

Ripples

from the Community Circle Players at Riverwalk Theatre

Season 35 • Number 6
March, 2024

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



“The play has evolved into what feels like a dreamscape. We are bearing witness to a confession and acknowledging a life that was once vibrant and complicated. The story never stops or wanes; it moves like a piece of music. It is measured in beats.”

So reports director Amy Rickett, who has been acting and directing in the greater Lansing area since 1992. A non-speaking role as a towns person in Riverwalk’s *Robin Hood* led to an open call for Spotlight Theatre and becoming a member of the Spotlight Actors Workshop. She directed her first show in 2015: Riverwalk’s *Child’s Play*, and has been alternating between being onstage and offstage ever since.

Amy was drawn to this show for its humanity. She says, “I am not proficient in classical music or the history of famous composers, but I am drawn to the human condition and what it means to be in crisis. How do we manage defining moments? The relationship in this play between Salieri and Mozart is fiction, but the crisis of faith, what it means to be rewarded or not for hard work, loyalty, friendship, love, marriage and atonement are all part of our lives.”

Amy feels fortunate to have had several actors come back and work with her again, notably Lewis C. Elson (Mozart) and Jeff Magnuson (Salieri) but the cast is a true ensemble, welcoming some new actors to Riverwalk as well as some familiar faces: Joe Clark, Laura Croff, Rachel Daugherty, Taylor Haslett, Nick Lemmer, Allison Meyer, Gay Oliver,

Michael Palmer, Mark Polzin, Bob Purosky, Ric Sadler, Michael Shalley, Elaine Simon, Lauren Spadafora, Eric Vincent, Aaron Wittbrodt, and Nathan Wood. These actors have had to learn languages, understand music composition and transport themselves back to the 18th century.

Amy credits her crew, Marcus Fields, Jan Ross, Leon Green, Ted Daniel, Tim Daniel, Ric Sadler, Kris Maier and her entire team, Leroy Cupp, Bob Nees, Scott Pohl, Gloria Vivalda and everyone who lent a hand in the shop.

“As the director, I am a small

part of what happens on and off stage. The collaboration of a collective group of people all working towards the same goal, sharing ideas and finding creative ways to make the play a success is what makes putting a show together exciting. *Amadeus* brought many helping hands, with expertise that I simply do not have and I am grateful for all the collaboration and sharing of ideas that this play has inspired.”

Amy adds, “I want to take a moment to acknowledge the extraordinary work of my leading man Jeff Magnuson. I have known Jeff for over 30 years and — full disclosure — been married to him for the last 22. I have had the privilege of acting alongside him and directing him on occasion. He is dedicated, disciplined, creative, inventive, kind and remarkable as Antonio Salieri. Jeff is one of the best listeners I know and his ability to create moment to moment work is credit to all the years he has dedicated to the craft of acting. He is generous on stage and off. His patience has no limits. Jeff has the ability to find the honest, human emotions of every character he portrays, but his work on this show is enthralling. He will not like that I wrote this about him, but I feel that this might be the role he was always meant to play.”

Amy is “wiggled out” in a good way for this show and welcomes audiences to come along for the ride. *Amadeus* runs March 14-24, with tickets available online at www.riverwalktheatre.com or by calling the office at 517-482-5700.

WHAT’S ON AT RIVERWALK

-  March 14-17 & 21-24 - **AMADEUS** by Peter Shaffer, Directed by Amy Rickett - main stage
-  April 11-14 & 18-21 - **MOON-GLOW** by Kim Carney, Director Emily Clark - black box
-  May 16-19 & 23-26 - **JAMES & THE GIANT PEACH**, Music/lyrics by Benj Pasek & Justin Paul, book by Timothy Allen McDonald, Directed by Linda Widener **NOTE: Thu-Fri-Sat 7pm; 2 pm Sun.** - main stage
- ★ June 21, Friday, 9am-8pm **HUGE INDOOR RUMMAGE SALE** - Start sorting through your STUFF to donate! (See page 4)
- ★ June 22, Saturday, 1pm **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
- ★ June 26, Wednesday, 6pm **ANNUAL BARNEY AWARDS** reception and awards show

-  **SHOWS:** 7 pm Thurs.; 8 pm Fri. & Sat.; 2 pm Sun. (Peach only: 7pm & 2 pm Sun.)
-  **PLAYS:** \$15 adult \$12 sr/student/military
-  **MUSICALS:** \$24 adult \$20 sr/student/military \$12 children under 13
- A AUDITIONS** - more info at riverwalktheatre.com/auditions
- ★ **SPECIAL EVENT:** More info at RiverwalkTheatre.com

The Exonerated: Powerful and Top Quality



The “make a face” photo is only a suggestion of the vast array of mood and character portrayed in *The Exonerated*.
Back, L to R: Filonna Thomas, Wulf Hogan, Quinn Kelly, Zach Husak, Samuel Vsetula, Jessica Bibbee
Front: Jordan Taylor, Holly Kay-Cannon, Julian Van Dyke, Adam Bright • PHOTO BY WWW.ARINIKO.COM

Riverwalk Theatre’s February production of *The Exonerated* was powerful and top quality. Several shows sold out as word spread. People returned for second viewings. One returnee admitted she got so angry at one evil police officer, she wanted to throw something at him (but didn’t). The play tells the true stories of five men and one woman who were convicted and sentenced to death for crimes they did not commit. Playwrights Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen created the script in 2002 from first-person interviews and public transcripts.

First-time director, Alan Greenberg, masterfully guided the Riverwalk actors in deeply moving performances. We felt each character’s dismay, frustration, anger, pain, hope, faith — and sometimes evil. We cared about each exoneree through the evocative portrayals of Julian Van Dyke (Delbert Tibbs, the Poet), Holly Kay-Cannon (Sunny Jacobs), Jordan

Taylor (David Keaton), Wulf Hogan (Robert Earl Hayes), Samuel Vsetula (Gary Gauger) and Adam Bright (Kerry Max Cook). Four cast members smoothly shifted in and out of multiple accessory roles: Jessica Bibbee (Sue and Sandra); Filonna Thomas (Georgia/Kerry’s Judge/Darla/State Attorney); Zach Husak (many bad guys and one good guy); and Quinn Kelly (several bad guys).

The production design was a true minimalist Black Box. Folding chairs and a few costume props defined each scene. Joseph Dickson used spotlights to make the rest of the stage disappear, flashing strobes to heighten drama, and subtle shifts from warm yellow portraying the present, to blue during flashbacks, and cold white front lighting (“interrogation light”) to create an eerie, non-real feel. The audience was pulled into the stories as they unfolded without interruption for scene changes or intermission

for 95 minutes.

Almost all of the audience, plus the cast and director, stayed for Talkbacks following the Saturday performances. Tracey Brame, Director of the Cooley Law School Innocence Project and Cooley Associate Dean of Experiential and Practice Preparation, led discussion with Gilbert Poole, an exoneree freed in 2020, 32 years after being wrongly incarcerated. An hour later, the audience was still gripped by their stories and asking more questions.

After collectively serving over 100 years on Death Row, the criminal justice system finally corrected its errors and freed the six people portrayed in *The Exonerated*. A donation box was in the lobby to collect for the Innocence Project’s Exoneree Fund. <https://innocenceproject.org/exoneree-fund/>

Liane M. Zimny

Farewell, Chris!

Chris Goeckel, Riverwalk's favorite monster, and spirited supporter of Lansing area theatre, passed away unexpectedly in a tragic bicycling accident on February 3, 2024, near his retirement home in Zellwood, Florida.

Chris found his way into theatre through his daughters, Amy and Alyssa, and thereafter performed in 25 shows at Bath Theatre Guild, Lansing Civic Players, Starlight Dinner Theatre, Over the Ledge and Riverwalk — notably featured as The Monster in RWT's 2014 *Young Frankenstein*, for which he won a Barney Award.

A Celebration of Life was held at Reno's East in E. Lansing February 24 which served as a sad but enjoyable reunion for many of his theatre friends.



Monster Chris terrorizes Veronica Gracia-Wing in Young Frankenstein, RWT 2014.

Donations in Chris's memory can be made to Riverwalk Theatre, Good Samaritans of Zellwood Station, or the American Heart Association.

Riverwalk donors will be listed in future programs.

Riverwalk Theatre
In Memory of Chris Goeckel
PO Box 12249
Lansing, MI 48901

Good Samaritans of Zellwood
Linda Leonard
2122 Nectar Circle
Zellwood, FL 32798

American Heart Association
ahatribute.funraise.org/fundraiser/alyssa-goeckel

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.

Riverwalk Recognized

The 2024 Annual Choose Lansing Award Event, held at the Breslin Center February 27, celebrated the launch of its rebrand and recognized many of the region's 476 Certified Tourism Ambassadors (CTA) who are dedicated to making every visitor experience a positive one.

Those acknowledged included CTAs who have served the community for five and 10 years. Tracy Welch, was celebrated as the CTA Star of the Year.

Choose Lansing acknowledged these local business anniversaries:

- Silver Bells in the City - 40 years
- Beggar's Banquet - 50 years
- Abrams Planetarium - 60 years
- Community Circle Players - 60 years - with 35 of those at the Riverwalk location



Riverwalk Theatre representatives Liane Zimny, Board Member, and Brian Farnham, Board President, proudly display a plaque recognizing Community Circle Players for 60 years of serving Lansing and Riverwalk Theatre's 35 seasons at its present location.

- Linn & Owen Jewelers - 107 years (Operating in Downtown Lansing the whole time; the owner, Stewart Powell, is retiring and closing the business.) "Choose Lansing" is a rebranding of the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau. **lansing.org**

RIVERWALK

2023-2024 Officers

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

2023-2024 Board of Directors

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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

Start saving your STUFF!

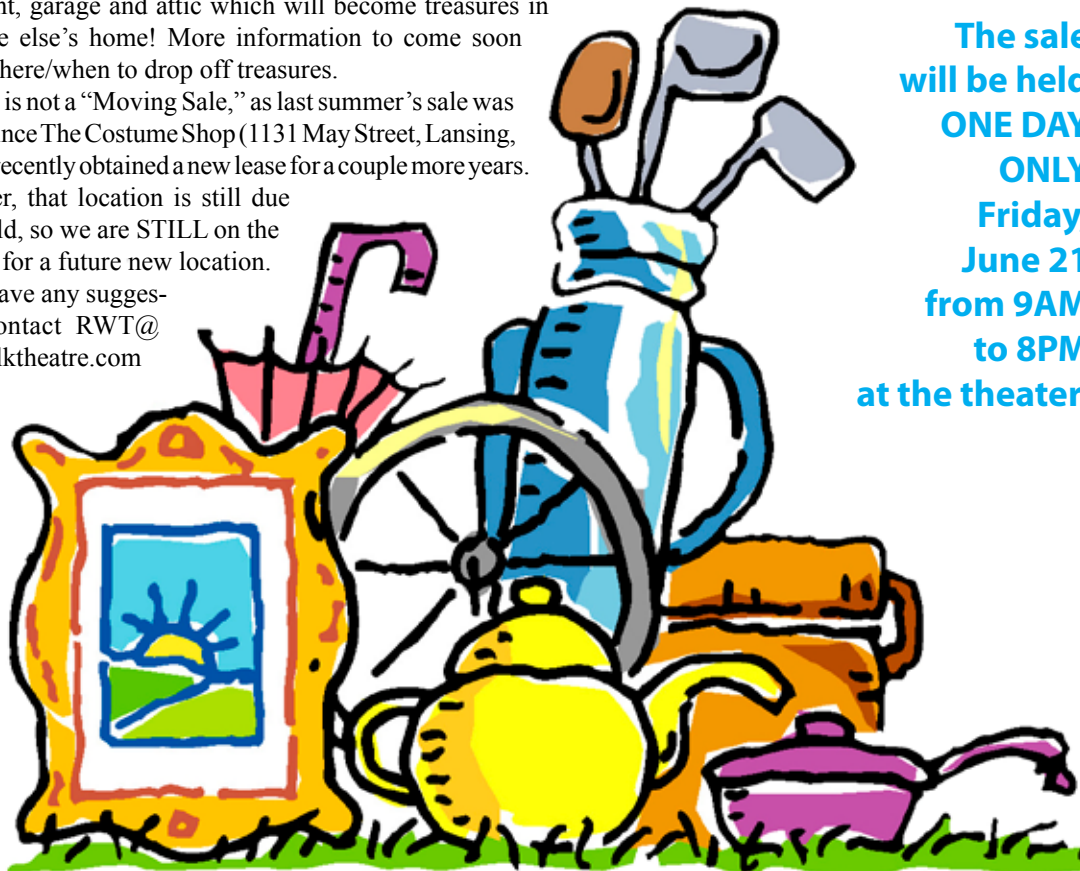
The Costume Shop is planning its second annual HUGE INDOOR SALE this summer. Those of you who attended the sale last year may remember how much fun you had and the great bargains you found!

We will soon be accepting donations of the cast-offs from your basement, garage and attic which will become treasures in someone else's home! More information to come soon about where/when to drop off treasures.

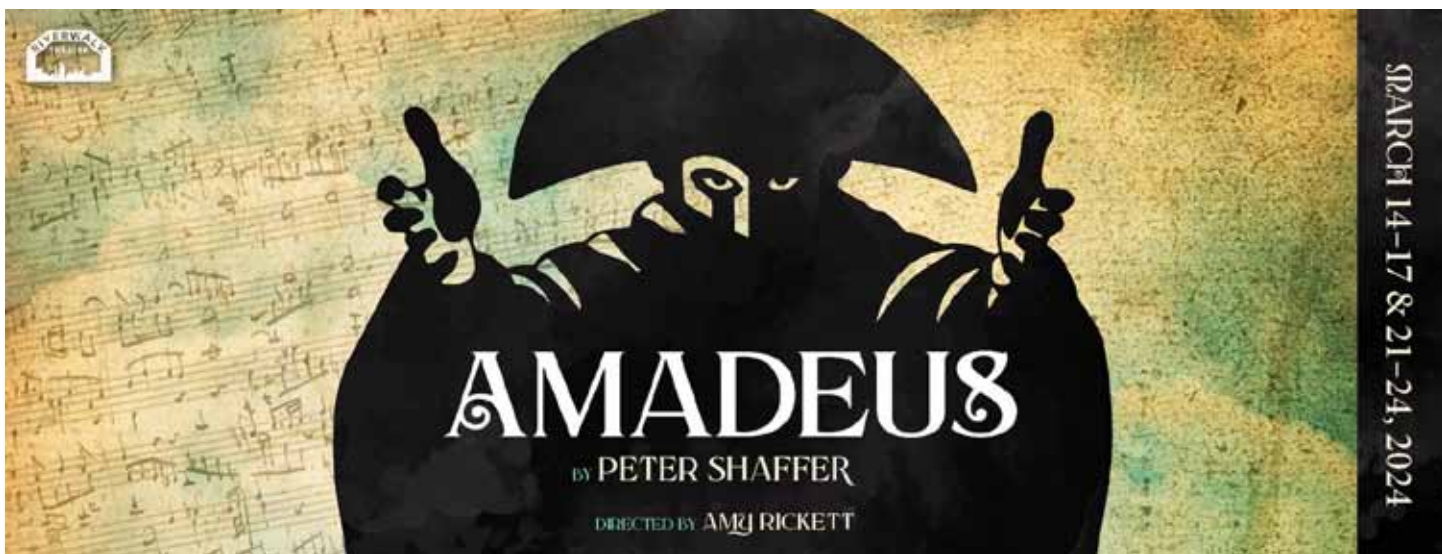
This is not a "Moving Sale," as last summer's sale was billed, since The Costume Shop (1131 May Street, Lansing, 48912) recently obtained a new lease for a couple more years.

However, that location is still due to be sold, so we are STILL on the lookout for a future new location.

If you have any suggestions contact RWT@riverwalktheatre.com



The sale
 will be held
**ONE DAY
 ONLY**
Friday,
June 21
from 9AM
to 8PM
at the theater.



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

