

A woman with curly hair, wearing a blue sweater, is holding a young woman with blonde hair and blue eyes. They are in a room with blue walls and shelves containing various medicine bottles. The woman is looking off to the side with a concerned expression, while the young woman looks directly at the camera with a somber expression.

# SPAY

by Madison Fiedler

Directed by Georgette Verdin



**Join us at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble on Monday, March 28th for a time of coordinated effort to uplift and care for our fellow Chicagoans. We will be assembling an evening's worth of sack suppers for the South Shore Stop of the Health Outreach Bus. The Night Ministry's specially designed Health Outreach Bus features a fully equipped nurse's office and brings basic medical care and a sense of community to individuals and families six days per week in diverse, underserved areas of Chicago.**

**Email [denise@rivendelltheatre.org](mailto:denise@rivendelltheatre.org) for more info about volunteering.**

**If you missed RTE's Day of Service, here are other ways to support  
The Night Ministry:**

- Sort donations and pack safe-sex or hygiene kits on Service Saturdays.
- Lend your support and skills with mailings, research, and other projects at our administrative office.

**To get started, contact Miranda Dean, Resource Coordinator, at [miranda@thenightministry.org](mailto:miranda@thenightministry.org) or 773-506-6022.**



# **RTE HOME**



Tara Mallen  
*Artistic Director*

Catherine Painter  
*Managing Director*

proudly present the World Premiere of

# SPAY

**by Madison Fiedler**

**Directed by Georgette Verdin**

March 17 - April 17, 2022

## **Development History**

Spay was originally commissioned in 2018 by BoHo Theatre in partnership with Northwestern University's Next Step Program & Laura Schellhardt, with a 2019 reading directed by Stephen Schellhardt.

## **Further development by**

- Rivendell Theatre Ensemble 2019 Fresh Produce New Play workshop, directed by Hallie Gordon
- The 2019 NNPN National Showcase of New Plays, directed by Hallie Gordon
- Florida Repertory Theatre Ensemble, 2020 PlayLab Festival, directed by Maureen Heffernan
- 2021 TheatreLab at Florida Atlantic University, directed by Matt Stabile

Spay was honored as part of the 2020 Kilroys List.

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

## **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 amplifying 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.

# CAST

Noah.....Rae Gray\*+  
Harper.....Krystel McNeil\*+  
Aubrey.....Tara Mallen\*+  
Jackson.....Spencer Huffman

Noah Understudy.....Jill Oliver  
Harper Understudy.....Maya Jahan Abram  
Jackson Understudy.....Anthony Baldasare

**Setting: Williamson, West Virginia**

**Time: Early Fall, 2019**

"We know Appalachia exists, because we need it to define what we are not. It is the other America, because the very idea of Appalachia convinces us of the righteousness of our own lives. Appalachia is real, but it exists in our cultural imagination as a mythical place where uncomfortable truths become projected and compartmentalized." -Ronald D. Eller

**The play runs approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.**

# PRODUCTION TEAM

Director.....Georgette Verdin#  
Production Stage Manager.....Deya Friedman\*  
Dramaturg.....Catherine Yu  
Fight Director/Intimacy Choreographer.....Claire Yearman  
Dialect Coach.....Sammi Grant  
Scenic Design.....Lindsay Mummert  
Lighting Design.....Michael Mahlum  
Sound Design.....Hannah Foerschler  
Costume Design.....Becca Duff  
Props Design.....Rowan Doe  
Production Manager/Covid Safety.....Erik Strebeg\*  
Technical Director.....Evan Sposato  
Master Electrician.....Garrett Steinke  
Scenic Builder.....Devan Crume  
Scenic Painter.....Kat Hasanov  
Assistant Stage Manager.....Grace Spencer  
Assistant Director.....Rashada Dawan  
Costume Assistant.....Alli Braun  
Original Compositions.....Jane Baxter Miller+  
Box Office Manager.....Trisha Hooper+  
Community Engagement.....Denise Yvette Serna  
Brit Cooper Robinson

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

"The number of opioids shipped to pharmacies in small towns of West Virginia has been astonishing: nearly 800 million opioids in total distributed to West Virginia in just a 5-year period, 20.8 million opioids to Williamson... [a town with a] population of 2,900."

-Hearing, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations (2018).

# RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE STAFF

Producing Artistic Director.....	Tara Mallen*+
Managing Director.....	Cat Painter
Director of Audience Services / Business Manager.....	Trisha Hooper+
Associate Artistic Director.....	Denise Yvette Serna
Marketing Director.....	Tanya Ward
Casting Director.....	Ashley Neal *
Public Relations.....	Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.
Interns.....	Sidney Cox Rachel Bachar

+ Denotes member of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble;

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

# Denotes member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical and labor union



The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production or distributing recordings on any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited. They are a violation of the author's rights and actionable under United States Copyright law.

# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This past year alone over 96,700 people died from drug overdoses. Opioids are killing more Americans than car crashes and gun deaths combined. And since we first began working on *Spay* in early 2019, overdose deaths have spiked 50 percent as more people turned to drugs during the pandemic. We consistently criminalize these individuals who suffer from addictions, label them "addicts" and "junkies" then funnel them through our prison systems and spit them back out with no support, no health care, no chance to find their way out of these terrifying cycles.

Plays that offer a meaningful and hopefully impactful experience have become Rivendell's signature, and as America's drug epidemic continues to spiral, I cannot imagine a more appropriate way to reopen our theater than with this stunning world premiere that offers an unflinching exploration of this issue—and the very people our system has failed. Playwright Madison Fiedler narrows her lens to focus specifically on one family who has been directly impacted by this national crisis and by doing so, offers us an opportunity to recognize our shared humanity. *Spay* invites us to begin a conversation, to clearly see the challenges presented and then, hopefully, encourages us to take action. I am delighted to be introducing Madison's exciting, compassionate and resonant voice to Chicago audiences. And more, I am profoundly happy to welcome you back to Rivendell.

*Tara*

Tara Mallen, Artistic Director

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Welcome to West Virginia, ground zero for the opioid crisis, where Big Pharma made its fortune off unsuspecting citizens, many with legitimate and debilitating pain who were merely seeking relief. We've spent weeks in rehearsals tracking how this epidemic rips through the family at the center of *Spay*, and the unconscionable lack of any true support for individuals who find themselves in these circumstances. So much about creating a play is about the act of getting curious, asking questions you may assume you already have the answers to, and then making room for not knowing. It can be tempting to other those suffering from addiction, but this would be dangerous and shortsighted. We're all vulnerable to the same root causes of addiction: stress, trauma, mental illness and, a lack of connection, none of which are in short supply in these difficult and scary times. For those of you who have been touched by addiction, I hope *Spay* makes you feel seen. In the last year alone, I've lost two family members to addiction-related deaths. I'd like to dedicate this production to my cousin, Torrin Strickland, who lost his battle with addiction on June 12, 2021 at 23 years old.

Georgette Verdin, Director



**Chase Hinojosa Doggett**  
(3/7/97–1/16/22)

This production is dedicated to Chase Doggett. No words hold all that you are: a cosmic creative force; home and family and eternal laughter to those of us lucky enough to call you our best friend; the very best of life. I love you.

Madison Fiedler, Playwright

## SPECIAL THANKS

Hallie Gordon, Regina Garcia, Zoë Verdin, Amy Peter/DePaul Prop Shop, the Northwestern University Prop Shop, Miranda Anderson, Dillion Michael, Tony Churchill, Lucia Lombardi, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, The Potocsnak Family Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Life Labs. As always, our heartfelt gratitude to Stjepan and Ivan Misetic for offering us a place to call home. "Naša iskrena hvala!"



**RAE GRAY** (Noah) (She/Her) is a Rivendell Theatre Ensemble member, and last appeared in *Crooked*. Other Chicago theater credits include: *graveyard shift*, *The Little*

*Foxes*, *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman); *Domesticated*, *Slowgirl*, *The Book Thief*, *Wedding Band* (Steppenwolf); *King Charles III* (Chicago Shakespeare); *The North China Lover* (Lookingglass); *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Victory Gardens); *The Real Thing* (Writers); *Sunday in the Park with George* (Ravinia); *Inherit the Wind* (Northlight); *The Crucible*, *Cry of Players* (TimeLine); *Oliver*, *State Fair* (Marriott); *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Drury Lane). Broadway: *The Real Thing* (Roundabout). International: *The Beacon* (Druid/Gate Theatre, IRL). Regional: *Queens* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Slowgirl* (Geffen Playhouse). TV: *A League of Their Own*, *Fear the Walking Dead*, *Grace and Frankie*, *For the People*, *Sea Oak*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Shameless*, *The Resident*, *Bull*, *Adventure Time*, *Bossy Bear*, *Chicago Fire*, *PD* and *Med*. Film: *Slice*, *I Do...Until I Don't*, *Mona Lisa and the Blood Moon*, *The Robbery* (Sundance Selection), *Dismissed*, *Invitation to a Murder*. Rae graduated with honors from the University of Chicago.



**KRYSTEL MCNEIL** (Harper) (She/Her) is excited to be working on *Spay* at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (*Laura and the Sea*, *The Cake*, *WOMEN AT WAR*) where she is an ensemble member.

Other credits include *Gem of The Ocean*, *Objects in The Mirror*, and *Carlyle* (Goodman Theatre); *In the Next Room or The Vibrator Play*; *Spill* (Timeline Theatre Company); *The Compass* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *Bootycandy* (Windy City Playhouse). Tours include *Defamation the Play* (Canamac Productions). Film and television credits include *Chiraq*, *Gossamer*, *The Chi*, *Chicago PD*, *Next*; *Proven Innocent*, *Soundtrack*.

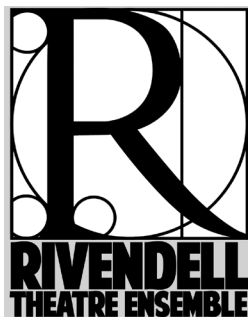


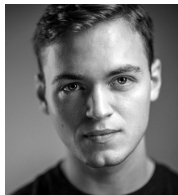
**TARA MALLEN** (Aubrey) (She/Her) is an actor, director, producer, the Artistic Director at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble and a proud recipient of a 2017 3Arts Award. In 2018, she appeared as

"Della" in Rivendell's Midwest premiere of *The Cake* (Jeff award "Lead Actor") then in a reprisal of that role for Renaissance Theatre-works in Milwaukee this past fall. World premieres include Lynn Nottage's *Sweat at Arena Stage*; *Laura & the Sea*; *Look, we are breathing*; *The Firebird's Take the Field*; *The Walls* (part of Steppenwolf's Visiting Theater Initiative); and *Rasheeda Speaking* at Rivendell, as well as Steppenwolf SYA production of *How Long Will I Cry: Stories of Youth Violence*. One of Rivendell's founding members, Tara has now produced and acted in over thirty productions.

Screen credits include the recent indie film *The Last Shift* opposite Richard Jenkins; *Chicago P.D.*, *Empire*; *Boss*; *Chicago Fire*; *Doubt*; *Controversy*; *Sense8*, and Steven Soderbergh's film *Contagion*.

Directing credits include the World Premiere of *Women At War*, *The Electric Baby*, *26 Miles* (in co-production with Teatro Vista); *Fighting Words*; and *Psalms of a Questionable Nature* for Rivendell; *Elliot, a Soldier's Fugue* with Stageworks in Hudson, New York and the brief and brilliant *Shady Meadows* by Lisa Dillman as part of the 2007 Chicago Humanities Festival.





**SPENCER HUFFMAN** (Jackson) (He/Him) is a playwright, actor, and director based in Chicago. He is thrilled to be making his Chicago acting debut with Rivendell. As a playwright, his

work includes: *Evil Perfect*, *The Baseball Gods*, *When We Were Little*, *Shine Down On Us*, *The Swamp Play*, *Like Some Deep Booming*, *The Vastness of the North*, and *If Only We Were Ghosts*. His plays have earned recognition from theatres and festivals across the U.S., including The National Playwrights Conference, American Stage's 21st Century Voices New Play Festival, Landing Theatre Co. New American Voices Festival, and Southwest Theatre Production's Rising Artists Playwriting Competition, among others. His plays have received productions and staged readings from Bramble Theatre Co, The Landing Theatre Co, Broken Bell Reads, Three Cat Productions, and Relative Theatrics. He has been a writing fellow at Millay Arts, The Marble House Project, and the Kerouac Project of Orlando. Spencer graduated from the School at Steppenwolf in 2019 and is an ensemble member and literary manager at Bramble Theatre Company. BA: Kenyon College. [jspencerhuffman.com](http://jspencerhuffman.com)



**MAYA ABRAM** (Harper/Understudy) (She/Her) is an actor from Nashville and is currently residing in Chicago. She is in the final year of her MFA Acting program at Northwestern University.

While at Northwestern, she has performed in *Romeo & Juliet* and *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*. She also is the founder of the Black Graduate Artist Group (BGAG), a Black affinity group at the School of Communication at NU. Maya is thankful and excited for the opportunity to work with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble! She is represented by The Rock Talent Agency.



**ANTHONY BALDASARE** (Jackson/Understudy) (He/Him) is an actor from Columbus, Ohio. He graduated from Ohio University with his BFA in Acting in 2017, and then completed an

Acting Residency with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre in their 2017-2018 season. He has since acted with regional theaters in Chicago, Wisconsin, Indiana, Louisiana, and Wyoming, most recently performing at the Jackson Hole Playhouse and with Griffin Theatre's touring production of *Letters Home*. He has been seen on TV in *Chicago Fire* (NBC) and acted in numerous independent films such as *Departure* and *Kampout*, (Amazon Prime) with more on the horizon! He is happily represented by Grossman & Jack Talent.



**JILL OLIVER** (Noah/Understudy) (She/Her) is delighted to be working with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble! She is a Chicago-based actor, writer, and filmmaker. Jill has worked with a

number of Chicago theatres including A Red Orchid Theatre, Lifeline Theatre, The Artistic Home and Shattered Globe Theatre. She spent nine years as an ensemble member of The Factory Theater, where she produced, directed, wrote and acted in over a dozen shows. She received her BA in Theatre from Columbia College Chicago alongside the Dublin Institute of Technology Theatre Conservatory Exchange Program. Jill is proudly represented by Gray Talent Group. Keep an ear out for Jill in season four of *Unwell*, *A Midwestern Gothic Mystery*, winner of the Best Podcast award at the 2021 BBC Audio Drama Awards.



# PRODUCTION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

**MADISON FIEDLER** (Playwright) (She/Her) Madison Fiedler is a Brooklyn-based, Asheville-raised playwright. Plays include *Spay* (2020 Kilroys List, 2022 world premiere at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 2021 Princess Grace Playwriting Fellowship runner-up, 2019 National Showcase of New Plays, Florida Repertory Theatre's 2020 PlayLab, 2021 FAU Theatre Lab, 2018-2019 BoHo Theatre commission), *Screech Owl* (2021 finalist: Playwrights Realm Writing Fellowship, Leah Ryan Fund for Emerging Women Writers), *If God Came a Callin'* (Barter Theatre Appalachian Festival of Plays & Playwrights), *The Incubators* (semi-finalist: Athena Project Plays in Process), and *I Talk to the Flowers* (Skidmore College, University of Kentucky). She is a National New Play Network Affiliated Artist and is represented by A3 Artists Agency. BA: Northwestern University (2019). madisonfiedler.net

**GEORGETTE VERDIN** (Director) (She/Her) Georgette Verdin is pleased to be making her Rivendell debut with *Spay*. She is a Cuban-American director, arts educator and the 2022 Michael Maggio Directing Fellow at Goodman Theatre. Since 2015, she's served as the Managing Artistic Director of Interrobang Theatre Project, an award-winning storefront theater known for its gutsy productions that tackle morally complex and socially-relevant issues. Select directing credits include *This Wide Night* by Chloë Moss (Shattered Globe Theatre/Interrobang Theatre Project), *Tribes* by Nina Raine (Western Michigan University), the U.S. Premiere of *Out of Love* by Elinor Cook, *Grace and Recent Tragic Events* by Craig Wright, as well as the 2016 Yale Drama Series winner *Utility* by Emily Schwend (Interrobang Theatre Project). Georgette has also worked with Lookingglass Theatre, Facility Theatre, and Chicago Dramatists, among others. Georgette holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Performance from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, LA and a Master in Directing from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. She's a 2021 recipient of a 3Arts Make-A-Wave grant and an associate member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. For more, visit [georgetteverdin.com](http://georgetteverdin.com)

**RASHADA DAWAN** (Assistant Director) (She/They) Rashada is excited to be making her assistant directorial debut at Rivendell for this new fascinating work! Thank you Tara, Georgette and the entire *Spay* team for this wonderful opportunity. Acting credits include: *Disney's The Lion King* (Las Vegas & Gazelle Natl Tour), *Madagascar*, *The Nutcracker* (Marriott Lincolnshire), *Cinderella* (Paramount), *Caroline or Change* (Firebrand/Timeline), *Djembe* (Foresight), *Something In The Game* (AMTP/ Wirtz), *A Red Line Runs Through It* (Second City), *Aida* (MUNY), *Dynamite Divas* (Black Ensemble Theatre). TV/ Film: *Chicago PD*, *Shameless*, *Hope Springs Eternal*, *Easy*, *The Red Line*, *Proven Innocent*, *61st Street* and *The Chi*. [RashadaDawan.com](http://RashadaDawan.com)

**DEYA FRIEDMAN** (Stage Manager) (She/Her) Deya Friedman is delighted to be working with Rivendell for the first time. Most recently, Deya served as Production Stage Manager for Porchlight Music Theatre's *Pump Boys and Dinettes*. Pre-pandemic, Deya served as Stage Manager for Congo Square's *Day of Absence*, and *Miracle the Musical* at the Royal George Theatre. Other Chicago credits include productions at Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Teatro Vista, Broadway Playhouse, and Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire, where she also served as Production Manager for 2 seasons. Deya taught stage management classes at Loyola University Chicago and DePaul University, and was a part of the teaching faculty at the University of Tennessee Knoxville from 2008 to 2015. Regional credits include productions at the Children's Theater of Minneapolis and 12 seasons at Peninsula Players in Door County, Wisconsin.

**LINDSAY MUMMERT** (Scenic Designer) (She/Her) Lindsay Mummert is thrilled to be making her debut at Rivendell. Recent credits include *Water by the Spoonful* and *A Wrinkle in Time* (DePaul University). She assisted Regina García and Jack Magaw on projects such as *When Harry Met Rehab* (the Greenhouse), *Mrs. Harrison* (Indiana Repertory), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Oregon Shakespeare), and *Relentless* (Timeline). Upcoming projects include *At the Vanishing Point* (Gift Theatre), *Two Trains Running* (Court Theatre, Asst.), and *A Raisin in the Sun* (Guthrie Theater, Asst.).

**LINDSAY MUMMERT** (cont) Lindsay is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University and resides in Chicago. More at [lindsaymummertdesign.com](http://lindsaymummertdesign.com).

**MICHAEL MAHLUM** (Lighting Designer) (He/Him) is based in Chicago and has designed lighting for dance, theatre, and architecture all across the globe. This is Michael's third time doing lighting design for Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, and he is thrilled to be working with such an amazing team. Recent theatre credits include: *Alias Grace*, *Winter, Year of the Hiker*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Night of Innocent Games*, *Dustbowl Gothic*, *Dracula*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Macbeth*. A selection of other projects includes: The Fillmore—Minneapolis, The Echo Lounge—Dallas, House of Blues Restaurant—Las Vegas, and Crayola Experience—Orlando.

**BECCA DUFF** (Costume Designer) (She/Her) Becca is honored to be returning to Rivendell after her work on *The Tasters*. She is a Chicago-based designer, creator, theatre artist, and actor. Most recently, she costumed *Mamma Mia* at Dominican University, completed a year of study in Alba Emotional Regulation, performed for an *Erasing the Distance* virtual storytelling event, and did a bunch of pandemic crafting in her home sewing studio. Love to Alli.

**ROWAN DOE** (Props Designer) (They/He) is a Chicago-based props designer, carpenter, electrician, artist, and freelancer. They received their degree in 2021 from DePaul University in Theatre Technology, with a minor in Film Production. *Spay* is their first production with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. Other props design credits include: *My Way* (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre), *The Bluest Eye* (Chicago International Puppet Theatre Festival), *Once Upon a Mattress* (Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre), and *Passage* (Remy Bumpopo Theatre Company). They have also assisted with props for *When Harry Met Rehab* (Greenhouse Theatre), and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre).

**HANNAH FOERSCHLER** (Sound Design) (She/Her) is a Chicago-based sound designer and musician, and she is excited to be back designing at Rivendell once again!

She apprenticed with the Purple Rose Theatre Company during their 2015-2016 season. Her recent design credits include Rivendell's *The Tasters* and *Laura and the Sea*, Pivot Arts' *Superfuluxus*, and Strawdog Theatre's *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*.

**SAMMI GRANT** (Dialect Coach) (She/Her) is a Chicago-based dialect/vocal coach and has worked at Goodman Theatre, Timeline Theatre, Drury Lane, Porchlight Music Theatre, Gift Theatre, First Folio Theatre, Windy City Playhouse, and many more. Film/TV Credits: *Rescued by Ruby* (Netflix); *Patriot* (Amazon Prime); *The Exorcist* (Fox). Sammi is a voice/speech teacher for The Theatre School at DePaul University and Access Acting Academy. She holds an MFA with Distinction in Voice Studies from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

**CATHERINE YU** (Dramaturg) Catherine Yu is a writer of plays and librettos. She was a 2016 NYSCA/NYFA fellow, a MacDowell Colony Fellow, a Soho Rep W/D Lab Writer and a New York Theatre Workshop Emerging Artist of Color. Her short plays have been commissioned by 52nd Street Project, Two Headed Rep, and Planned Parenthood among others. Her one act *A Sand Romance* was a 2016 Heidman Award finalist. Her arts writing has been published by Hyperallergic. She has served as a grants panelist for the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and Brooklyn Arts Council. As an educator, she has been a volunteer GED tutor for prison inmates, an ESL tutor in China, and is currently a tutor to elementary school children. In her spare time, she volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House and reads scripts for regional theaters. BA: Stanford University. MFA: New York University.

**CLAIRE YEARMAN** (Intimacy & Fight Coordinator) (She/Her) is excited to be working with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble for the first time. Claire is an actor, fight director, intimacy choreographer, SAFD certified teacher, and an ensemble member with Interrobang Theatre Project. Some theatres she's worked for include: Williams Street Repertory, Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Interrobang Theatre Project, Aston Rep Theatre Company, Red Tape Theatre, WildClaw Theatre and Oil Lamp Theatre.

**ERIK STREBIG** (Production Manager, COVID Safety) (They/He) is beyond grateful to be working with Rivendell for the first time! A graduate of Roosevelt University (CCPA), Erik is a multi-hyphenated theatrical artist, nomad, and devotee of The Artist's Way. Chicago credits include: Lookingglass Theatre Co, The Auditorium Theatre, The Empire Room(Palmer House), About Face Theatre, The MCA, The CSO, and Davenports Piano Bar and Cabaret (6 years, Technical Director). New York Credits include: *Shades of Buble*: Live Onstage National Tour (Production Stage Manager), *Don't Tell Mama* (4 years, Technical Direction), and 3 fabulous years at Club Cumming (by Alan Cumming).

**DENISE YVETTE SERNA** (Community Engagement) (She/Her) is Rivendell's new Associate Artistic Director, a theatre practitioner, and arts activist raised in San Juan, Texas. She has facilitated international workshops and productions with Global Hive Laboratories and its partners, as well as readings, fundraisers, panels, and festivals to raise awareness and promote activism about racial equity, accessibility, climate justice, gender-based violence, immigration, land sovereignty, literacy, community collaboration, and collective joy. Chicago directing and curating credits include productions with MCA Chicago, The Latinx Theatre Commons, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Prop Thr, Strawdog Theatre Company, Pop Magic Productions, The Neo-Futurists, Victory Gardens Theater, Writers Theatre, Goodman Theatre, El Semillero, and Steep Theatre Company. Producing credits include: *Dreams Beyond Borders*, *New Roots* at Howard Area Community Center, *Pop Magic's* salon series *Homeset*, and *The Syndicate's First Read*. Denise is committed to supporting arts organizations as they champion equity, diversity, access and inclusion, and move forward as transformative anti-racist forces in their communities. [deniseyvetteserna.com](http://deniseyvetteserna.com)

**BRIT COOPER ROBINSON** (Community Engagement) (She/Her) is a theater maker and writer living 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 is co-producer of the storytelling series *Unearthing Our Fire* and co-devised the *Folded Map Play*.

She is a contributor for *Sixty Inches from Center*, *Our Bible App*, *Understory Quarterly*, and runs digital storytelling for *How Men Cry*.

**GRACE SPENCER** (Stage Management Assistant) (She/Her) is ecstatic to be working with Rivendell for the first time ever as the Stage Management Assistant for Spay. Born and raised in the beautiful state of Kansas, Grace attended college in both Kansas and Iowa. Upon graduating this December with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, Grace moved to Chicago for the first time. Since coming to the city, she has worked as an intern at Interrobang Theatre Project, as well as here at Rivendell. In the past, Grace has worked with Kansas City Repertory Theatre as the Production Assistant for their Summer Youth Theatre Ensemble. In addition to working backstage, Grace has appeared on film in *Bucks: A Coffeeshop Sitcom*, and on stage in multiple plays, musicals, and operas throughout her college career. A music lover and trained musician, Grace also teaches private piano and voice lessons. [graceannespencer.com](http://graceannespencer.com)

**CAT PAINTER** (Managing Director) (She/Her) After serving as Rivendell's grant writer for six years, Cat joined the company as Managing Director in 2020. She is also Executive Director of Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre and Development Consultant to Praize Productions, Inc. 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. She holds Bachelor and Master of Science degrees from Northwestern University.

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# ABOUT RIVENDELL THEATRE

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (RTE) elevates 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. For more information about Rivendell Theater Ensemble, visit [rivendelltheatre.org](http://rivendelltheatre.org).

## RIVENDELL ARTISTIC ENSEMBLE

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Producing Artistic Director  
Trisha Hooper,  
Business Manager  
Lisa Dillman,  
Literary Director  
Mary Cross  
Megan Carney  
Victoria Deiorio  
Devon de Mayo

Jerre Dye  
Diane D. Fairchild  
Jessica Ervin  
Patrick Fries  
Regina Garcia  
Meighan Gerachis  
Hallie Gordon  
Rae Gray  
Joanna Iwanicka  
Keith Kupferer  
Lucia Lombardi

Krystel McNeil  
Jane Baxter Miller  
Elvia Moreno  
Ashley Neal  
Kristin J. Osborn  
Janice Pytel  
Paula Ramirez  
Eric Slater  
Rebecca Spence  
Mark Ulrich

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Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is a member of Theatre Communications Group, Inc. (TCG), National New Play Network (NNPN), Arts Alliance Illinois, the Andersonville and Edgewater Chambers of Commerce, and the League of Chicago Theatres.



# ACCESSIBILITY

We want everyone to be comfortable and welcome at Rivendell. If you have questions about accessibility or accommodations at Rivendell, please contact us!

Reach us at 773.334.7728 or [boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org](mailto:boxoffice@rivendelltheatre.org).

## FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble proudly acknowledges its civic partners, whose annual contributions provide major programming support.

December 1, 2021 - December 1, 2022

### **\$25,000 +**

Arts Work Fund  
Paul M. Angell  
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### **up to \$2,499**

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Polk Bros. Foundation \*  
Small Business  
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Economic Injury Disaster  
Loan Advance Grant

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\* matching funds

# INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble sincerely appreciates the following individuals for their efforts to advance our work:

December 1, 2021 - December 1, 2022

## **\$5,000 +**

Anonymous  
Toni and John Burt  
Dawn and Rick Gray  
Maureen Miller

## **\$2,500 - 4,999**

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Tim Bresnahan and Michael Szott (and Jax)  
Joan and Michael Callahan  
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Cat Painter and Chris Brandely  
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Tilly Wilhoite

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Rachel Arfa  
Jeffrey Bakker and Cynthia Dorsch  
Neal Ball  
Greg Cameron and Greg Thompson  
Kristy Combs  
Sheryl Curcio  
Elyse Danckers  
Christine Donovan

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 Diane and Michael Ervin  
 Suzan Fete -  
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   works  
 Matthew Ford  
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   Gaceta  
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 Mary T. Schneider  
 Elizabeth Schraft  
 Jamie Seagren  
 Sharon Seeder

**\$100 - 249**

Anonymous (3)  
 Jonathan Abarbanel  
 Sue Abramis

**\$100 - 249 (cont)**

Sandy Shinner and Jerry Wilson  
 Eva Silverman and Chuck Kite  
 Trisha Hooper and Eric Slater  
 Estelle Spector  
 Stacie Spindler Elizabeth Schraft  
 Jamie Seagren  
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 Anne Sundberg  
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 Georgette and Zoe Verdin  
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 Shelley Ziacik

**up to \$99**

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 Laurie Barretto  
 Tara Batty  
 Joy Borgardt  
 Linda Bubon  
 Dawn Burt  
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 Jessica Carravallah  
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 Nathan Cohen  
 Rachel Combs  
 Deborah Cousino  
 Mary-Terese Cozzola  
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 Julieanne Ehre  
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 Kirsten Fitzgerald  
 Debra Flanigan  
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 Ann Gifford  
 Hallie Gordon  
 Diane Gregg  
 Darlene and Ray Grossman  
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 Michael Hammerman  
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 Fr. Jim Heneghan  
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 Hannah Horwick  
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 Caitlin McGlone and Eric Koop  
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 Monica Kowalski  
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 Teresa LaGamba  
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 Allie Leonard  
 Ruth Lipschutz  
 Marilyn Litt  
 Nikki Lively  
 Will Liverman  
 Lucia Lombardi  
 Judith Lord  
 Jim Lucas  
 Sylvia Maconaghy  
 Meredith and Andrew Mallen  
 Adam Marzolf  
 Vanessa Harty Marzolf  
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 Peter Moore  
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 Laura Mueller  
 Robert and Judith Mueller  
 Stephanie Niro  
 Karen O'Connor  
 Christine Painter  
 Michelle Paul  
 Lucas Pawloski



### **up to \$99 (cont)**

Alison Paul and  
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Kelsey Rice  
Isabel Rivera  
Peggy Roeder  
Mickie Paskal  
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Courtney Williams  
Diane Wollney  
Nancy Woodruff  
Kelly Woods  
Tyler Wurst  
Gabby Yates  
Eric Young  
Keith and Mary  
Chase-Ziolek



### **What is a Riv Pass?**

- Riv Pass is our version of a subscription - formerly called Flex Pass.
- Each Riv Pass Holder may attend main stage productions (preview or regular run) as often as they like, as well as enjoy invitations to special events.
- Let us know you're coming and we'll save a seat for you! Or just stop by and any free seat is yours (subject to availability.) You'll also be invited to exclusive readings and other behind-the-scenes events throughout the year.
- Riv Pass is valid for 1 year and is not transferable. Riv Passes may be purchased as gifts - please just let us know who the user will be.
- Riv Pass costs \$95.

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## IN-KIND SPONSORS

Rivendell is grateful to receive in-kind support throughout the year from many individuals, local businesses, and other nonprofits. Below are in-kind donors with gifts estimated over \$500.

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Lagunitas Brewing Company  
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IncorporatedRR4 Catering  
Spectrum Creative Solutions  
Terry Touhy

### THE SHOW GOES ON AT RAVEN THEATRE

Come see the Chicago premiere of **THE LUCKIEST**, featuring Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's Artistic Director **Tara Mallen**, coming to Raven Theatre this spring!

Tickets and info at [raventheatre.com](http://raventheatre.com)

  
**THE LUCKIEST**  
BY MELISSA ROSS  
DIRECTED BY CODY ESTLE  
MAY 4 - JUNE 19, 2022





**RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE IS TRULY GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT FROM THESE ORGANIZATIONS, ENABLING US TO ELEVATE THE LIVES OF WOMEN THROUGH THE POWER OF THEATRE.**



**PAUL M. ANGELL**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION



**MacArthur**  
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Supported by The MacArthur Funds  
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# SPAY

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**MARCH 22, MARCH 29, APRIL 4,  
APRIL 11- 1:30PM**

### **RIVENDELL READS: SELECTIONS FROM OUR LIL LIBRARY!**

Hear some of what is in our little library, featuring Rivendell's own co-artistic director Denise Yvette Serna! Live on our Instagram @rivendelltheatre

### **MARCH 26 PERFORMANCE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

Ticket holders with children under 13 years old are invited to skip the sitter and drop off their youngster at our (next door!) rehearsal space to spend the evening engaging in creative play!



### **MARCH 28 VOLUNTEER EVEN, ON BEHALF OF THE HEALTH OUTREACH BUS - SOUTH SHORE**

Join us at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble on Monday, March 28th for a time of coordinated effort to uplift and care for our fellow Chicagoans. We will be assembling an evening's worth of sack suppers for the South Shore Stop of the Health Outreach Bus. The Night Ministry's specially designed Health Outreach Bus features a fully equipped nurse's office and brings basic medical care and a sense of community to individuals and families six days per week in diverse, underserved areas of Chicago. The majority of people who visit the Health Outreach Bus have either not eaten anything or had enough to eat when they receive a meal at the Bus. Email [denise@rivendelltheatre.org](mailto:denise@rivendelltheatre.org) for more info!

### **APRIL 4 - 7:00PM POP!: AN INTIMATE STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE**

Join us for an evening of intimate art and storytelling! An exploration of motherhood featuring Rivendell Ensemble Members!

