

# Ripples

# from the Community Circle Players at Riverwalk Theatre

Season 29 • Number 9

April, 2018

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

## Melodrama *Lily the Felon's Daughter* offers Nostalgic Fun

You've got to love a script with character descriptions like these:

"Lily Fairweather, as Pure as the Driven Snow."

"Craven Sinclair, as Poisonous as a Toad."

"Miss Ophelia, as Plain as the Nose on Your Face."

Yes, these character names hint at classic, old-fashioned melodrama, and that is exactly what *Lily the Felon's Daughter* is.

Tom Taggart's play, set in the 1890s, takes the Riverwalk Main Stage March 15-18 and 22-25.

It's directed by Susan Chmurynsky.

"I don't think Riverwalk has ever

done an old-fashioned melodrama," she said. "I read a couple, and 'Lily' came to mind." She remembers helping with props on a production of "Lily" at the old Okemos Barn Theatre, with Winifred Olds directing.

"Winnie used to love melodramas, and she directed 'Lily' several times," Chmurynsky said. She's dedicating this production to the memory of Olds, a well-known local TV and theater personality who died in 2013 at age 88.

The appeal of "Lily" – and other melodramas – is that they're pure fun.

"They're silly, Chmurynsky said. "There is pretty

much no message, except the villain does lose."

The cast includes Monica Holland as the titular Lily; Joe Clark as her love, Compton; and Jim Coyer as the Compton's unsavory friend, Craven.



Villain Jim Coyer (L) fights Joe Clark for the honor of Pure Lily (Monica Holland)

PHOTO BY WWW.ARINIKO.COM

Jan Ross plays Betsy, Charles Sartorius is Jonas, Erin Barger plays Ophelia, T.E. Klunzinger is Rob, Cody Skalmowski plays Lord Monty, an Englishman. (What melodrama would be complete without one?)

Rounding out the cast are Anasti Her as Marie, Candace Myers as Mrs. Kingsley and Jacqueline Payne as Mrs. Bloodgood.

"I love my cast, and I love

that they've really gotten into the laughing part of it," Chmurynsky said. "They know what's funny, or at least we think we know what's funny."

Actors will encourage the audience to root for the good guys and jeer the villain, and, like the tradition in most Riverwalk children's shows, there will be a chase scene.

"We're just having a good time doing it, so we hope everyone has a good time watching it," Chmurynsky said.

The show is profanity-free and suitable for older kids, who may enjoy the cheering and jeering.

Kathleen Lavey

## WHAT'S ON AT RIVERWALK

March 15-18 & 22-25 - **LILY, THE FELON'S DAUGHTER** melodrama - Director: Sue Chmurynsky

**A** March 18 & 19, Sun. & Mon., 7 pm, musical **Spamalot AUDITIONS**, director: Bob Purosky; Music Director John Dale Smith (shows June 7-17, 2018)

★ March 22 - 6 pm - **PSST** Pre-show Senior Second Thursday gathering for age 55+ followed by *Lily the Felon's Daughter* at 7.

April 19-22 & 26-29 - **BUD, NOT BUDDY** - family show - Director: Tom Ferris

★ April 26 - 6 pm - **PSST** Pre-show Senior Second Thursday gathering for age 55+ followed by *Bud, Not Buddy* at 7.

■ May 10-13 & 17-20 - **SCOTLAND ROAD** - psychological thriller - Director: Bob Robinson

★ May 17 - 6 pm - **PSST** Pre-show Senior Second Thursday gathering for age 55+ followed by *Scotland Road* at 7.

June 7-10 & 14-17 - **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT**, musical - Director: Bob Purosky

★ June 14 - 6 pm - **PSST** Pre-show Senior Second Thursday gathering for age 55+ followed by *Spamalot* at 7.

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

**MUSICALS:** 7 pm Thursdays; 8 pm Fri./Sat.; 2 pm Sundays \$22 (\$20 student/sr./military)

■ **BLACK BOX SHOWS:** 7 pm Thurs.; 8 pm Fri. & Sat.; 2 pm Sun. • \$12 (\$10 student/sr./military) **Bargain Thursdays: \$10 (\$8)**

**A AUDITIONS** - More info at RiverwalkTheatre.com

★ **SPECIAL EVENT:** see website

## White Buffalo

Can Native American heritage mesh with American commerce? Perhaps, but with speedbumps along the way. Playwright Don Zoldis tackles this potentially thorny question in *White Buffalo*, based on the real-life events of the birth of a white buffalo in Wisconsin in 1994. Zoldis builds his story on the desire people have to see the remarkable creature out of curiosity and for more serious, cultural reasons.

Emily Clark plays Carol Gelling, the owner of a rundown farm who discovers that her small herd of buffaloes has yielded a white calf. She's a single mother struggling to do what's right by her teenaged daughter Abby, portrayed by Cassie Little. Their struggles center on money issues and Cassie's desire to choose her own path in life.

As word of this "miracle" birth spreads, the farm becomes a magnet for throngs of people, many of whom are drawn by the powerful Native American story of how a white buffalo is a harbinger of peace on earth. Among them is John Two Rivers, a young man who sees the creature for more than the symbol it has become; perhaps it can reconnect him with his family. Boris Nikolovski makes Two Rivers both a teacher of Native American lore and a potential romantic target for Abby.

Amongst the visitors to the Gelling farm is Anderson Wilkes, a rich westerner who offers Colleen a huge sum of money to buy the calf. As played by Jeff Boerger, Wilkes' motives are up for debate and increase the tension between mother and daughter.

A last, complicating factor is the unexpected appearance of Mike Gelling, Carol's estranged husband and Abby's father. Why is he there, and can he soften the bitterness of the family he left behind? Doak Bloss's



*Abby (Cassie Little) begrudgingly helps her mom, Carol, (Emily Clark) clean out boxes from their flooded basement in White Buffalo • PHOTOS BY WWW.ARINIKO.COM*

Mike pursues restoring their faith in him, but is his motivation a sincere desire to fix things...or is it money?

Rounding out the production is a chorus of four actors who bring the excitement of visitors to the farm alive while at other times delivering an authentic-feeling presentation of Native American culture to the program. Among them is Jacob Menefee, a Native American who got involved in *White Buffalo* via his mother. Eva Menafee was an important consultant for director Michael Hays, whose sincere desire to have the production accurately portray Native American culture was his focus throughout. Together, Menafee and Victoria Voges helped Hays achieve that.

The chorus is rounded out by Colleen Runyan Bethea, who added well-researched Native American chants to her performance; Tim Perry, who's work here ranged from Native American elder to a dying buffalo;

and Savannah Cardwell, a fourth-grader at St. Gerard School making her stage debut in several roles including that of Hope, the calf central to this moving story.

*White Buffalo* was presented on an intricate set designed by Jeff Miller, constructed and enhanced by Leroy Cupp, complete with an array of properties put together by Gertrude Makepeace. Artwork was contributed by upper elementary students from Montessori Radmoor.

Hays' team included assistant director Ellison Winterstein, production assistant Heath Sartorius, stage manager Diane Cooke, producer Jeff Magnuson, lighting designers Richard Chapman and Ted Daniel, costumes by Kris Maier, John Delaney's scenography, sound design by Shannon Bowen and Leon Green with assistance from John Campbells, and sound and light technicians Craig and Duncan Darnell.

*Scott Pohl*



*Costume "queen" Melody Stratton, will help you find your crown — or other costume piece — at The Costume Shop.*

## WELCOME Costume Shop Associate Melody Stratton

We are pleased to welcome experienced costume/prop backstage maven Melody Stratton to The Costume Shop staff, joining Kate Koskinen and Cathy Wotring. They are gearing up to help you find the perfect outfit for shows, events, THE PROM and beyond.


Most recently at work on special props for *Wonder of the World* on the Riverwalk main stage, Melody enjoys all aspects of behind-the-scenes creativity.

During her youth in the Virgin Islands, she collaborated with theater professionals

at Caribbean Dance and St. Croix Island Center to round out her training. Locally, she has lent her talents, with an emphasis on youth, to All-of-us Express Children's Theatre, East Lansing High School's Theater Program, Sunsets with Shakespeare, and Riverwalk Theatre.

The Costume Shop is located at 1131 May Street, Lansing, MI 48906. Business hours are 3-6 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 10-2 on Saturdays. ([www.rwtcostumeshop.com](http://www.rwtcostumeshop.com).)

**Musical Comedy**  
**Book and Lyrics by Eric Idle**  
**Music by John Du Prez**  
**and Eric Idle**



**Directed by Bob Purosky**  
**Music by John Dale Smith**  
**Choreography Karyn Perry**

Unfortunately, *Spamalot* director Jane Falion needed to withdraw due to some health issues. Riverwalk is pleased to announce Bob Purosky as director. Bob has been an active member of Riverwalk since 2009. He has appeared in and worked on on many successful musicals and is being welcomed by the excellent music/choreography/stage manager team of John Dale Smith, Karyn Perry, and Michele Booher-Purosky.

**AUDITIONS: Sunday & Monday,  
 March 18 & 19, 2018, at 7 pm.**

**Shows: June 7-17, 2018**

This Tony Award winning musical celebration of inanity was adapted from the 1975 film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. It is a highly irreverent parody of the Arthurian Legend which differs from the film in many ways, but upholds the artful idiocy of the Python tradition.

**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](mailto:rwt@RiverwalkTheatre.com)

## A Member Tale



I've been a member for what seems like *forever*... 1972, Community Circle Players when we were at the Okemos Barn. Dear departed backstage stalwart Marcia Voigt (yes, the name on the Re-

hearsal Hall door) worked with me at The John Henry Company. She told me about *Sweet Charity* auditions, and I was hooked.

Well, to be honest, I was hooked before that — on theatre as a “way of life.” I wrote and staged scripts in our basement as a kid. I got through a not-pretty-enough-to-be-a-cheerleader adolescence with the help of Kalamazoo Junior Civic Theatre and Kalamazoo Community Youth Theatre.

Many of you know I'm “The G.L.U.T. Lady” (Greater Lansing Ubiquitous Theatre) seeing way too many shows and emailing reviews and theatre news. ([www.greaterlansingtheatre.net](http://www.greaterlansingtheatre.net)) I love all the theatres, and I am a member/contributor to a few others... but hey, this is Riverwalk we're talking about. So why, *particularly*, am I a member here?

Of course no theatre is “perfect” but I

feel like this one is my best investment — in both membership dues and volunteer time and effort. It's a good balance of stability, accessibility, and excellence.

It struggles, financially, as all theatres do, and thus requires more than ticket sales to survive — but it's well established enough that it *will* survive, even if a few “indispensable” people are lost. Thanks to the faith and hard work of “Godparents” Bill Helder, Tom Ferris, Bob Mellor and Leonor Reizen, and many other members, we renovated and then purchased our warehouse/theatre home after being booted from the Barn by benevolent landowners, Delta Dental. (The charm and tenacity of the godparents assured that Delta was one of our initial donors to the Capital Campaign to create Riverwalk.)

So, it's not just “my show” that's important to me. Membership in Riverwalk supports the institution of community theatre where participants and audience can share that “live theatre” experience. Thank goodness for this place where a wi-i-i-ide variety of appearances, ages, types, skills (backstage and onstage) can come together in service of the same goal: the show must go on!

*Jane Shipley Zussman*

## Why are YOU a member of Riverwalk Theatre?

Share your story on the Riverwalk Facebook page and you can also email it to: [JSZussman@gmail.com](mailto:JSZussman@gmail.com) to get it printed in *Ripples*. (Send a photo, too! ... or I can steal one from Facebook.)

Riverwalk depends on membership for over a quarter of our revenue. Be a part of the foundation that ensures we will be here for actors, back-stagers and audiences for many years to come.

**Actor** — \$15-24, Ripples, voting

**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

**Go to [riverwalktheatre.com](http://riverwalktheatre.com). Click “more” then “get involved” to join online. Or just mail/give a check to Mike at the office. We're 501c3 tax deductible. If you're already a member, recruit a NEW member today!**

## RIVERWALK THEATRE

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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

P.O. Box 12249 • Lansing MI 48901

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

# PSST!

Are you 55 or older?  
Riverwalk  
has a new  
event  
for  
you!



### P.S.S.T. stands for Preshow Senior Second Thursdays.

Meet new old friends at this fun reception/party/backstage peek 6 pm before the second Thursday performance of every RWT adult show.

Free reception at 6 pm (the show, optional, starts at 7; buy your bargain show ticket for only \$8 - \$20 for musicals.) Mix and mingle (with refreshments) on the opposite stage from where the night's show will perform (Black Box/Main Stage.) We'll check out the set-in-progress and get some news about the following show as well as the one we're about to see. Membership and volunteer sign up will be available — **plus a members-only drawing for a \$20 gift certificate to Riverwalk!**

March 22 *Lily the Felon's Daughter*

April 26 *Bud, Not Buddy*

May 17 *Scotland Road*

June 14 *Spamalot* (musical)



228 MUSEUM DR.  
LANSING, MI 48933  
517-482-5700

A MELODRAMA BY TOM TAGGART  
DIRECTED BY SUSAN CHMURYSKY



Lily,  
The Felon's  
Daughter

MARCH 15-18  
& 22-25,  
2018

THURSDAYS:  
7PM  
FRI/SATURDAYS:  
8PM  
SUNDAYS:  
2PM

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

Tickets:  
\$15 Adult  
\$12 Senior/Student/Military  
\$10/\$8 Bargain Thursdays

Lily, The Felon's Daughter is presented by special arrangement  
with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.



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