



Tara Mallen  
*Artistic Director*

Catherine Painter  
*Managing Director*

proudly present the World Premiere of

# **NO SUCH THING**

**by Lisa Dillman**

Directed by Malkia Stampley

March 22 – April 27, 2025

**Presenting Sponsors: Michael Litt**

## **Development History**

NO SUCH THING was developed through workshops at the PlayPenn Conference (Philadelphia, PA) in 2013 and at Heartland Theatre (Bloomington, IL), and at Rivendell's FRESH PRODUCE new play series directed by Malkia Stampley in August 2024.

**[rivendelltheatre.org](http://rivendelltheatre.org)**

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is a member of Theatre Communications Group, Inc., National New Play Network, the Andersonville and Edgewater Chambers of Commerce, and the League of Chicago Theatres.

# CAST

Ren ..... Susan Gosdick \*  
Olivia ..... Jessica Ervin+  
Fallon ..... Josh Odor \*  
Ted ..... Matt De Caro \*  
Marilyn ..... Cheryl Hamada \*

## Understudies:

Ren / Marilyn ..... Suzy Krueckeberg  
Olivia ..... Anna Yee  
Fallon ..... Jelani Julyus  
Ted ..... Patrick Blashill

\*\*Understudies will not substitute unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance.

Amor Eterno, Written by Juan Gabriel, Performed by Marco Rivera Rosa

Time: The present  
Place: New York City

The play runs approximately 2 hours with a 15-minute intermission.

# PRODUCTION TEAM

Director ..... Malkia Stampley ~  
Production Stage Manager ..... Kristi Martens \*  
Dramaturg ..... Tanya Palmer  
Costume Design ..... Evelyn Danner  
Lighting Design ..... Madeleine Reid  
Props Design ..... Lonnae Hickman  
Scenic Design ..... Lauren Nichols ^  
Original Music & Sound Design ..... Ethan Korvne  
Production Manager ..... Shannon Golden-Starr  
Technical Director ..... Axel Adams  
Assistant Director ..... Hanna Dworkin  
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Carly Zamost  
Master Electrician ..... Chase Barron  
Lead Carpenter ..... Chas Mathieu  
Intimacy Director ..... Cristin Carole  
Scenic Charge ..... Devin Meseke  
Casting ..... Ashley Neal +  
Glenn Obrero +  
Front of House ..... Ema Kester

+ Denotes member of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

\* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional stage actors & managers

~ Denotes member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

^ United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, IATSE

# RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE STAFF

Founder & Artistic Director.....Tara Mallen\*+  
 Managing Director..... Catherine Painter  
 Director of Audience Services / Business Manager..... Trisha Hooper+  
 Marketing Director.....Tanya Ward+  
 Director of New Work.....Caroline Michele Uy  
 Grants Manager.....Silvino da Silva  
 Outreach and Community Engagement Manager.....Brit Cooper-Robinson  
 Graphic Designer ..... Anthony Churchill  
 Public Relations..... Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.

## SPECIAL THANKS

Lucia Lombardi, Ray Nardelli, Bryan Back,  
and as always...to the Miseti family, volimo te!

## PLAYWRIGHT’S NOTE

When I was younger, I had a bird’s-eye view of my mother’s experience as she transitioned into and beyond middle age. It seemed as if a societal curtain had dropped—she gradually became invisible. What she experienced as she got older, I’ve since learned firsthand, is all too common for women in this country. When I experienced it myself, I admit it became a bit of an obsession. In writing *No Such Thing*, I set out to create a portrait of one woman’s struggle to step over the societal boundary lines that so many women encounter as they age past society’s view of who is relevant, attractive, and acceptable in our world. And I couldn’t be more thrilled that this play is going to premiere at my longtime artistic home, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, whose mission it is to elevate the lives of all women through the power of theatre.

- Lisa Dillman


*“Too many conflicting emotional interests are involved for life ever to be wholly acceptable, and possibly it is the work of the storyteller to rearrange things so that they conform to this end. In any case, in talking about the past we lie with every breath we take.”*

—William Maxwell, *So Long, See You Tomorrow*



**STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY**

SDC is the theatrical union that unites, empowers, and protects professional stage directors and choreographers throughout the United States.



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United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, IATSE is the union representing Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound and Projection Designers in Live Performance






WIPEOUT, 2024

## NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the world premiere of longtime ensemble member Lisa Dillman's *NO SUCH THING* directed by the talented Malkia Stampley. Plays that center women's authentic lives and offer both a meaningful and impactful experience have long been Rivendell's signature, so I cannot imagine a more appropriate way to launch our 30th Anniversary season than with another premiere from the gifted playwright who penned our enormously successful productions of *AMERICAN WEE-PIE* and *THE WALLS*. Lisa's newest play is the absolute embodiment of Rivendell's mission – a refreshing new play told from an all too often invisible perspective – a woman over sixty. At this moment of unprecedented challenges to our country and our humanity, there has never been a greater need for the theater we make and the vital stories we tell. Plays that shine an unflinching light on the toughest issues, dispel lies, promote possibilities, and offer alternative perspectives. And you have my promise that no matter what happens in our world, Rivendell will continue to develop and present these bold new stories, amplify voices that need to be heard, and provide an artistic home for women identifying artists. I am beyond excited to have you join me on this journey and delighted for the opportunity to share Lisa Dillman's *NO SUCH THING* with Chicago audiences.

*Tara M. Mallen*

- Tara

# PROFILES



**SUSAN GOSDICK** (Ren) is delighted to work with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble for the first time. Performances include: *My Fair Lady* (Paramount Theatre); *A Christmas Story* (Theatre at the Center); *Women Who*

*Steal, Indian Blood, Our Town* (Artists' Ensemble Theatre); *Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* (Drury Lane Oakbrook); *Trial by Jury, Cox and Box* (Transgressive Theatre-Opera); *Nathan the Wise* (Chicago Festival of the Arts); *Henry V, Richard II, The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare Project), The Old Globe Theatre, Lincoln Center Institute, and Ma-Yi Theatre. As a dialect coach, she has worked with Paramount Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Marriott Theatre, Chicago Opera Theater, Pulse Theatre Chicago, Invictus Theatre Company, Music Theater Works, Shattered Globe, Artistic Home, and teaches voice / dialects at Columbia College Chicago and Roosevelt University.



**JESSICA ERVIN** (Olivia) (she/her) is an ensemble member at Rivendell where she originated the role of Annie in Rivendell's Jeff Award-winning production of *Motherhouse*. Other credits with Rivendell

include: *Dry Land* (Jeff Nomination - Actress in a Principal Role), *I Wanna F\*cking Tear You Apart*; *The Firebirds Take the Field*; and understudying *Scientific Method, Alias Grace*, and the tour of *Women at War*. Jessica's other theatrical work includes roles with Goodman, Minetta Lane, Strawdog, A Red Orchid, American Blues, Walkabout, Route 66, Kalliope and Co., and Prop Thtr. On-screen, she has appeared on Chicago Fire (NBC), and in the films Princess Cyd, Provo, Teacher, Lucid, and Late Bloomer, in addition to other shorts and a commercial for CDW NetApp. Jessica is a graduate of The School at Steppenwolf and Ball State University. She is proud to be represented by Actor's Talent Group. [www.jessicaerwin.com](http://www.jessicaerwin.com)



**JOSH ODOR** (Fallon) is excited to be back at Rivendell. Josh was last seen here in *Scientific Method, Firebirds Take the Field* and *I Wanna F\*cking Tear You Apart*. Most recently he was in Facility's *Right Now* (Jeff

for Best Ensemble), *No Man's Land* at Steppenwolf and *Origin Story* in Cincinnati at Playhouse in the Park. Josh has worked at The Goodman, Lookingglass, TimeLine, Steep, Jackalope and the Artistic Home among others over the past 20 yrs. TV/Film credits: The Chi, Chicago Med/PD/Fire, Boss, Betrayal, Janie Jones and The Express. Josh is represented by DDO Chicago and is a proud member of SAG/AFTRA.



**MATT DeCARO** (Ted) has most recently appeared as Winston Churchill in *The Audience* at the Drury Lane Theatre where he also appeared as Big Daddy in *A Cat On a Hot Tin Roof* for which he received a Joseph

Jefferson Award. His recent credits include *The Cherry Orchard* at Goodman Theatre and Kansas City Rep's premiere of *Flood*. He was a company member for several seasons at Sarasota's Asolo Repertory Theater. Roles there include LBJ in *The Great Society*, Oscar Hubbard in *The Little Foxes*, Gene in Frank Galati's *Rhinoceros* and Stan in *Sweat*. Matt has been fortunate to play in theaters across the country including Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theatre Club. The Goodman Theatre, The Guthrie Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, The Old Globe Theatre, San Francisco's A.C.T., and internationally in Dublin, Toronto and China. Some favorite roles include the Judge in David Mamet's *Romance*, Dave Moss in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Boss Mangan in *Heart-break House*, Boolie in *Driving Miss Daisy*, and Fa Hai in Mary Zimmerman's *The White Snake*. His TV and film credits include *The Wise Kids*, *Eagle Eye*, *House*, *The Office*, *Prison Break*, and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, among many others.



**CHERYL HAMADA** (Marilyn) is delighted to be working with the great people of Rivendell. She recently appeared in Token Theatre's premiere production of *Zac Efron*. Other stage work includes *Chimerica* (Time-Line), *Washer/Dryer* (Rasaka Theatre), *Yohen* and *Golden Child* (Silk Road Rising), *Race* (Looking-glass), *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman), *ER: Emergency Room* (Organic Theatre) and *Innocent Thoughts*, *Harmless Intentions* (Next Theatre-Jeff Citation). Her TV/Film credits include her work for the WTTW and national PBS pledge drives, hosting 4 seasons of the HGTV series *Extreme Homes*, one season of WTTW's *Your Chicago Kitchen* and film roles in *About Schmidt*, *The Dilemma*, *Nothing Like the Holidays*, *Above the Law*, *Chain Reaction*, *Chicago Hope*, *Boss*, *Unsolved Mysteries* and the indie film *Relative*. She also appeared recently in episodes of *Chicago Med* and the limited series *Emperor of Ocean Park*.

He dedicates his career as an actor to his children and hopes they learn that it's never too late to pursue your dreams.



**ANNA YEE** (Olivia Understudy) was born in the Middle East and grew up in the Midwest, currently residing in Chicago. Select theatre credits include: *Right to Be Forgotten* (Raven Theatre), *Hellcab* (Agency Theater); multiple immersive comedy productions as a Yellow Rose Theatre ensemble member, and *The Decent Comedy Show* at Second City with Well Versed Comedy. TV credits include: *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago PD* (NBC); *Easy* (Netflix); and various national commercials. When Anna is not acting, she is writing for screen and stage, including her one-woman show about growing up with a Jordanian mom and Chinese father. Love you Mom and Baba!



**SUZY KRUECKEBERG** (Ren/Marilyn Understudy) is thrilled to work with Rivendell for the first time! She was recently in *The Totality of All Things* at Redtwist. Other credits include *Vanya and Sonia* and *Masha and Spike* (Sonia), *Ripcord* (Marilyn), *Plano* (U/S Mother), *Twelfth Night* (Toby Belch), and *Rabbit Hole* (Nat). Suzy is a graduate of School at Steppenwolf, Black Box Academy, and Second City's Conservatory. She is a proud ensemble member at Bramble Theatre. She is represented by DDO Chicago. Learn more at [suzykrueckeberg.com](http://suzykrueckeberg.com)



**PATRICK BLASHILL** (Ted Understudy) has been working in Chicago Theater since the early 90s and is an ensemble member with Lifeline Theater, some favorite roles include: Dr Banks in *Blue Stockings* at Promethean theater (Jeff nomination-ensemble), Towny in *Midnight Cowboy* at Lifeline theater, Edgar Drake in *Piano Tuner* at Lifeline (After Dark Award- Actor), Tom in *Pistols For Two* at Lifeline (Jeff nomination-ensemble), Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night* at Eclipse Theatre, Father in *Eurydice* at Filament Theater, Mr. Knightley in *Emma* at Reverie Theater. Patrick also understudied *Choir Boy* at Steppenwolf theater (Jeff award- ensemble). Film credits include *Visiting Friends* and *The Dancing Monkey* both of which are being released this year. TV credits include *Chicago PD*, *Chicago Fire*, *Empire*, and documentary work for WTTW. Patrick is represented by the Gray Talent Group.



**JELANI JULYUS** (Fallon Understudy) Jelani Julyus (he,him, his) believes in the power of story to transform society and possesses a unique ability to find the hope nestled at the heart of any story. Jelani is grateful for the opportunity to work

with Rivendell Theater, this incredible cast, and our exceptional creative team. Jelani Julyus is represented by 10 Management, and you can follow him @jelanijulyus on Instagram or at [jelanijulyus.com](http://jelanijulyus.com).

## PRODUCTION TEAM

**LISA DILLMAN** (Playwright) is very happy to be back at her artistic home of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble for the world premiere of *No Such Thing*. Her plays include *Ground*, *Rock Shore*, *American Wee-Pie*, *Half of Plenty*, *The Walls*, *Just Cause* (cowritten with Todd Logan), and her most recent, *The Crosses*. Her work has been produced by Steppenwolf Theatre, Humana Festival, Seattle Public Theatre, Rogue Machine, Tipping Point, Station Theatre, and many other companies as well as colleges and universities around the country. Dillman has received commissions from Steppenwolf, Goodman, Northlight, Baltimore Centerstage, and the Chicago Humanities Festival and has developed work at the O'Neill, PlayPenn, Goodman's Playwrights Unit, Inge Center for the Arts, ACT Theatre/Hedgebrook Women Playwrights Festival, and others. She is a longtime member of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, where her plays *American Wee Pie*, *The Walls*, and *Chiaroscuro* all premiered. Her play *Shady Meadows* was commissioned by the 2007 Chicago Humanities Festival's "Climate of Concern" and directed by RTE Artistic Director Tara Mallen. Dillman's work is published by Samuel French/Concord Theatricals, and Dramatic Publishing, and in anthologies from Heinemann, Playscripts Inc., Smith and Kraus, and New Issues Press.

**MALKIA STAMPLEY** (Director) A Milwaukee native, Malkia is a director, actor and Goodman Theatre's BOLD Artistic Producer. Select directing credits: *Primary Trust* and *In My Granny's Garden* (Goodman Theatre); *Nonsense* and *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Milwaukee Rep), *The October Storm* (Raven, Jeff-nominated, Best Director), *Boulevard of Bold Dreams* (TimeLine), *STEW* (Shattered Globe), *Black Nativity* (Black Arts MKE), *The Gift of the Magi* (American Players), *Five Guys Named Moe* (Skylight Music), *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grille* (Farmers Alley), *Exit Strategy* (Northwestern). She is an Ensemble Member of Congo Square Theatre and co-founder of Bronzeville Arts Ensemble and Milwaukee Black Theater Festival.

**KRISTI MARTENS** (Production Stage Manager) is happy to be at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. Some other theaters that she has worked at: Mercury Theater Chicago, Drury Lane Theater (Oakbrook Terrace), Northlight Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Porchlight Music Theater, Goodman Theatre, The Royal George Theater, Drury Lane Evergreen Park, Drury Lane Water Tower, Fox Valley Repertory, Oak Park Festival Theater, Fulton Opera House (Lancaster, PA), Maine State Music Theater (Brunswick, ME), Theater At the Center (Munster, IN), WYO Theater (Sheridan, WY), Carousel Dinner Playhouse (Akron, OH), Dallas Theater Center (Dallas, TX). A proud Equity member for over 35 years, Kristi started stage managing with children's theater.

**TANYA PALMER** (Dramaturg) is a dramaturg, creative producer, educator, and playwright who currently serves as the Assistant Dean and Executive Artistic Director at Northwestern University's School of Communication, where she oversees programming at the Wirtz Centers for the Performing and Media Arts. Prior to joining Northwestern, she served as the Director of New Play Development at the Goodman Theatre for 14 seasons and at Actors Theatre of Louisville for 5 seasons. Originally from Calgary, she lives in Evanston, Illinois with her husband Jim and their two teenagers, Harper & Theo.

**EVELYN DANNER** (Costume Design) Costume Designer has been working creatively in the Chicagoland area for more than twenty years and is happy to be returning to Rivendell after the premiere of *Wipeout*. Costume credits include *Hero The Boy from Troy*, Womenfirst Productions, Goodman Theatre's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Swing State* (Premiere), *Gem of the Ocean* and *This Happened Once At The Romance Depot off of I-87 In Westchester*. Peninsula Players of Door County, Wisconsin, *Trying* and *The Rainmaker*. Black Ensemble Theater's *Hitt Records*, *The Salon*, *The Other Cinderella*, *The Real Housewives of Motown* and others. MPAACT's *The Book of Me*, *Red Summer* and Marriott Theatre's, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*.

**LAUREN NICHOLS** (Scenic Design) is a three-time Jeff- nominated freelance designer native to Chicago. Past designs for Rivendell Theatre Ensemble include the world premieres of *Motherhouse* and *Scientific Method*. Recent credits include: *Hot Wing King*, *Tiger Style* (Writers) and *A Home What Howls* (Steppenwolf). She has also designed for Marriott, Paramount, Remy Bumppo, UIC, Lifeline, VG, Jackalope, Harper College, Young People's Theatre, Shattered Globe, Renaissance Theatreworks, Village Theatre in Seattle, The Gift Theatre, Firebrand, Teatro Vista, Raven, and BoHo. As an associate she has worked on dozens of productions all over the country. She currently teaches design as an adjunct professor at The Theatre School-DePaul University and Northwestern. She is the recipient of the 2024 Michael Maggio Award for Emerging Designers. MFA Northwestern. [laurenangeldesigns.com](http://laurenangeldesigns.com)

**MADELEINE REID** (Lighting Design) is a Chicago based Lighting Designer for theatre, opera, dance, and live events. Recent Design credits include: *Dial M for Murder* (Penobscot Theatre Company); *Guys & Dolls* (Harper College); *Puffs* (Cape Fear Regional Theatre); *9 to 5* (MPAC); *POTUS* (Stages Houston); *Hurricane Diane* (Rec Room); *The Chinese Lady* (Kitchen Theatre, Geva Theatre Center). Assistant/Associate Design credits include productions with Goodman Theatre, The Alley Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Dallas Opera, and Repertory Theatre St. Louis. [www.madeleinegreid.com](http://www.madeleinegreid.com)

**ETHAN KORVNE** (Original Music and Sound Design) is a composer and sound designer from Akron, OH and based in Chicago. Recent credits include: *Coronation* at Refracted Theatre Company, *Beneath the Willow Tree* at Pulse Theatre Chicago, *Short Shakes! Romeo & Juliet* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, and the Chicago premiere of *Tambo & Bones* at Refracted Theatre Company (2 Joseph Jefferson Awards – Original Music in a Play and Best Sound Design). Ethan graduated in 2024 from The Theatre School at DePaul University with a BFA in Sound Design. Listen to his work and more at: [ethankorvne.com](http://ethankorvne.com)

**SHANNON GOLDEN-STARR** (Production Manager) CHICAGO: *Mesmerized*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Frederick* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *I, Banquo*, *Short Shakespeare! The Comedy of Errors*, *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, *Fight Night*, *Shakespeare in the Parks* production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Frankenstein, Act(s) of God*, *Plantation!*, *Hard Times*, *Moby Dick*, *Thaddeus and Slocuum: A Vaudeville Adventure* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *The King of the Yees*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Carlyle*, *Soups Stews and Casseroles: 1976*, *Feathers and Teeth* (Goodman Theatre); *The Mutilated*, *Simpatico* (A Red Orchid Theatre); *This Wonderful Life* (American Blues Theater). EDUCATION: BS in stage management, Ball State University. UPCOMING: *A Year with Frog and Toad* (Chicago Children's Theater). Love to Henry, Ravioli, and Mac!

**AXEL ADAMS** (Technical Director) is excited to work with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble for the first time. Axel is new to the Chicago area, having recently moved here after completing his Bachelor's degree in Scenic Construction and Technical Direction at Arizona State University. When he's not running around putting a set together Axel enjoys going for long walks and silver smithing.

**HANNA DWORKIN** (Assistant Director) is happy to be working with Rivendell. She began her training at the age of 15 at the prestigious Minneapolis Children's Theatre Conservatory High School. In Chicago she has worked with such theaters as Writers' Theater, Drury Lane, Steppenwolf, About Face, Timeline, A Red Orchid, and American Theatre Company where she originated the role of Deirdre Blake in the world premiere of *The Humans*. Hanna was also a member of the critically acclaimed Famous Door Theater Company where she appeared in the Jeff Award winning productions of *The Living*, *Early and Often*, and *Ghetto*, among others. Film/TV credits include Chicago Fire, Chicago PD, Sense8, Empire, Shining Girls, Rounding, and the critically acclaimed film, *Ghostlight*.



**CARLY ZAMOST** (Assistant Stage Manager) is overjoyed to be making her Rivendell debut! A Chicago native, she recently returned to the city after earning her BFA in Stage and Production Management from Emerson College. Carly's stage management credits include *Ragtime: The Symphonic Concert* (Tanglewood & Boston Symphony Hall), *Spring Awakening* (ART/New York), *Not Calm* (NYC Brick Theatre), *Cabaret* (Majestic Theatre Boston), and *Romeo and Bernadette* (Skokie Theatre). She also served as Assistant Production Manager for the NHSI Theatre Arts program at Northwestern University. Carly is incredibly grateful to her family and friends for their unwavering love and support.

**CHASE BARRON** (Master Electrician) is incredibly excited to be back at Rivendell after their work on *Motherhouse* and *Fresh Produce*. Chase is currently completing a BFA in Lighting Design from The Theatre School at DePaul University and will be graduating in June of this year. When not working in theatre they enjoy attending local music shows.

**CHAS MATHIEU** (Lead Carpenter) (he/him) is excited to be working with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble for his first time. Chas is also a scenic designer and artist working in the city of Chicago. Chas has also spent the last several seasons with Chicago Children's Theatre as their scenic supervisor. In his free time, he enjoys exploring the city and painting with watercolors.

**CRISTIN CAROLE** (Intimacy Director) has served on the faculty of the City Colleges of Chicago and the College of The Bahamas (now University of The Bahamas) as an Arts Integration Specialist, and for ten years as adjunct faculty for Columbia College Chicago's Graduate Program in Education and most recently as adjunct faculty Loyola University's theater department. She has developed programs and workshops for the Golden Apple Foundation, Hedwig Dance Company, Urban Gateways, Chicago Park District, South Side Community Arts Center and the Arts Center of Cannon County Tennessee. She is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and was most recently accepted into Columbia College's Intimacy Directors Certification Program for Stage and Screen.

**DEVIN MESEKE** (Scenic Charge) is a Scenic Painter and Scenic Designer based in Chicago, Illinois. He is currently in his final year of completing his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Scene Design from DePaul University and has been painting in Chicago for the past three years at several theaters including DePaul Opera, Mercury Theatre, Albany Park Theater Project, and Remy Bumpo Theatre Company. His recent projects have included *Sour Angelica/Gianna Schicchi* at DePaul Opera (Paint Charge), *This One Will Grow* at Glass Apple Theatre Company (Paint Charge), and *Manon Lescaut* at the Opera Festival of Chicago (Painter) along with multiple design projects at DePaul University.

**EMA KESTER** (Front of House / Community Engagement) (she/they) is incredibly excited to be working with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble again! Ema is a multi-hyphenate theatre artist that finds joy in exercising their love for theatre arts in whatever way she can. Previously, Ema has assistant stage managed at Rivendell during the extended production of *Motherhouse*. Ema is also a member of the Production Team at 2nd Story, assisting with their storytelling workshops, productions, and other projects. They received their Bachelor of Arts from Loyola University Chicago in 2022, where she was introduced to Rivendell Theatre Ensemble by several beloved professors and mentors. Ema is very much looking forward to her future in the Chicago theatre world!



Cake - 2018

# RIVENDELL STAFF

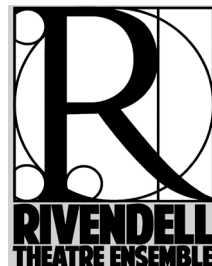
**TARA MALLEN** (Rivendell Artistic Director/ Producer) is the founder and Artistic Director at Chicago's award-winning Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. She is a 2017 3Arts Awardee and a Volunteers of America Silver Star Awardee. Most recently she was seen onstage in Rivendell's critically acclaimed, smash-hit production *MOTHERHOUSE* as part of their Jeff Award winning ensemble. In 2018, she won the Jeff Award for "Actor in a Principal Role" for her portrayal of "Della" in *THE CAKE*. Recent stage credits include *THE LUCKIEST* at The Raven Theatre (Jeff Nomination – Supporting Actor); the world premiere of Lynn Nottage's *SWEAT* at Arena Stage; Rivendell's world premiere productions of *SPAY*; *LAURA AND THE SEA*; *LOOK, WE ARE BREATHING* and *RASHEEDA SPEAKING* among others; and *HOW LONG WILL I CRY* at Steppenwolf Theatre. She received a Joseph Jefferson award for "Supporting Actress" for work in *WRENS* and was also a part of that production's Jeff winning ensemble. Screen credits include the independent feature by acclaimed Chicago Filmmakers Kelly O'Sullivan and Alex Thompson, *Ghostlight* (premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival), Steven Soderbergh's *Contagion*; *The Last Shift* (Sony Pictures); *Dark Matter* (Apple TV); *Empire* (Fox); *Boss* (Starz); *Chicago Fire* (NBC); *Doubt* (CBS/ Sony Pictures); *Chicago P.D.* (NBC); *Sense8* (Netflix) and the independent feature *FOOLS*. Tara co-conceived and directed the Rivendell world premiere of *WOMEN AT WAR*; directed Rivendell's Jeff nominated Midwest premieres of *THE ELECTRIC BABY*, *26 MILES* (co-production / Teatro Vista); *FIGHTING WORDS*; *PSALMS OF A QUESTIONABLE NATURE*; *ELLIOT, A SOLDIER'S FUGUE* (co-production/ Stageworks Hudson); and the brief but brilliant *SHADY MEADOWS* by Lisa Dillman as part of the 2007 Chicago Humanities Festival.

**BRIT COOPER-ROBINSON** (Community Engagement Manager) is a theatre practitioner and writer living in Chicago, on the stolen land of the Kickapoo, Peoria, Potawatomi, Miami, and Ojibwe peoples. The power of storytelling and the necessity of compassionate witness drive her work as she seeks personal and systemic change. She's a trauma-informed ghostwriter and digital messaging strategist. She's the co-producer of

the storytelling series *Unearthing Our Fire* and co-devised the original *Folded Map Play*. She is a contributor for *Sixty Inches From Center*, *Our Bible App*, *Understory Quarterly*, and runs *Community Engagement* for Rivendell Theatre Ensemble.

**TRISHA HOOPER** (Business Manager) has been involved with Rivendell since graduating from Loyola University Chicago in 2007, where she studied English. She was recruited by Rivendell Founder Tara Mallen as a volunteer as the company was moving into our current space, and grew into the positions she holds today, both Business Manager and Box Office Manager. She manages everything from payroll and cash flow to donor and ticket buyer relations for the organization. In addition to her work with Rivendell, Trisha spent a summer with American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin where she was a management intern. Trisha also made vegan pastries at Metropolis Coffee Company and is generally recognized as Rivendell's top baker to this day.

**CATHERINE PAINTER** (Managing Director), after serving as Rivendell's grant writer for six years, joined the company as Managing Director in 2020. She is also Managing Director of Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Development and Strategy Consultant to Praize Productions, Inc., and a board member for the National New Play Network (NNPN). She is a member of the faculty at the University of Illinois–Chicago Certificate in Non-Profit Management Program where she teaches classes on Individual Giving and Strategic Leadership. Previously, she consulted with the American Indian Association, Trinity Irish Dance Company, and independent artists, and worked with Victory Gardens Theater, Merit School of Music, Northlight Theatre, and Latin School of Chicago.



# RIVENDELL STAFF

**CAROLINE MICHELE UY** (Director of New Work) (they/them) most recently served as the Artistic Producer for Rivendell's Fresh Produce New Play Festival this past year. As a dramaturg, stage manager, and producer, they have worked at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Steep Theatre, American Music Theatre Project, and other Chicago theaters. Other credits include: New Stages Festival 2023 (Line Producer, Goodman), Purpose (Script Supervisor, Steppenwolf), Wonder Boy (Dramaturg, AMTP), The Writer (Dramaturg, Steep Theatre), This Happened Once... (Dramaturg, Goodman Theatre), and Swing State (Asst. Dramaturg, Goodman Theatre). Stage management work include Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi, Die Fledermaus, Cendrillon, and additional credits from the University of Michigan, Trinity Rep/ Brown University, Berlin Opera Academy, and New York Stage and Film. BFA Design & Production (Stage Management), BA Cognitive Science (Language & Cognition; Minor in Germanic Languages and Literature) – University of Michigan.

**TANYA WARD** (Marketing Director) has two decades of experience in grassroots and traditional marketing engagement, and 10+ years in social media content marketing. She has supported brands such as: mcdonald's USA, Coca-Cola, Toyota, Verizon, Procter & Gamble's My Black Is Beautiful, l'oreal, Congo Square Theatre Company, and Siskel Jacobs Films, among others. She is a writer and a founding member of the Englewood Arts Collective, which was formed to help produce artists, events and interactions that reflect the Englewood community of Chicago in a positive way. She is very proud to be an Associate Producer on the award-winning documentary *Being Michelle* (Orange Kite Productions). She has served RTE as Marketing Director since 2018 and is thrilled to strengthen her writing and producing muscles as a Rivendell Ensemble member too!

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble acknowledges its location on the ancestral homelands of the Council of the Three Fires (the Ojibwe, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes). Descendants of these and other North American tribes continue to live and work on this land with us; the Chicagoland area is home to the largest number of Native Americans in the Midwest, over 65,000.

We acknowledge and strongly condemn the present territorial dispossession, resource theft, disproportionate targeting by the criminal legal system, and other ongoing crimes against Indigenous people in the United States. We commit to doing our part to right these wrongs by centering Indigenous voices and telling the truth about history in all places that our voices are heard. We further recognize our responsibility to stand in solidarity with Native leaders in our city, as we understand, teach, advocate, and respect the past and present realities of local Native Americans and their continued connection to this land.

## TICKETING POLICY

Rivendell offers tickets on a sliding price scale to ensure accessibility while supporting the high-quality art our audiences enjoy. Discounts for seniors, students, military and veterans, as well as pay-what-you-can and other ticket options are available in addition to prices listed.

**We never want anyone to miss a trip to Rivendell because of a tight budget.**

If you don't see a ticket option that works for you, please contact us at 773-334-7728 or [boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org](mailto:boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org).

## ACCESSIBILITY

We want everyone to be comfortable and feel welcome at Rivendell. If you have questions about accessibility or accommodations at Rivendell, please contact us at 773-334-7728 or [boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org](mailto:boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org).

Mask-Required performances – April 5 & 13

Face masks will be required at these performances. At all other performances they are optional.

Open Caption performances – April 26 @ 4 pm

Equipment loaned by Cultural Access Collaborative with special thanks to the Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

Performance with pre-show Touch Tour – TBD,  
contact us for details [boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org](mailto:boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org)

Rivendell's facilities are ADA compliant, including movable seating; ramp access to the bathrooms and theater. Rivendell Theatre lobby includes a gender inclusive bathroom.

## TOWN HALL DISCUSSION

**April 12th** immediately following the 4 pm matinee

During the run of each performance Rivendell hosts town hall conversations with the audience and an expert panel to extend the conversation from the stage to the community. The Town Hall for this production will take place following the Saturday matinee performance listed above. You are welcome to attend even if you are not at the performance that afternoon.

For more details about content and panelists, join our email list at [www.rivendelltheatre.org/yourvisit](http://www.rivendelltheatre.org/yourvisit)



# A LEGACY OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE AND ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN'S VOICES

## RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble continually strives to find insightful work and produce bold plays that push the boundaries of its ensemble of artists, collaborators and administrators.

It has been over 100 years since the 19th Amendment was ratified, granting white women the right to vote, and almost 60 years since women of color were given that right through the Voting Rights Act. And yet today women still struggle to have their voices heard or be seen.

Serving as a narrative of change, Rivendell's mission is to elevate the lives of women through the power of theatre. We accomplish this by giving voice to women and their stories through artistic recognition of their lives with the support of an award-winning ensemble of artists, combating the inequities experienced by women in the theater landscape through gender parity at all levels of theatrical production, helping other women theater artists find artistic recognition and visibility by providing mentorship and support through subsidized theater and rehearsal space, and by creating a rewarding experience for audiences and community by being a catalyst for conversation through insightful stories and outreach.

After three decades firmly in the cultural landscape of Chicago, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble has learned one very important thing: even in a small space you can tell big stories. And telling big, impactful stories is what Rivendell does best. Artistic Director Tara Mallen founded Rivendell Theatre Ensemble in 1994 with a group of like-minded artists who understood that stories must be shared to open minds. And since its inception, Rivendell has grown to uniquely fill an important role in the Chicago and national theatre community as the only women-focused Equity storefront theatre in Chicago and one of a handful in the country. In its 30-year history, Rivendell has earned 12 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nearly four dozen nominations. It is recognized as a national force in new play development and as a home for women theatre artists, engaging over 200 artists and 3,000+ audience members each year through its mainstage season, new work development, and outreach.

Learn more about our 30th Anniversary Celebration at [www.rivendelltheatre.org](http://www.rivendelltheatre.org).

Rivendell is Chicago's leading theatre company dedicated to producing new plays focused on women's stories, experiences, and issues. Join us for a show and you'll experience great plays with provocative social themes shot through a distinctly female lens.

## **RIVENDELL ARTISTIC ENSEMBLE**

Tara Mallen, Artistic Director	Hallie Gordon	Janice Pytel
Mary Cross	Rae Gray	Eric Slater
Rashada Dawan	Trisha Hooper	Sarah Slight
Victoria Delorio	Keith Kupferer	Rebecca Spence
Devon de Mayo	Lucia Lombardi	Evan Sposato
Lisa Dillman	Krystal McNeil	Meg Thalken
Jerre Dye	Jane Baxter Miller	Mark Ulrich
Jessica Ervin	Elvia Moreno	Georgette Verdin
Diane D. Fairchild	Andi Muriel	Tanya Ward
Patrick Fries	Ashley Neal	
Regina Garcia	Glenn-Dale Obrero	
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## **RIVENDELL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Shera Street .....	Board Chair
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## **DIRECTORS**

Phoegina Brown	Jennifer Kranz
Ann Christopherson	Tara Mallen
Emily Kneer	Meera Sundareson

## **RIVENDELL'S MISSION:**

We elevate the lives of women through the power of theatre. We cultivate a creative home for audiences and artists to explore untold women's stories while fostering an environment in which women theatre artists can thrive. Rivendell lifts up all female voices, promotes female-focused work creation, broadens awareness with fresh insights and dialogue, and advocates for women.



*The Tasters - 2018*

## MAKING ART POSSIBLE

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. On the following pages we thank the donors who underwrite about 80% of our budget, complementing ticket sales and rental income to support equitable artist pay, high production values, and new play development.

If you are on this list, we thank you. You help us elevate the lives of women through the power of theatre. When you hear applause here, know that some of it is for you!

If you are not on this list yet, please join the Rivendell family by making a donation today. Every dollar makes a real difference at Rivendell—from paying theatre artists to providing the equipment and supplies they need to maintaining the facilities in which they create.

Please consider making a one-time or monthly donation at  
**[www.rivendelltheatre.org/donate](http://www.rivendelltheatre.org/donate)**.

Or give right now with Venmo **@rivendelltheatre**  
or Paypal **trisha@rivendelltheatre.org**

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Rivendell Theatre Ensemble sincerely appreciates the following individuals for their generous support of our vital work.

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*I Wanna F\*cking Tear You Apart - 2019*



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