

Ripples

from the Community Circle Players at
Riverwalk Theatre

Season 30 • Number 3
October, 2018

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

It's the 1920s in Ottawa, Illinois, and a group of young women can't believe their good fortune.

They've landed jobs that pay well and don't involve lifting or heavy work. All they need to do is paint glowing radium onto the dials of clocks and watches using tiny brushes they're taught to shape with their lips.

But the radium would eventually sicken and kill some of these women as well as others in other plants elsewhere in the country.

These Shining Lives tells the story of Catherine Donohue, who helped bring a class-action suit against her employer, and three other "radium girls" as they learn their coveted jobs are killing them. The drama, written by Melanie Marnich, takes the Riverwalk Black Box stage September 27-30 and October 4-7.

Director Susan Chmurynsky read a book about the workers, *Radium Girls*, and was taken with their plight.

"At first, nobody knew that radium was awful. They thought it was a cure-all," Chmurynsky said. Even when the companies learned the radium was dangerous, they kept that news from their workers. When they finally found out, many of them were sick already.

That doesn't mean *These Shining Lives* is anything like a downer, though.

"I love the language in this play," Chmurynsky said. "I like the way it portrays the young women. They



did not feel sorry for themselves. This is not an 'oh, poor me' play."

Instead, it reveals the camaraderie they had as they worked together, learned they were ill and decided to go on with their lives.

"They had trouble finding doctors and a lawyer to represent them," Chmurynsky said. "They finally did win in court."

The result: better protections for workers and an awareness of

the danger of radioactivity that even carried over into the research and experiments involved with the Manhattan Project to create the first atomic bomb.

Taylor Rupp plays Catherine Donohue. Anasti Her plays Frances, Erin Hoffman is Charlotte and Erin Barger plays Pearl. Heath Sartorius takes on the role of Catherine's husband, Tom Donohue, while Charles Sartorius is Mr. Reed.

Catherine Donohue – radium worker, wife and mother of two – died in 1938, the same year that she and other radium dial-painters were awarded damages.

"They're some of the reason we have worker protections in place today, but it didn't do much good for them," Chmurynsky said.

And it may be a cautionary tale in an era of deregulation.

"I'd kind of like people to go out of the theater thinking they don't want this to happen again," she said.

Kathleen Lavey

WHAT'S ON AT RIVERWALK

■ September 27-30 & October 4-7
THESE SHINING LIVES - historic drama - Director: Susan Chmurynsky

A October 1 and 2, Monday and Tuesday, 7 pm, **AUDITIONS for Noises Off**, comedy farce, director: Michael Hays

👂 October 18-21 & 25-28 - **JITNEY** - African American drama, Director: Vanessa Cunningham Sanders

A October 28 & 29, Sun. & Mon., 7 pm, **AUDITIONS for Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**, musical comedy, director: Brian Farnham

👂 November 29-December 2 & 6-9 - **NOISES OFF** - comedy farce - Director: Michael Hays

★ Nov. 3 - 8 pm - **RIVERWALK SATURDAY NIGHT - MUSIC & FUN** with Tom Heideman, Mary Koenigsnecht, whimsical poet David James... and more!

🎵 January 24-27 & January 31-February 3, **CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG** - family musical comedy - Director: Brian Farnham

■ February 14-17 & 21-24 - **THE A-TRAIN PLAYS** - exploring connection - Director: Doak Bloss

👂 **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 RiverwalkTheatre.com

★ **SPECIAL EVENT:** see website

Farewell to a Riverwalk Godfather - BILL HELDER



Another daunting challenge from Bill Helder: memorializing him in this newsletter, which he challenged me to take on 19 years ago. He has challenged me — and many, others — to a myriad of projects over the years — all in the service of Riverwalk Theatre, to which he was fiercely devoted.

Bill was President of Community Circle Players at the Okemos Barn and also at Riverwalk, and joined Tom Ferris, Bob Mellor and Leonor Reizen as "godparents" implementing the "impossible dream" of creating a theatre out of an abandoned warehouse — after Delta Dental evicted us from their Barn property, with their good wishes and a \$25,000 matching grant (which I imagine Bill and his fellow godparents played a part in negotiating.)

Bill was also Director of Curriculum for Lansing Public Schools.

Dr. William J. Helder - November 22, 1932 - August 29, 2018

Originally a teacher, he had longtime Riverwalk president Tom Ferris in his class; Tom also became a teacher, and had current president, Jeff Magnuson in *his* class — a proud educational chain of leadership.

Bill's memorial service on the Riverwalk stage September 10 featured the wonderful music of John Dale Smith and singers Travis Williams, Janine Novenske Smith, Laura Croff, Sally Hecksel, Kelly Lofton, and Brian Farnham. Speakers Tom Ferris, Dr. Eva Evans, myself, Nancy Madtes, Bob Trezise, Sr., Matt Ottinger and the absent Bob Mellor and Roger Rochowiak's and Evelyn Weymouth's statements read by Jeff Magnuson, shared memories from both the school system and the theatre. We painted a diverse and colorful picture of this man as a force-to-be-reckoned-with who had a twinkle in his eye and a theatrical imagination anchored to a sense of fiscal responsibility.

On the news of Bill's death, Facebook exploded with tributes, some of which I've condensed/excerpted here in a vain attempt to describe the scope of his influence:

Michael Siracuse: This was the most difficult week in my 24 years at Riverwalk Theatre. Visiting with Bill Helder, I could tell his time was close. It broke my heart to see him in such bad shape...I told him again how much we appreciated his efforts that gave us all a place to play for so many years... He was my boss, my friend, my benefactor, and substitute dad all rolled up into one human being...

Jan Lockwood: I saw Bill onstage many times but the role I remember most fondly was his Mowbray in Bob Gras' first RWT production of *Noises Off*...Very funny stuff, beautifully done. He directed me at least twice, and I always learned something new...

Doak Bloss: I will always look at Bill as an example of a life well lived. He sought and gave pleasure in the arts in innumerable ways to friends and strangers alike, and in so doing enriched us all in ways that can never be measured.

Joe Quick: You rarely come across a man so supportive, talented, smart, loving, and gracious. He was a role model and grandfather figure to me for more than half of my life. He will be so missed....

Jeanie Croope: ...we mourn the loss of Bill Helder, the remarkable force for Riverwalk, a wonderful Friend of MSU theatre and supporter of all local groups. His twinkling eye, great smile, lovely countenance and deep commitment to the arts will be sorely missed...

Veronica Gracia-Wing: ...many thousands of folks owe even just a little something to the kindness,

leadership, creativity, philanthropy, talent, vision, counsel, humor and opportunity so graciously and selflessly shared by Bill Helder. We have lost a friend to the arts, to children, to education, to Lansing and to so many in our individual ways.

Melissa Kaplan:...He was a mentor, a listener with a twinkle and a laugh, a colleague...Bill believed in theatre magic, and worked to make it possible for people to play and to watch, in so many ways large and small. I loved him. His absence hurts, the painful truth of love.

Dick Hill: For the past few years I've proudly displayed wild unruly eyebrows after so many years of envying Bill's. In more important ways, I'm far from his match as gentleman, public servant and public benefactor, and clear thinking courageous person of respect and influence...

Tanya Burnham: Bill was a man of great integrity, humor and good will, a man of kindness, a man that valued education and understood that the intrinsic qualities of the arts enrich all our lives... that always saw room for improvement and possessed the strength of character to throw himself into the task to make it happen...

Gary Mitchell: He was a theatre icon. Without him, there would have been no Riverwalk Theatre. That will always be his greatest legacy.

Names of donors to Riverwalk Theatre in memory of Bill Helder will be listed in theatre programs for one year. Riverwalk Theatre, P.O. Box 12249, Lansing, MI 48901

Jane Zussman

REVIEW

Jekyll & Hyde - beautifully staged - very entertaining

Director Tom Ferris mounted a beautifully staged production of *Jekyll & Hyde*. From the opening scene to the finale, the play looked professional and flowed smoothly, enhanced by John Dale Smith's usual top notch orchestra (Dan Alt, Eric Chatfield, Mike Fox, Jerry Krause and Tim Thelen).

Set Design by Mr. Ferris worked perfectly and his blocking of the set changes was stellar. The Set Construction crew included Leroy Cupp, Leon Green, Bob Nees, Pattie Wieber, Marlon Torres, Anthony Maldalari, Lee Purdy, Ric Sadler, Sandy Norton and Danny Ferris. Running crew for set changes included Pattie Wieber, Bobby Maldonado and Cody Skalmowski. Lighting Design by James B. Brink III was also stellar as was Sound Design by Leon Green.

Choreography by Fran Ludington worked very nicely, especially the lovely balletic number with Jimmy McCormick and Alaina Humphrey. Costume Design by Ashley Hampton was great. She was ably assisted by Theresa Dunn, Ryan Hendy, Chris Kennedy, Camara Lewis, Ana Maier, Kris Maier, Mary K. Hodges Nees and Marina and Morgan White-Villanueva who also helped with set changes. Properties were handled by Merialice Jensen who was also the Assistant

Director, and Sandy Norton, who was also the Producer. Laura Croff designed Hair and Dan Moore was Hair Consultant.

It took the aforementioned huge crew to support a wonderfully talented cast. Kameron Going made his Riverwalk debut in the dual role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Mr. Going's beautiful voice was matched by his commanding stage presence. Travis Williams's performance as John Utterson was excellent. Gordon Hicks-Clark's Sir Danvers Carew was remarkable as he gave a fine performance the day following his mother's untimely death.

The two leading ladies — Kelley Lofton and Sally Hecksel — were spot-on as Dr.

Jekyll's two loves. Other standouts included Brian Farnham, James Geer (disgracing the cloth), Austin Elieff and Sandy Thomasson, all well done villains.

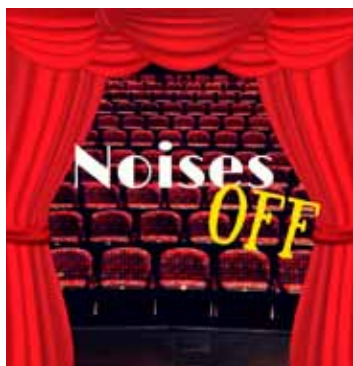
Solid smaller roles were portrayed by Lee Purdy, Laura Croff, Mark Zussman and Ron Lott, along with Danica O'Neill, Ric Sadler, Timothy Lawrence and the Ensemble of Chloe Brandt, Lydia Cotner, Kate Dickinson, Danny Ferris, Alaina Humphrey, Jimmy McCormick, Mara McGill, Laura Johnson, Tim Lewis, Anthony Mandalari, Zach Whitlock and Kait Wilson. Rita Deibler managed to Stage Manage this enormous cast and crew. Whew! It was a very entertaining evening of theatre.

Jan Lockwood



Sally Hecksel
& Kameron Going
PHOTOS BY WWW.
ARINIKO.COM

A U D I T I O N S



**Comedy
Farce by
Michael Frayn
Directed by
Michael Hays**
**AUDITIONS:
Mon. & Tue.,
Oct. 1 & 2,
7 pm**

Show Dates: Nov. 29 - Dec. 9, 2018

Actors in *Noises Off* are performing as actors (in *Nothing On*)! This zany romp pokes fun at British Theatre! Slapstick, physical humor! **All ages are flexible:**

Dotty Otley: middle-aged to elderly. Plays "Mrs. Clackett," the housekeeper for the Brent's home in England, in *Nothing On*.

Lloyd Dallas: 30+. The director of the play-within-the play, called *Nothing On*.

Garry LeJeune: 30+. A stuttering actor, easily fired up. Plays "Roger," the real estate agent looking to let the Brent's house, in *Nothing On*.

Brooke Ashton: early 20s+. A young inexperienced actress from London. Plays "Vicki," who works for the tax authorities, and is trying to woo "Roger," in *Nothing On*.

Poppy Norton-Taylor: 25+. Assistant Stage Manager, for *Nothing On*.

Frederick Fellowes: 35+. Fears violence and blood. Plays "Phillip Brent," who lives out of the country with wife, "Flavia," to avoid paying taxes and is on a secret visit, in *Nothing On*.

Belinda Blair: 28+. Cheerful, sensible, a reliable actress. Plays "Flavia," Phillip's wife, dependable, but not one for household duties.

Tim Allgood: 25+. An over-worked Stage Manager, for *Nothing On*.

Selsdon Mowbray: 45+. With actorly mannerisms, plays "Selsdon," an elderly burglar breaking into the Brents' house, in *Nothing On*.

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 at www.riverwalktheatre.com/auditions.html



**Family
Musical
directed
by Brian
Farnham**
**AUDITIONS:
Sun. & Mon.
Oct. 28 &
29, 7 pm**

Show Dates: Jan. 24-27 & Jan. 31- Feb. 3, 2019

Based on the beloved 1968 film version of Ian Fleming's children's book, this musical comedy follows the Potts family and their fantasmagorical flying car on a journey of self-discovery and intrigue.

Caractacus Potts: male, 30s to 40s. Brilliant but eccentric inventor, loving father, good-guy hero type. Strong acting, singing (baritone), and dancing.

Truly Scrumptious: female, 20s to 30s. Lovely, strong-willed heiress to the Scrumptious candy fortune. Ahead of her time – feisty, but loving. Strong acting/singing (soprano), some dancing.

Grandpa Potts: male, 50s to 60s. Caractacus' father – eccentric, not quite as brilliant - lovable Brit. Character acting, singing (baritone), some dancing.

Jeremy Potts: male, 8-15. Caractacus' son. Genuine and sincere, loves and believes in his father above all. Strong acting and singing (baritone or tenor).

Jemima Potts: female, 9-16. Caractacus' daughter. Cares deeply about looking after her brother and

father. Strong acting/singing (alto/soprano).

Baron Bomburst: male, any age 18+. The nefarious ruler of Vulgaria. A truly petulant little man, he both hates and loves his domineering wife. Strong character acting, some singing (baritone) and dancing.

Baroness Bomburst: female, any age 18+. The power behind the throne of Vulgaria. Dotes on her childish husband, ironically, as she hates children above all. Strong character acting, singing (alto), and dancing.

Boris and Goran: male or female, any age 18+. Two bumbling Vulgarian spies tasked with obtaining Chitty Chitty Bang Bang for the Bomburst dynasty. The comic relief of the show. Strong character acting, some singing (baritone/alto), and some dancing.

The Childcatcher: male or female, any age 18+. The evil, creepy, and fiendish right hand of the Baroness Bomburst. Enforcer of Vulgaria's no-child policies. Strong character acting - likely double-cast in the ensemble.

The Toymaker: male or female, 18+. The put-upon royal toymaker helps foment the rebellion against the Bomburst regime. Acting, singing (alto/baritone), and some dancing – likely double-cast in the ensemble.

Adult/Kids ensemble: 8-10 adults and 5 kids (8-17 years) to play multiple characters - will be very active, and need strong skills in acting singing and dancing

Be prepared to learn a dance combination and to perform a short reading from the script. Please bring a complete list of all conflicts from November 2018 through February 3, 2019 including weekends and holidays. Prepare an audition piece, 16-32 measures. Bring the sheet music. NO a capella singing allowed.

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MEMBER is
a part of the
FOUNDATION**
that supports
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the benefit of all
theatre lovers!

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ship year runs July-
June. JOIN NOW
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JUNE 2019!**

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Members Choice
favorite show award.

Technician — \$25-49,
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program listing

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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

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Click "more" then
"get involved" to join
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Riverwalk Theatre

P.O. Box 12249 • Lansing MI 48901

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

THOMAS TOMASEK - Lobby Artist September - November



Thomas Tomasek is an award winning pastel artist whose work has been recognized throughout Michigan, including honors at the Muskegon Museum of Art, Saginaw Art Museum, Lansing Art Gallery, Midland Center for the Arts and Ann Arbor Art Center. Tom's work can be found in many galleries in the Greater Lansing Region as well as Gallery representation at the Main Street Gallery, Leland Michigan and Bier Gallery, Charlevoix Michigan. In 2014, Tom was one of four Michigan artist selected to represent Michigan in Japan as part of "Art from the Lakes," an art and artist exchange program with Michigan's Sister State, Shiga Prefecture.

Tom enjoys painting on location and in the studio located in his rural 150-year-old farmhouse.



By Melanie Marnich



Directed by Susan Chmurynsky

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

Tickets:

Adult: \$12

Military/Senior/Student: \$10

Box Office: (517)482-5700

www.RiverwalkTheatre.com



These Shining Lives is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York