

Ripples

from the Community Circle Players at

Riverwalk Theatre

Season 34 • Number 5
January-February, 2023

228 Museum Dr. • PO Box 12249 • Lansing, MI 48901 • 517-482-5700 • Office Hours: Tues.-Fri. 10 am to 5 pm • e-mail: RWT@riverwalktheatre.com • web site: RiverwalkTheatre.com

Fandom Turns to 'Misery' in Riverwalk's Black Box

What happens when admiration turns to obsession? Lansing audiences can find out when Riverwalk Theatre begins its production of *Misery*, adapted from the Stephen King novel of the same name, in the Dart Black Box Theatre.

Director Ayden Soupal, long a fan of King's work, first saw the movie *Misery*, starring James Caan and Kathy Bates, and he was "instantly drawn into the world and story."

"At the center of this grim and violent show is one about obsession and determination," Soupal said. He is particularly excited to bring the story to the intimate setting of the Black Box. "This closeness, I think, connects the audience more with our protagonist, Paul, and makes them even more scared of Annie, because she's right there in front of you."

Misery follows successful romance novelist Paul Sheldon (Scott Pohl), who is rescued from a car crash by his 'number one fan,' Annie Wilkes (Holly Sleight-Engler), and wakes up captive in her secluded home. While Paul is convalescing, Annie reads his latest book and becomes enraged when she discovers the author has killed off her favorite character, Misery Chastain. Annie forces Paul to write a new *Misery* novel, and he quickly realizes Annie has no



Holly Sleight-Engler terrorizes with a smile.
photo by www.Ariniko.com

Stage adaptation
of Stephen King's thriller
opens
February 9

intention of letting him go anywhere. The irate Annie has Paul writing as if his life depends on it, and it does.

Soupal had to make difficult casting decisions with a small cast but is glowing in his praise of Pohl and Sleight-Engler. "Scott ... is finding so many layers to the character," while "Holly ... makes these incredibly subtle and smart and bold choices." Jules Overfelt as Sheriff Buster rounds out the cast of three.

Pohl is another fan of King's books and says *Misery* is one of his favorites. "It feels more like it could really happen than his supernatural stories," he said. Pohl, in his third role at Riverwalk, hopes to bring the same kind of iconic performance as Caan did in the film adaptation.

Sleight-Engler, a Lansing theatre veteran but newcomer to Riverwalk, says she's excited to take on the challenge of playing a complex character like Annie. "I have a strange love of playing villains and anti-heroes," she said, "especially when that character doesn't think of themselves as a villain."

Misery will run February 9-12 and 16-19. Showtimes are 7 p.m. Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Sundays. To learn more and purchase tickets, visit www.riverwalktheatre.com or call our box office at 517-482-5700.

WHAT'S ON AT RIVERWALK

- 🎭 February 9-19 - **MISERY** - Thriller by William Goldman based on the Stephen King novel, Directed by Ayden Soupal - Black Box Stage
- A** February 12-13 - Sun/Mon, 7pm - **AUDITIONS for PETER & THE STARCATCHER**, Directed by Brian Farnham
- A** February 19-20 - Sun/Mon, 7pm - **AUDITIONS for STEEL MAGNOLIAS**, Directed by Meg Woolsey
- 🎵 March 2-12 - **KINKY BOOTS** - Musical by Harvey Fierstein, Music by Cyndi Lauper, Directed by Kelly Stuibler Clark - Main Stage
- 🎭 April 13-23 - **STEEL MAGNOLIAS** - Drama by Robert Harling, Directed by Meg Woolsey - Black Box Stage
- 🎵 May 4-14 - **PETER AND THE STARCATCHER** - Musical Comedy by Roger Rees & Alex Timbers Written by Rick Elice with Music by Wayne Barker, Directed by Brian Farnham - Main Stage
- ★ Wednesday, June 28, 7 pm - **BARNEY AWARDS Celebration** awards, entertainment, refreshments.

- 🎭 **PLAYS:** (both black-box & main stage) 7 pm Thurs.; 8 pm Fri. & Sat.; 2 pm Sun. Fri./Sat./Sun. \$15 (\$12 sr/student/military) **Bargain Thursdays \$12/\$10**
- 🎵 **MUSICALS:** 7 pm Thursdays; 8 pm Fri./Sat.; 2 pm Sundays - \$24 (\$20 sr/student/military) (\$12 age 12 & under)
- A AUDITIONS** - more info at riverwalktheatre.com/auditions
- ★ **SPECIAL EVENT:** More info at RiverwalkTheatre.com

A Year with Frog & Toad brings childlike wonder

It is an undeniable truth that the fundamental aesthetic of Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad* children's books is resoundingly whimsical. They bring a cheer and absurdity to the comfortable stories for children.

Riverwalk Theatre's production of *A Year With Frog and Toad*, directed by Tom Ferris, succeeded in living up to the expectations of whimsy and delight the picture books set. Lighting Designer Alan Greenberg's thoughtful care transported the audience to a fey-like, pastel otherworld. Lighting alone cannot carry the visuals of any production, so it's very fortunate that Set Designer Tom Ferris carried the theme in his work.

Two house backdrops framed the stage with deliberate care taken to impart the personality of their owners. Frog's proclivity for bright and saturated colours contrasted masterfully against Toad's more homely and cozy theme. Before the actors even stepped onto the stage, an audience member could tell which character belonged where.

House lights down, stage lights up, and the performance began. First along is a charming chorus medley, introducing our host of supporting cast and showcasing the

fantastic costuming work by Designer Kris Maier. Connor Kelly's Frog was the first of our protagonists to appear, the actor doing a fantastic job bringing an upright springy attitude to the character's body language, moving with vigor and enthusiasm about the stage. When Quinn Kelly's Toad rose, the actor likewise brought an appropriate amount of frump and grump to the character's physicality.

Our leads were not, however, the only ones performing their characters' unique animal physiology well.

Birds swooped and swirled as though in flight, squirrels skittered about, and the Mail Snail made a slow but enthusiastic pace. Of particular note, there was some spectacular puppetry from Charles Hoogstraten in the role of the Large and Terrible Frog. He manipulated an enormous and impressive piece of puppetry designed by Adam Carlson, that still managed to stay within the whimsical tone of the musical.

Not everything can be sunshine and well-earned praise, however. While the per-



Connor Kelly (Frog) and Quinn Kelly (Toad)

formance of the actors and the design of the set and lighting were spectacular; sound was a bit of an issue. At least for the performance I saw, the music would occasionally drown out the chorus with sheer volume. Though whether this was an issue of a misaligned slider on the soundboard or I had the poor luck of sitting beneath a speaker I couldn't tell you, as the performance itself managed to keep hold of my attention throughout.

Overall the production was a wonderful experience of childlike wonder and fun. Many thanks to the large village of folks who helped raise this childlike wonder: co-director Linda Widener; music director Kait Wilson; choreographer Fran Ludington; producer Bernie Lucas; hair and makeup designer Susie Perazza; sound designer Leon Green; props designer Sarah Hayner; running crew Ben Wardfield; Chad Razmus and Linda Shankland; as well as set constructors and painters Leroy Cupp, Bob Nees, Patty Wieber, Leon Green, Kat Koehn, Linda Widener, Tim Lewis, Bethany Wilson, Charles and Katie Hoogstraten and Merialice Jensen — and especially Kris Maier's stellar costume team: Lee Helder, Susan Chmurynsky, Mary K. Hodges Nees, Ashley Hampton, Anna Maier, Merialice Jensen and Marina White.

Dominic Redman



Connor Kelly (Frog) and Kat Koehn (Snail Mail)
PHOTO BY WWW.ARINIKO.COM



Emerging Playwrights is a play-writing competition sponsored by Riverwalk Theatre. The competition is open to **high school students** in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton Counties.

Ripples - January-February - 2023 - Page 2

Scripts Due February 8

Students in grades 9-12 are invited to write short one-act plays and submit them to the competition. Five plays will be selected for production and each author will receive a \$1000 prize.

Complete details are available at the Riverwalk website by scanning this QR code.



A U D I T I O N S



Musical adaptation of Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's novel, conceived for stage by directors, Roger Rees and Alex Timbers, written by Rick Elice, with music by Wayne Barker, Directed by Brian Farnham

Auditions Feb. 12 & 13, 7 pm (attend 1 day)
Shows - May 4-7 & 11-14

This origin story of Peter Pan, the Lost Boys, and the nefarious Captain Hook is a fast-paced, engaging, and often hilarious romp across the high seas. A truly unique staging, the director seeks principal roles plus a wide range of talented ensemble members to create the fantastical Neverland.

Boy (Peter Pan) – orphan seeking to find his place in the world — transitions from down-and-out orphan boy to the famous Peter Pan. Male, age 15-19.

Molly Aster – precocious and opinionated daughter of Lord Aster, servant of the Queen. A strong female character, a true leader and heroine of our story. Female, age 15-19.

Prentiss – a pompous and sarcastic orphan who fancies him/herself a

leader, but is really just looking to be led. All genders, age 13-17.

Ted – a food-obsessed orphan who is constantly looking for a leader and a place to feel safe (and to eat). Comedic, genuine sidekick. All genders, age 13-17.

Black Stache – nefarious villain, a bit of a fop who mingles blood-thirsty ambition with an absurd sense of self-worth. This role requires an actor with impeccable comedic timing and very high energy. Male, age 30+.

Smee – Stache's affable and bumbling first mate, oft-abused and rarely appreciated faithful servant. All genders, age 25+.

Lord Aster – Molly's faithful and loyal father, the Lord is the quintessential British seaman – who perhaps takes himself a bit too seriously. Male, age 35+.

Mrs. Bumbrake – uptight English nanny, bustles around Molly and disapproves of most things (comically). Typically a man in drag, though the director is open to all hilarious interpretations. All genders, age 35+.

Storyteller's Ensemble – (12-18 performers) to portray a variety of featured characters, narrators, and scenery/effects. High level of versatility, especially in movement. All genders & ages.

NOTE: looking for ALL ages, races, and cultural backgrounds. While this is a musical, singing is limited to a small handful of characters. Because of this there is **no need to prepare a song in advance of auditions.** We will hold a movement audition and read selections from the script. Callbacks may include singing but are by invitation only after the initial open audition is concluded. Please contact rwt@riverwalktheatre.com or brianfarnham1988@gmail.com with any questions!



Drama by Robert Harling
Directed by Meghan Eldred-Woolsey

Audition dates: Sunday & Monday, February 19 & 20, 2023, at 7 pm

Shows: April 13-16 & 20-23, 2023 on the Black Box Stage

In Truvy's Louisiana

beauty salon we find hilarious repartee and acerbic but humorously revealing verbal collisions, but the play moves toward tragedy in the second act drawing on the underlying steely strength

of these women — and love — which make the play truly touching.

Truvy Jones - (female 40-50) Southern Belle owner of a small town beauty salon who knows and shares everyone's business.

M'Lynn Eatenton - (female 50-60) Mother of Shelby, overprotective at times. Busy, worries.

Annelle Dupuy-Desoto - (female 20-30) Shy 20-year-old hairdresser goes from a soft-spoken person to a bible-loving Christian with her heart on her sleeve.

Shelby Eatenton-Latcherie - (female 20-30) 25-year-old diabetic, pretty and loved by all. Close, but sometimes strained relationship with her mother.

Clairee Belcher - (female 60s) Widow of the former mayor. Wealth, knows everyone's business, sarcastic.

Ouiser Boudreaux - (female 60s) Loveably miserable, wealthy, with a unique sense of humor.

MEMBERSHIP

funds at least a quarter of show budgets plus general operating expenses to maintain our building and staff.

WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU FOR A SECURE FUTURE!

Actor — \$15-24, Ripples, voting on board members and Members Choice favorite show award.

Technician — \$25-49, Ripples, voting, program listing

Stage Manager — \$50-99, Ripples, voting, program listing, and one comp ticket

Director — \$100-249, Ripples, voting, program listing, two comp tickets

Producer — \$250-499, Ripples, voting, program listing, four comp tickets

Star — \$500-999, Ripples, voting, program listing, six comps, name on theatre seat

Angel — \$1000+, Ripples, voting, program listing, 12 comp tickets, name on a theatre seat and on the donor board in the lobby

THREE WAYS TO JOIN: go to **riverwalktheatre.com**

- click "more" then "get involved" to join online — OR phone Mike with your credit card info 517-482-5700 — OR just mail a check to Mike at the office, P.O. Box 12249, Lansing 48901. We're 501c3 tax deductible.

PERUSAL SCRIPTS for all shows are available at the Riverwalk office, Tuesday - Friday, 10 am - 5:00 pm. Call 517-482-5700 to check availability: rwt@RiverwalkTheatre.com audition forms are available online at www.riverwalktheatre.com/auditions.html

RIVERWALK

2022-2023 Officers

President.....Brian Farnham
 Admin. VPKate Clark
 Production VPShannon Bowen
 Treasurer Michele Booher-Purosky
 Secretary..... Elisha Smith

2022-2023 Board of Directors

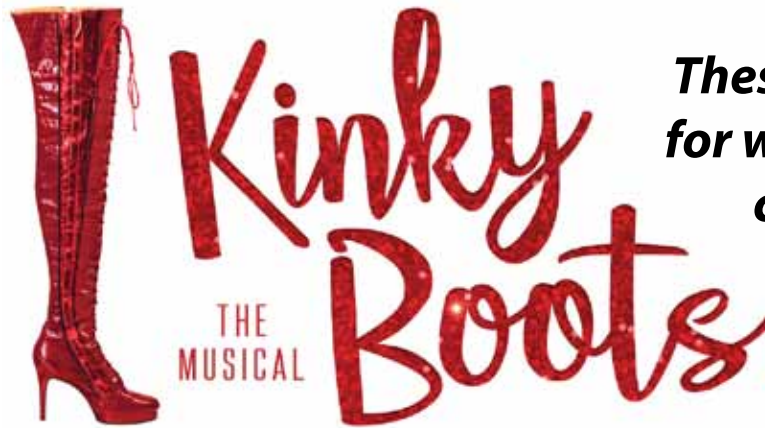
Laura Clark-Roumpz
 Darrin Fowler
 Leon Green
 Alan Greenberg
 Sarah Hayner
 Bernie Lucas
 Amanda Macomber
 Scott Mandel
 Lauren Mudry
 Scott Pohl
 Ayden Soupal
 Julian Van Dyke
 Rick Wendorf
 Linda Widener
 Aaron Wittbrodt

Ripples is published by Riverwalk Theatre. Submit info to Editor Jane Zussman (jszussman@gmail.com) or Riverwalk Manager Mike Siracuse (rwt@riverwalk-theatre.com) 517-482-5700 or at RiverwalkTheatre.com



P.O. Box 12249
 Lansing MI 48901

Next to Impression 5,
 228 Museum Drive, south
 off Michigan Avenue,
 across from the
 Lansing Center



These boots are made for walkin', but beauty comes with a price

Let's high kick our way to *Kinky Boots* opening night by supporting the cast and crew!

Deliver a check/cash to the theatre with a note marked "[Your Name], Kinky Boots" or call Mike at 517-482-5700 to set up your donation* by **Tuesday, February 17 at noon**. Donations received after that point will not be reflected in program.

*credit card service fee does not apply toward donation

BOOTS DONOR (one name per donation) — \$25-49

Name in Kinky Boots program
 Recognition at intermission

ANGEL DONOR (one name per donation) — \$50-99

Name in Kinky Boots program
 Recognition at intermission
 Special Meet & Greet with the Angels in Black Box after show
 Photo with the Angels

LOLA DONOR (up to 2 individual names, 1 family name, or 1 business name listed on donation) — \$100+

All the perks of Angel Donor plus recognition during curtain speech

Capital City Market/Meijer Donates \$5,000 to Riverwalk Theatre



From L to R: Mark Walton and Clark Crow (RWT's former custodian) of Capital City Market present Riverwalk Theatre President Brian Farnham, Theatre Manager Michael Siracuse, and Vice President Kate Dickinson Clark (Not pictured: Keri Tomac and Robert Lajcay)

We are honored to receive this donation from Capital City Market/Meijer and were humbled to hear we were the recipient of this gift. What a wonderful holiday surprise! Thank you to Capital City Market

for their generous spirit and continuing to make communities across Michigan better by giving back to their local non-profits — and especially to Clark Crow for being an advocate for Riverwalk Theatre!

Supported in part by MICHIGAN ARTS AND CULTURE COUNCIL • NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS • COMMUNITY FOUNDATION • ARTS COUNCIL OF GREATER LANSING



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

