

# Ripples

## from the Community Circle Players at Riverwalk Theatre

Season 31 • Number 4  
November, 2019

228 Museum Dr. • PO Box 12249 • Lansing, MI 48901 • 517-482-5700 • Office Hours: Tues.-Fri. 10 am to 5:30 pm • e-mail: RWT@riverwalktheatre.com • web site: RiverwalkTheatre.com



**Back L to R:**  
Caila Conklin, Brie Roper, Jessa Bye, Kelly Jo Garland;  
**Front:** Anasti Her, Tyler Frease, Ann Glenn Carlson  
**PHOTO BY** WWW.  
ARINIKO.COM

Diane Cooke was looking for a play to present at Riverwalk Theatre that had strong roles for women. After a Google search, she ordered a copy of *A Piece of My Heart* and took the script on vacation with her. "I read it in two hours on the beach and fell in love with it," she said.

*A Piece of My Heart*, written by Shirley Lauro, is based on the real-life experiences of women in Vietnam. It comes to Riverwalk's Black Box October 24-27 and October 31-November 3.

Cooke was a small child when the Vietnam War took place during the 1960s and early '70s, but it also hit close to home, as her stepfather is a Vietnam veteran.

"It evokes lot of feelings and memories," she said.

The cast of seven includes four female characters in the military, a Red Cross volunteer and a USO performer, as well as one man who plays a variety of roles.

The cast includes Kelly Jo Garland as Martha, Caila Conklin as Mary Jo, Anasti Her as LeAnn, Jessa Bye as Sissy, Brie Roper as Whitney, Ann Glenn Carlson as Steele and Tyler Frease as "All

American Male(s)." He's the only cast member with costume changes.

Cooke brought in veteran Dave Dunckel, who helped explain military details to the cast. Cast members did their own research, including watching Ken Burns' documentary about the Vietnam era. Cooke even made a visit to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C.

The memorial, which includes a vast granite wall bearing the names of U.S. soldiers killed in Vietnam and a nearby monument to women who served during the war. "I wanted to see it for myself," she said. "It's awe-inspiring and humbling."

Cooke said the program will include resources for U.S. veterans who might still need help navigating life after serving, whether they're Vietnam vets or from more recent conflicts.

Cooke said she thinks the heartfelt situations in the play give it a universal appeal.

"I think it encompasses all people, regardless of who they vote for and how they feel about life in general," she said.

Kathleen Lavey

### WHAT'S ON AT RIVERWALK

■ Oct. 24-27 & Oct. 31-Nov. 3 - **A PIECE OF MY HEART** - true drama, Director: Diane Cooke

★ Nov. 9 - 7pm - **SLIP AND FALL** - comedy by Roger Rochowiak **staged reading** - Free of charge; donations accepted.

🎵 November 29-December 1 & 5-8 - **YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN** - family musical - Director: Bob Purosky

**A** December 8 and 9, Sun/Mon, 7 pm, **AUDITIONS for A Hotel on Marvin Gardens**, Director: Mary K. Hodges-Nees (performs March 12-22, 2020)

**A** December 15 and 16, Sun/Mon, 7 pm, **AUDITIONS for Unnecessary Farce** - Director: Jeff Magnuson (performs February 6-16, 2020)

★ December 20-22 - **HOLIDAY CHEER** musical variety - Director: Meghan Eldred-Woolsey

■ January 16-19 & 23-26, **BOY GETS GIRL** - sexual politics thriller - Director: Brian Farnham

🎭 **PLAYS:** 7 pm Thurs.; 8 pm Fri. & Sat.; 2 pm Sun. Fri./Sat./Sun. \$15 (\$12 sr/student/military) **Bargain Thursdays \$10/\$8**

🎵 **MUSICALS:** 7 pm Thursdays; 8 pm Fri./Sat.; 2 pm Sundays \$24 (\$20 sr/student/military) (\$12 age 12 & under)

■ **BLACK BOX SHOWS:** 7 pm Thursdays; 8 pm Fridays & Saturdays; 2 pm Sundays \$12 (\$10 sr/student/military) **Bargain Thursdays \$10/\$8**

**A AUDITIONS** - more info at <https://www.riverwalktheatre.com/auditions.html>

★ **SPECIAL EVENT:** see website

**W WORKSHOP** - More info at RiverwalkTheatre.com

## SWEAT gripping, touching, funny, sad, frightening

The real-life inspired, Pulitzer Prize winning drama, *SWEAT*, by Lynn Nottage, stood out on Riverwalk's Season 31 schedule. Nestled between such enduring and delightful fan favorites as *Pippin*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Unnecessary Farce*, and *Shrek*, it required a Google search to identify.

Even then, for this reviewer, it didn't inspire the same enthusiasm to make an advance ticket purchase as the others, which is the reason why I selected it as the show I would review for Ripples because Ripples reviewers earn free entry to their selected production. (*Email editor Jane - JSZussman@gmail.com - if you would like to participate in this program as there are still shows available this season*).

My gamble paid off. The production, ably directed by George Popovich and finely performed by a strong ensemble of new and familiar faces, was gripping, touching, funny, sad, frightening, and hit very close to home, especially given the industrial nature of much of our mid-Michigan economy and the ongoing General Motors strike.

Standing out in the cast were Connor

Kelly, as Jason, whose youthful energy and passion were doused by corporate reality and replaced by vengeful passion that erupted into the tragic event that drove the proceedings but that the audience didn't experience until the penultimate scene.

Lekeathon Wilson, as Chris, Jason's best friend and eventual co-defendant, was just as strong in a more subtly written role. Maureen Sawdon and Rose Jangmi Cooper, playing their respective mothers, each struggling under the pressures of single parenthood, full-time factory work, and fear of the future, also gave fine performances.

Julian Van Dyke (playing two very different characters), Scott Pohl, Madeline Nash, and, especially, Edward (Eddie) Heldt, lent strong support.

The set (Scenic Design and Set Painting by Emily Willemese; Set Construction by Leroy Cupp, Tom Ferris, George Popovich, and Leon Green) was a drab, blue-collar hangout/bar, surrounded by a combination sidewalk, probation office, back-alley, living room, path to nowhere. It beautifully conveyed the remoteness, both of each individual

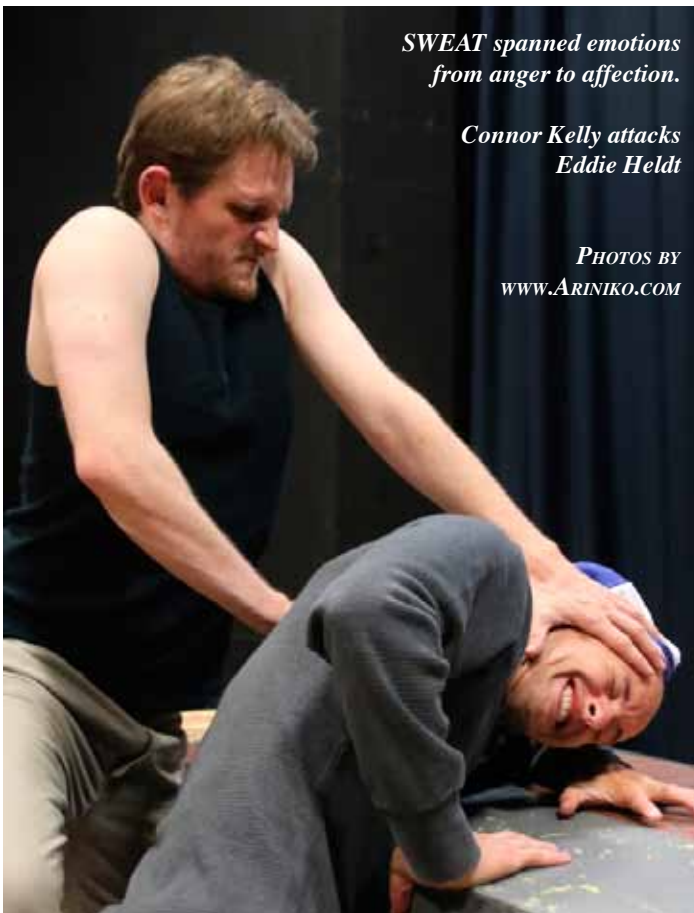
character from each other, and of Reading, Pennsylvania, from the rest of the world, as described in Mr. Popovich's personal and illuminating Director's Note.

Standing ovation-worthy was the tremendous work of Fight Director, Matthew Kowalczyk. This reviewer has never witnessed a live performance of such a challenging, lengthy, and powerful scene of violence. Kudos.

Other technical elements were also strong and provided by: Stage Manager and co-Properties Designer (with the director), Jenny Popovich; Lighting Designer, Chelsea Witgen; Sound Designer, Rita Deibler; Costume Designer, Rachel O. Kay; Light Board Operator, Tricia Rogers; Sound Board Operator, Lillian Nash; and Costume Assistants, Jenny Popovich, George Popovich, Ashley Hampton, Theresa Dunn, and Adriana Flores.

This production represented Mr. Popovich's directorial debut with the Community Circle Players. His resumé, from before relocating to mid-Michigan, is impressive. One hopes to see more of his work in future seasons.

*John Roche*



*SWEAT spanned emotions from anger to affection.*

*Connor Kelly attacks Eddie Heldt*

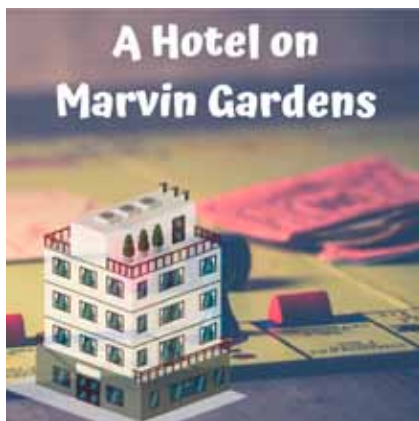
*PHOTOS BY  
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*Julian Van Dyke gives Rose Jangmi Cooper a peck on the cheek.*



# A U D I T I O N S



*Comedy*  
by  
*Nagle*  
*Jackson*  
*Directed*  
by  
*Mary K.*  
*Hodges-*  
*Nees*

**AUDITIONS: Sun/Mon, Dec. 8-9, 7 pm.**  
**Shows: March 12-15 & 19-22 - Black Box**

All I want is to run everything and always be right; now is that so much to ask?" Thus speaks K.C., the no-nonsense editor of ME magazine, a popular rag dedicated to the upwardly mobile. K.C. lives by herself, the only occupant of an island off the Connecticut coast, On April Fool's Day, three friends gather for their annual Monopoly game. One guest is new, and doesn't know K.C.'s elaborate "rules" for behavior. As if that doesn't cause enough problems, a young woman appears at the door, dumped off on the island after rejecting her date's advances on his boat.

K.C. - (pronounced "Casey") magazine editor. Handsome woman in her 40's.

BO - real name Robert, K.C.'s publisher. Late 40's hale and hearty. \*

ERNA - Magazine's Food Critic & new player this year. Attractive in an eccentric way. \*

HENRY - assistant editor, whom K.C. plans to fire. Late 30's insecure and bookish. \*

ROSE - stranded school teacher. Very pretty, late 20's or early 30's

\*These roles Mary K. plans to precast, but she will audition for them if people she asks are not able to do the show. Black Box shows have traditionally been precast, with a few exceptions. Next season, Riverwalk policy changes to include auditions for all Black Box shows



*Comedy*  
by  
*Paul*  
*Slade*  
*Smith*  
*Directed*  
by  
*Jeff*  
*Magnu-*  
*son*

**AUDITIONS: Sun/Mon, Dec. 15-16, 7 pm.**  
**Shows: February 6-9 & 13-16 - Main Stage**

Two cops. Three crooks. Eight Doors. Go!

In a cheap motel room, an embezzling mayor meets with his female accountant, while in the room next-door, two undercover cops wait to catch the meeting on videotape...Why does the accountant keep taking off her clothes?

Eric Sheridan, Male

Billie Dwyer, Female

Karen Brown, Female

Mayor Meekly, Male, 50s-70s

Agent Frank, Male

Todd, Male - Speaks with a pronounced Scottish Accent

Mary Meekly, Female, 50s-70s

Anyone cast in the show must be off-book by the second week of rehearsal. All ages, races and ethnicities will be considered. Mayor and Mary Meekly will be in their 50's-70's. The script calls for Eric and Karen to spend extended time onstage in their underwear. Eric, Billie, Karen, Agent Frank and Todd will be learning, rehearsing and performing choreographed action, including falls. Anyone auditioning for the role of Todd must review the script prior to auditions and come prepared to read the Scottish accent as written in the script.

Rehearsals will vary on Tuesdays-Sundays with some Saturday/Sunday rehearsals.

## Have you EXPIRED?

RWT membership runs July - June.

Revenue from membership funds at least a quarter of our show budgets as well as general operations. Keep Riverwalk thriving for years to come!

**Actor** - \$15-24, Ripples, voting on board members & 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 the-atre seat

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

**IT'S EASY TO JOIN OR RENEW:**

Go to riverwalk-theatre.com. Click "more" then "get involved" to join online. Or just mail/ give a check to Mike at the office, P.O. Box 12249, Lansing 48901. We're 501c3 tax deductible.



**NOTE: General Shrek auditions have moved!**  
**Now: March 29 & 30**

PLUS we have **SUPER EARLY AUDITIONS for ADULT SHREK and FIONA ONLY** Saturday, **JANUARY 11**, 9:30 am to noon, and Sunday, **JANUARY 12**, 2 pm to 4 pm  
(All other roles will be cast after the March 29 & 30 auditions.)

**PERUSAL SCRIPTS for all shows are available at the Riverwalk office, Tuesday - Friday, 10 am - 5:30 pm. Call 517-482-5700 to check availability: rwt@RiverwalkTheatre.com audition forms are available online at www.riverwalktheatre.com/auditions.html**

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Ripples is published by Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., P.O. Box 12249, Lansing, MI 48901. Submit info to Editor Jane Zussman (jszussman@gmail.com) or Riverwalk Manager Mike Siracuse (rwt@riverwalktheatre.com) office hours: Tuesdays thru Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Reservations and info at: 517-482-5700 or RiverwalkTheatre.com



## Riverwalk Theatre

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## SLIP AND FALL - Free Staged Reading

What do you do when you fall on the ice and blow-out your kneecap? Then two months later your heart decides to slow itself down to a very slow beat, thus making it mandatory to have a new best friend by the name of "Pacemaker."

You write a play. No, better yet, you write a "comedy" about everything that transpired in the course of these two events. Take my word for it, there is humor in a hospital. It's a good thing that laughter is good medicine.

**Saturday, November 9th 7:00 p.m. at Riverwalk Theatre Black Box** there will be a free staged reading

of *Slip and Fall* featuring:

*Tina Brenner, Shannon Broadwell, Laura Croff, Joe Dickson, Brian Farnham, Carol Ferris, James Houska, Jeff Magnuson, Bob Murrell, Bob Purosky, Amy Rickett, Artis White, Adam Woolsey, and Jane and Mark Zussman.*

This will be open to the public with a free-will offering for Riverwalk Theatre. A film crew will be filming this to be used as a documentary.

*Elliott Smith - Producer  
 Roger Rochowiak - Playwright  
 Tom Ferris - Director*



Join playwright  
**Roger Rochowiak**  
 at **SLIP AND FALL**, Saturday,  
**Nov. 9, 7 pm**

## A PIECE OF MY HEART

by Shirley Lauro

October 24- November 3, 2019

Directed by Diane Cooke

*Vietnam,  
 as told by women who served.*



Thursdays: 7pm  
 Fri/Saturdays: 8pm  
 Sundays: 2pm

Tickets:  
 Adult: \$12  
 Military/Senior/Student: \$10

Reserve tickets:  
[www.RiverwalkTheatre.com](http://www.RiverwalkTheatre.com)  
 or 517-482-5700



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