

# Ripples

## from the Community Circle Players at Riverwalk Theatre

Season 35 • Number 3  
November, 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

### The Trail to Oregon Leads to Laughs

Nick and Matt Lang, Brian Holden and Jeff Blim's innovative and hilarious musical parodies the video game series "The Oregon Trail."

The characters' names are picked from suggestions shouted from the audience and, at the end, the audience chooses the fate of one of the characters.

And there's dysentery! Tons of dysentery. There's a lot of swearing and some adult situations, too. But watch out for the dysentery.

Director Ayden Soupal discovered this StarKid video on YouTube about five years ago and "cried laughing throughout." After finding that StarKid shows are available for license, he was excited to submit it to Riverwalk.

Ayden has compiled quite a theatre background for his young age, starting at All-of-us Express, and starring in Riverwalk's *Master Harold and the Boys* in 2017. This is his second RWT directing project; the first was *Misery* last February. He will also direct *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* at All-of-us Express this coming May. You may also remember the insightful script *Ernie's Life* he wrote for our outdoor playreadings in 2021.

Ayden reports that after directing a small cast play, he set his sights on directing a musical, and found this small-cast script ideal, "...not only because it's funny, but because the music is great and the story is very sweet."



Dale  
Wayne  
Williams

Xia  
Skowronek

Kaela Panicucci

PHOTOS BY  
WWW.ARNIKO.COM

improv, and Xia is one of the funniest people you will ever meet.

"The other four cast members are returning to Riverwalk: Taren Going (*You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*) bringing a humanity to the role while wanting to whoop her family, Dale Wayne Williams (*Kinky Boots*) never missing a comedic beat, Kaela Panicucci (*Big Fish*) belting beautifully, and JT Tosolt (*Fabulation*) making you want to join their bandit ways."

Ayden is pleased with his new team behind the scenes: Katrina Robinson (Stage Manager) and Drew Doman (Assistant Director) Lane Soupal, his sister, is choreographing for the first time and doing an outstanding job.

*The Trail to Oregon* is playing in Riverwalk's Black Box stage November 9-12 and 16-19. The Black Box has only about a third as many seats as the main stage, and general seating. Reservations are still advised to assure admission, and get there early for the best seats. Call 517-482-5700 or reserve online at Riverwalktheatre.com

### WHAT'S ON AT RIVERWALK

🎭 November 9-12 & 16-19 - **TRAIL TO OREGON** by Nick & Matt Lang, Brian Holden & Jeff Blim, Directed by Ayden Soupal - black box

**A** Wed/Thurs., Nov. 29/30 at 7pm - and by appointment - **AUDITIONS FOR THE EXONERATED** Directed by Alan Greenberg. Contact alanbgreenberg@gmail.com for appointment if you cannot attend Wednesday or Thursday

🎭 December 7-10 & 14-17 - **CHRISTMAS BELLES** by Jones, Hope & Wooten, Directed by Kate Clark - main stage

**A** Sunday & Monday, January 21 & 22 at 7 pm - **AUDITIONS for AMADEUS** Directed by Amy Rickett

**A** Sunday & Monday, February 18 & 19 at 7 pm - **AUDITIONS for JAMES & THE GIANT PEACH** Directed by Linda Widener

**A** Sunday & Monday, February 25 & 26 at 7 pm - **AUDITIONS for MOONGLOW** Directed by Emily Clark

🕒 **ALL SHOWS:** 7 pm Thurs.; 8 pm Fri. & Sat.; 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

# Rocky Horror Sensational - in all senses of the word

Not for the faint of heart or prudish of mind, this ridiculous, campy fun-fest drew crowds of nostalgic 50-60-somethings who used to haunt the midnight movies in the 80s — as well as younger folks ready to sass back at the actors and have fun.

Directors Shannon Bowen and Erin Hoffman are not only proven co-stars *onstage* but also stellar co-directors *offstage*, capable of juggling two separate casts of leading characters — so they didn't have to do both 8 pm and midnight shows on the same night.

The wild wonderful workhorses performing in ALL the shows were: the ever popular Narrator Matt Ottinger with a spookier version of Quiz-Buster charm; Phantom Chorus: Erin Biel, Diego Collazo-Coca, Caila Conklin, Dinah DeWald, Taylor Haslett, Karrington Kelsey and Simon Rebeck — plus Nicole Martin and rockin' band: Lauren Spadafora, Yoshi Fukagawa, Charles Slocum, and Ty Schalter.

The long audience-participation tradition with the movie was honored with “Prop Participation Bags” sold before the show, including squirt guns, glow sticks and more. We were among the “collateral damage,” well sprinkled near the front of the audience.

This tribute to the science fiction and horror B movies of the 30s through early 60s celebrates sleaze — but the “bad taste” was tastefully done with a wink of humor. Choreographer Amanda Tollstam also served as the much needed “intimacy coordinator.” The set is clever and efficient (Ann Carlson Set

Design and Dressing) and the costumes are a treat (Morgan Bowen, assisted by Ashley Hampton and Samantha Hall-Loenhardt.)

The “Rocky” cast featured hospitably voluptuous Ny’Kieria Blocker as Usherette Trixie. TJ Kelly and Sally Hecksel made the most of their oblivious, celebratory loss of innocence. Carmen Zavala-Kelly was a sassy Columbia and Megan Malusek was a powerful Magenta. David Micheal Cooper was a streamlined body beautiful as Frank n Furter’s creation, Rocky. Connor and Quinn Kelly came full circle from *Frog and Toad* with Connor burning up the stage on “Hot Patootie” and Quinn flashing his wheelchair stockings and garters. Lewis C. Elson fully inhabited in the role of Transsexual Transvestite Queen of the Castle Dr. Frank-N-Furter — and Brian Farnham led this all-good-singers cast with a sultry pout and a standout voice that raised the roof.

The “Horror” cast kept up the sensational standard set by the “Rocky” cast. Seeing it a second time helped me further appreciate the Phantom chorus, who made even clear-

ing trash and mopping the floor sexy.

The “Horror” cast delivered the sex, aliens and rock ‘n’ roll with more great voices: Robert Mueller as spooky Riff Raff, Kayla Henry as Usherette and cat-caller Trixie, and Travis Williams exploding in song as the ill-fated Eddie. Keara Hayes was a menacing, Magenta, and Tricia Rogers was lolly-popping fangirl Columbia. Luka Pawsek and Ron Meyer were “supersized” versions of the previous Frank-N-Furter and Rocky, with similar allure, charm and decadence. Brad (Michael Palmer) and Janet (Elena Billard) were again adorably naive charmers, and Dr. Scott (Alan Greenberg) looked appropriately inappropriate in his fishnets.

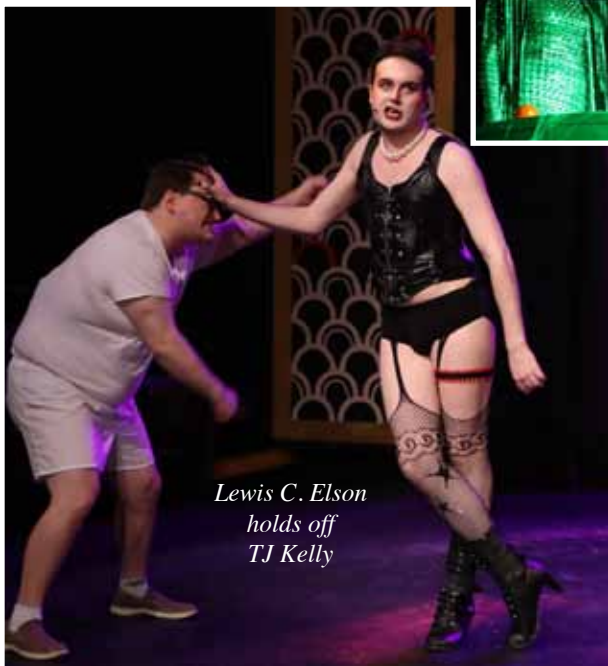
Directors Shannon and Erin have it figured out, as their note explains: “... beneath its surface silliness, the show tells a tale about initiation into a dangerous world, about surviving lost innocence, about deviance and acceptance, about creation, forgiveness, death and regeneration.” *Jane Zussman*



Ron Meyer as the “Rocky” creation



Megan Malusek and Brian Farnham



Lewis C. Elson holds off TJ Kelly



Luka Pawsek holds court with Tricia Rogers (L) and Keara Hayes and Robert Mueller (R)

PHOTOS BY  
WWW.ARINIKO.COM

# NEW PROCESS FOR SELECTING SEASON 36

The RWT Season Selection Committee and Board of Directors cordially invites directors to submit projects for consideration for our 36th season, taking place fall of 2024 through spring of 2025.

**VP Production, Shannon Bowen** explains changes to the submission and selection process via video: <https://bit.ly/rwtshows36>

The video outlines the changes and the reasoning behind them.

Half the shows are pre-selected by the committee (large “mystery musical,” *Angels in America Part 1*, *Pickleball*, *Importance of Being Earnest*) and half are “show types” that can be filled by director choice — plus a “wild card” category.

**Submissions will be accepted through noon, Friday, December 1, 2023.** No late submissions accepted.

Once you have reviewed the changes, please use either the Pre-

selected Show Submission form or the Open Submission form to submit your project(s). Each show submission requires its own form. Forms are at [Riverwalktheatre.com](http://Riverwalktheatre.com) — or email Mike ([rwt@riverwalktheatre.com](mailto:rwt@riverwalktheatre.com)) if you need the form or video link emailed to you.

Thanks to the Season Selection Committee for developing this plan to help Riverwalk balance artistic freedom and theatre sustainability.

## 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

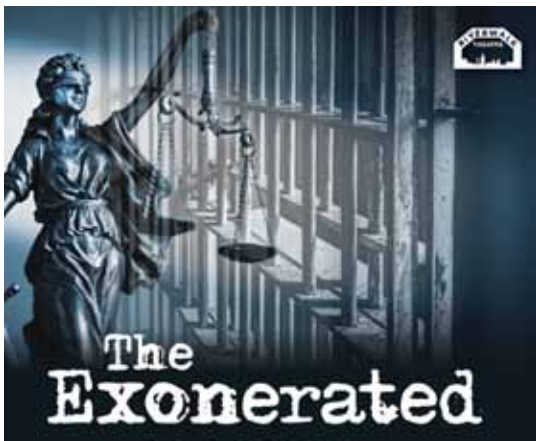
**Star** — \$500-999, Ripples, voting, program listing, six comps, name on theatre seat

**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](http://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.

# A U D I T I O N S



*Drama by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen*

*Directed by Alan Greenberg*

**Audition Dates: Wed. & Thurs., November 29 & 30 2023 at 7 pm. (or by appt.)**

**Production Dates: February 15-18 & 22-25**

*The Exonerated* combines first-person narrative with legal records to tell the stories of six wrongfully convicted inmates and their paths to freedom, emphasizing their lives after being sentenced to death, including much of the legal proceedings that gained their exoneration.

**Delbert** - African-American, 60. A seminary dropout, radical and poet, he is like an old soul song; smooth, mellow and with an un-

derlying rhythm that never lets up, with a substantial sense of humor in addition to his obvious depth.

**Sunny** - White – 50. A bright, Pixie-ish yoga teacher from California. Her lightness and positivity contrast with moments of great depth and clarity.

**Robert** - African-American, 30s.

A former horse groomer from the Deep South; hardened but not lacking a sense of humor. Deep rural Mississippi accent.

**Georgia/Female Ensemble #1** - African-American, 30s. Robert's wife, also southern; opinionated outspoken female and extremely warm. She and Robert have a lovingly contentious relationship. Loves to speak her mind.

**Gary** - White, 45. A Midwestern hippie and an organic farmer. Clearly was in his element in the late 60s and early 70s, generally good-natured, friendly, and quite smart.

**Kerry** - White, 45. A 19-year-old trapped in a 45-year-old's body, born and bred in Texas. Kerry was imprisoned for 22 of his 45 years and is eager to rediscover the world and connect with people. Strong Texas accent.

**David** - African American, 40. A gentle, sad man, born and raised in northern Florida (a.k.a. Southern Alabama). Has a very strong spiritual sense and had aspirations to the ministry before being put on death row at 18, battling between resignation and hope.

**Sandra/Sue/Female Ensemble #2** - White, 40. **Sandra** is married to Kerry. Sweet, nurturing, loves Kerry dearly and has a great sense of humor about him. She has a strong Texas accent. **Sue** is married to Gary. Salt of the earth, an organic farmer with a strong upper midwestern accent - think Fargo.

**Male Ensemble #1 & #2** - Both white, 35 to 50. These two play police officers, attorneys, suspects, and other supporting characters. Require highly versatile, commanding actors with dialects and characterization.

Since the play is based on real life characters, many of whom are still living, there are some, but limited opportunities for non-traditional casting. All actors will be considered.

**If you cannot make one of the scheduled audition dates, please e-mail [AlanBGreenberg@gmail.com](mailto:AlanBGreenberg@gmail.com) and include your name and phone number. You will be called back to set an auditions time.**

**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](mailto:rwt@RiverwalkTheatre.com) audition forms are available online at [www.riverwalktheatre.com/auditions](http://www.riverwalktheatre.com/auditions)

## RIVERWALK

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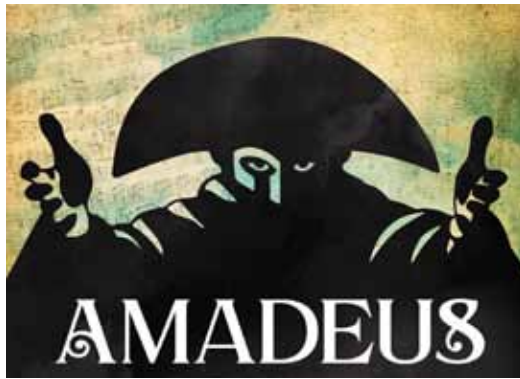
Ripples is published by Riverwalk Theatre. Submit info to Editor Jane Zussman (jszussman@gmail.com) or Riverwalk Manager Mike Stracuse (rwt@riverwalk-theatre.com) 517-482-5700 or at RiverwalkTheatre.com



P.O. Box 12249  
 Lansing MI 48901

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

# AUDITIONS



*By Peter Shaffer*  
*Directed by Amy Rickett*

*Lead roles of Antonio Salieri and Wolfgang Mozart were cast in August:*  
**Antonio Salieri - Jeff Magnuson;**  
**Wolfgang Mozart - Lewis C. Elson**

**ALL OTHER ROLES Audition**  
**NEW DATES: Sunday & Monday,**  
**January 7 & 8, 7 pm**

This play is OPEN to Non-Traditional casting. Non-traditional casting “is defined as the casting of ethnic minority actors in roles where race, ethnicity, or gender is not germane”.

Come prepared to read from the script. Perusal scripts are available at the Riverwalk Theatre Office Tuesday-Friday, 10am-5:00pm or contact us at: [RWT@Riverwalktheatre.com](mailto:RWT@Riverwalktheatre.com) • **Find role descriptions and further info at [www.riverwalk-theatre.com/auditions](http://www.riverwalk-theatre.com/auditions)**

## Lobby Artist: David Winkelstern

David has participated in area art and craft shows for about 15 years. They include showings in Okemos, DeWitt, Holt, Grand Ledge and Lansing. He has displayed works at galleries in Grand Ledge and Old Town.

**This is his second showing at Riverwalk. David will donate half of his sales to the theatre. All prices are reduced (sometimes barely matching expense costs) to benefit Riverwalk.**

David specializes in 3-D art that reveals more and more with each view. He often uses layers and layers of latex paint to get distinctive results. Ten of the works on display were created recently especially for this showing. No two creations are ever the same; each is unique.

When he's not playing music in local groups, writing for *The City Pulse*, or working on his own writings, this retired teacher can be found

playing with contact cement and paint in his Mulliken garage. Contact him at [ahfungi@yahoo.com](mailto:ahfungi@yahoo.com)



# THE TRAIL TO OREGON

ORIGINALLY PRODUCED BY STARKID PRODUCTIONS

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY JEFF BILLY

BOOK BY NICK LANG, MATT LANG, BRIAN HOLLER AND JEFF BILLY

ARRANGED BY CLARK BAXTRESSER AND PIERCE SIEBERS

**Nov.**  
**9-12**  
**& 16-19**

DIRECTED BY AYDEN SOUPAL

**Black  
 Box  
 Stage**

arrive early for  
 best seats

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

