom she serves as a managing member, she's been widely praised for her compelling star performances in such plays as *The Heidi Chronicles*, *Poor Super Man* and *The Mineola Twins*, and has a range that runs from tragic realism to screwball hilarity.

Current project: Multiple characters in BUA's production of Paul Rudnick's *Valhalla*.

Education: UB for theater; Buffalo State for education.

Day job: "I teach second and third grade and sometimes theater at Tapestry, the arts-based charter school in Buffalo. It is a K-8 school and I love it."

How did you become interested in theater? "As children, my cousin, Carolyn Baeumler, and I would put on shows for the family. They were silly entertainments, filled with singing and dancing. Our parents were very indulgent—or I should say supportive. Carolyn is an actress in New York City now."

First professional gig: "Right out of school a group of friends and I started a theater company called Schtoinck. It was a reaction to the kind of serious, heavy theater we were doing in college. We did plays by Richard Foreman (founder of the Ontological-Hysteric Theater) and Brecht one-acts, that kind of thing. After that I moved to Chicago for a while, and when I came back I played the movie star in *House of Blue Leaves* at the old B.E.T. in the Jackson building. That led to other shows with B.E.T., often with an Irish accent!"

How did you become involved in Buffalo United Artists? "It began gradually. I began by doing costumes for Harvey Fierstein's *Safe Sex*. Then I did costumes for Brad Fraser's *Unidentified Human Remains*... The first acting I did was in *Mama Drama*. Eventually, while we were doing Fraser's *Poor Super Man*, Javier Bustillos asked me to be a founding managing member."

What have been your acting highlights with the company? "Well, Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles*, obviously, and Paula Vogel's *The Mineola Twins*. Those were wonderful experiences. *Me and Jezebel* was such fun. And I really liked playing Rabbi Sharon in *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*."

You often play over-the-top Jewish-lady-philosophers in Paul Rudnick plays. "Yes. In the opening scene of *The Most Fabulous Story* there was the lady who sends Adam out of the garden with a moist towelette; then later in the play, I was Rabbi Sharon. Now in *Valhalla* I do the tour guide who has the son, Debbie—'Need I say more?' They are caricatures of women I have known and women I hope to become."

What do you like most about Buffalo? "I can work in the theater constantly, own a home and raise a family all at the same time. My husband, Seaghan, and I have two children—Eli, who is three and a half, and Ruby, who is 11 months old. We have two dogs and two cats, and lots of tropical fish. We have it all. I have my cake and eat it too. You can do that in Buffalo."

Guilty pleasure: "I am addicted to 'Law and Order' reruns."

Hobby: Photography.

As a managing member of the company, what is your greatest hope for BUA? "That we would have our own home, our own theater. We are very experienced at being nomads. I remember doing many shows for which we stored the props and costumes in our cars. We did that for *Quilt*; we did that for *Jeffrey*; we did that for *Whoop-dee-doo*, if you can believe it. All those wigs! But to have a home of our own would enable us to solidify our relationship to our very loyal audience, to rehearse and develop productions in a stable environment and to store our incredible wig collection appropriately. That would be great!"

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OPENINGSHOTS

Valhalla

by Paul Rudnick
Buffalo United Artists
at the Alleyway

top to bottom:

Valhalla director Chris

Kelly with star Eric Rawski
and the incomparable Katie
White, who plays Europe's
most alluring hump-backed
princess.

Playwrights Kathleen Betsko
Yale and Manny Fried flank
chameleon Valhalla actress
(and current Artvoice Artist
of the Week)

Caitlin Coleman.

Versatile and adorable
Valhalla cast members
Rick Lattimer, Guy Tomassi
and Marc Sacco.

