

Ripples

from the Community Circle Players at Riverwalk Theatre

Season 35 • Number 4
December, 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

Christmas Belles: Family Fun & Chaos

A church Christmas program spins hilariously out of control in this Southern farce about squabbling sisters, family secrets, a surly Santa, a vengeful sheep and a reluctant Elvis impersonator.

Director Kate Clark describes *Christmas Belles* as “Golden Girls meets National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation—chaos, shenanigans, hilarity, dry wit, and, at the end of the day, heart — all led by strong and endearing women (and the men are fabulous, too!)”

Kate comes from a theatre family in the metro Detroit area. She played Gina Jo when her mom directed this show. She points out, however, that Riverwalk’s version will be quite different — with the challenges and opportunities of the thrust stage — as well as the vastly different interpretations of this talented cast.

Kate has particularly loved watching the sisters gel. “Debbie Lundeen is a gem of the Lansing theatre community and is holding the show together as the calm, collected, weeks-overdue-with-her-second-set-of-twins Frankie; Linda Widener, a Riverwalk board member who typically works behind the scenes (and is directing *James and the Giant Peach* later this season) is making her return to the stage after

quite a while as the chaotic Honey Raye, just trying to make her Christmas extravaganza come together; and Holly Kay-Cannon is back in the area and back on stage at RWT after a long hiatus in LA, playing the jailbird Twink, who wound up in jail after an inadvertent arson that burned down half the town. And not to give TOO much away, but I’m confident

audiences are going to fall in love with newcomer Jerome Kluck, playing the wacky sheriff John Curtis. We were in awe of him from the second he opened his mouth at auditions.”

One of the playwrights in the Jones Hope Wooten collective, Nicholas Hope, passed away in September and this production is dedicated to his memory. For more info on the noteworthy Jones Hope Wooten collective, check out www.joneshope-wooten.com.

By the way, don’t be put off by “Christmas” in the title if you are not religious or are of a different religion. This is a show about the universal silliness of us all. It takes place in and around a church/church community, but it’s truly not a Biblical play.

Christmas Belles runs December 7-17. Make reservations today for the whole family.



L to R: Rich Kopitsch, Morgan Pohl, Charles Hoogstraten, Debbie Lundeen, Linda Widener, Jerome Kluck, Holly Kay-Cannon; front: Tim Edinger • PHOTO BY WWW.ARINIKO.COM

WHAT'S ON AT RIVERWALK

A Wed/Thurs., Nov. 29/30 at 7pm - **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 7 & 8 at 7 pm - **AUDITIONS for AMADEUS additional roles** 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

February 15-18 & 22-25 - **THE EXONERATED** by Jessica Blank & Erik Jensen, Directed by Alan Greenberg - black box

March 14-17 & 21-24 - **AMADEUS** by Peter Shaffer, Directed by Amy Rickett - main stage

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

Trail to Oregon Leads to Laughs

Much to the dismay of director Ayden Soupal, I did not laugh until I farted nor fart till I laughed. However, I did laugh — a lot. I mean a lot, a lot. And the laughter didn't always happen because of the dialog of the central actors of the scene. No...well...yes, I did laugh then, but sometimes it was non-central acting that I'd catch out of the corner of my eye that made me howl. There's so much of this play that's in your face — and I mean literally, in your face — but there are also very subtle parts that make this the funniest show I'd ever seen at Riverwalk Theatre.

The play is a spoof of "Oregon Trails," the pixelated video game from the eighties (which I have actually played at the Ebersole Center when I was in elementary school as a part of our camping experience.) But the way it's acted out has the actors spoofing the spoof of the game. It's really a feat that must be seen in person. It's also an interactive production where, from the beginning, the audience is brought in to participate and in doing so, becomes part of the spoof of the spoof of the game. This happens more than once throughout the play.

The set is appropriately simple: panels artfully painted by Kat Soupal. It does exactly what it needs to do — provides the space for this amazing cast to do their thing. Each cast member is cartoonishly perfected with the use of props, facial expressions,

unexpected behavior, costumes, and dialog.

Xia Skowronek as the seven-year-old son brought an apropos juvenile attitude to her character and I greatly enjoyed watching her expressiveness throughout the play. JT Tosolt, as multiple devilishly villainous characters, constantly elevated the chaos of the scenes. They truly brought the energy to another level that was a delight to watch. Kaela Panicucci made an excellent daughter — vibrant, boisterous and a tad rebellious. She also had one of two solo songs which tugged at the heartstrings.

The second touching solo was sung by Taren Going. It was all fun and games until the lights dimmed and Taren perfectly belted out their heart-wrenching "When the World's at Stake" mother's song to her child. With a tear in my eye, I was instantly reminded how

extraordinarily talented these artists are and that their goofiness before and after that song were only a testament to their talent.

Quentin Villa played the role of "Father" with breadth, humor, kindheartedness and silliness. He performed with slapstick humor, not taking himself too seriously, and really embracing the asinine content of the play.

It should also be mentioned that lighting played a huge part in this production and was perfected by Amy Jo Brown and Drew Doman. The creativity in the costumes was also quite entertaining as well. Kudos to Kristy Krive and Amanda Macomber for such delights in this area.

Ayden created a hilarious, fast-paced, entertaining Black Box production of which he should be very, very proud.

Ariniko O'Meara



Xia Skowronek



Kaela Panicucci



L to R: JT Tosolt, Quentin Villa and Xia Skowronek



Quentin Villa & Taren Going

PHOTOS BY
WWW.ARINIKO.COM



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart finds a fierce rival in Antonio Salieri. Resenting Mozart for both his hedonistic lifestyle and his undeniable talent, the highly religious Salieri and becomes obsessed with Mozart's downfall, leading to a devious scheme and dire consequences.

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

Speaking and non-speaking roles are available, listed at riverwalktheatre.com/auditions

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."

James & the Giant Peach

Book – Timothy Allen McDonald, Music and Lyrics –Benj Pasek and Justin Paul Based on the book by Roald Dahl
Director: Linda L. Widener; Music Director Kate Clark
Choreographer: Fran Ludington

AUDITIONS: James and Ladahlord Only - Sat. & Sun., February 10 & 11, 2024 at 4 pm.

All roles EXCEPT James/Ladahlord - Sun & Mon, Feb. 18 and 19 @ 7 pm. • Shows: May 16-26, 2024

When James is sent by his conniving aunts to chop down their old fruit tree, he discovers a magic potion that results in a tremendous peach... and launches a journey of enormous proportions. With human-sized insects with oversized personalities, he faces hunger, sharks, plenty of disagreements and learning to live and work together as a family. The adventure takes a whole new twist once they land on the Empire State Building...

Casting will be gender blind; every role is open to all auditioners. However, per licensing agreements, all roles must be portrayed as the gender they are written. English accents preferable especially for James, Spiker and Sponge (give it a try!) All roles available to all races/ethnicities

Prepare 16-32 bars of a song in the style of (but not from) the show that best shows off your personality and vocal range. Bring sheet music or a backing track. A speaker will be provided.

James (M, age 8-11, Tenor, Treble/Boy Vocal range: top G5, bottom G3) A lonely boy who feels he belongs nowhere after losing his parents in a freak accident; becomes resourceful and innovative — a good friend.

Ladahlord (M, age 25-55, Tenor, Baritone/Bass Bb2-A4) A strange, magical storyteller. Often appears, in disguise, to help push the action forward.

Other role descriptions and further info at riverwalktheatre.com/auditions

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

MOONGLOW

Drama by Kim Carney
Directed by Emily Clark

Audition Dates: Sun. & Mon., Feb. 25 & 26 at 7 pm • Shows: April 11-14 & 18-21, 2024

Maxine, a feisty, bitter Alzheimer's victim, doesn't want to move into a nursing facility. But when she meets Joe, a widower who shares her love for dance, her outlook begins to change.

Characters:

The Girl — Late teens, early 20's
Diane — Late 40's or 50's
Benita — 30's or 40's
Maxine — 70's or 80's
Joe — 70's or 80's
Greg — 40's or 50's
The Sailor — 20's

Anyone auditioning for the Girl, Maxine, Joe or the Sailor will need to learn a small dance routine. Come prepared to read from the script.

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

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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

Riverwalk Recycles!

Riverwalk Theatre is proud to announce that we are ratcheting up our effort to keep our facility and the environment clean with a bolstered recycling program.

You'll notice new recycling bins in our lobby, clearly labeled to indicate what materials go in them. As patrons utilize cups, juice bottles and our new compostable coffee stirrers from our concessions stand, those items can be placed in the bins. Styrofoam cups are no longer being used. Our custodian, Adam Carlson, will properly dispose of trash and recycle what can be recycled.



We need you to make this a successful effort. Please follow the same guidelines you use for your home recycling. Cups must be emptied; the concession stand volunteers will be happy to empty your cup, if needed. It is also very important that non-recyclable materials, such as candy bar wrappers and napkins, are *not* put into the recycling bins.

Bins have also been added to our Green Room, where cast members and crew will be able to easily recycle.

It's our hope that you'll do your part to help Riverwalk in this enhanced recycling program.

Christmas

BELLES

a jones hope wooten comedy

directed by kate clark

December
7-10 &
14-17,
2023

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

