Presents

SEX With STRANGERS

By Laura Eason

October 20-November 12, 2017

Directed by Mallory Metoxen

Stage Manager ......................................................... Martinque M. Barthel*
Scenic Design ......................................................... Sarah E. Ross~
Props Design ......................................................... Melissa Centgraf
Lighting Design .................................................... Marisa Abbott
Sound Design ......................................................... Megan Henninger~
Costume Design ..................................................... Kristina Sneshkoff
Intimacy Design ...................................................... Christopher Elst
Intimacy Consultant .................................................... Tonia Sina
Technical Director ................................................... Anthony Lyons

There will be one 10-minute intermission

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CAST

OLIVIA ................................................................. Marti Gobel*
ETHAN ................................................................. Nick Narcisi

*Appearing through an Agreement between Renaissance Theaterworks and Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

~Member of United Scenic Artists

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“SEX WITH STRANGERS” was developed through Steppenwolf Theatre Company’s New Play Initiative, was presented as part of its First Look Festival of New Work and the world premiere was produced by Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, IL; Martha Lavey, Artistic Director and David Hawkanson, Executive Director.

SEX WITH STRANGERS is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

“Sometimes the greatest relationships are the ones you never expected to be in. The ones that sweep you off your feet and challenge every view you’ve ever had.”

– Unknown Author

BIOGRAPHIES

Laura Eason (Playwright) Laura is a screenwriter and playwright. She is best known for four seasons on the Netflix drama, “House of Cards” (WGA Nomination for Outstanding Writing in a Drama Series, Emmy Nomination for Drama Series) and her more than twenty produced plays and adaptations. They include SEX WITH STRANGERS (Second Stage, New York; Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago; Hampstead Theatre, London; Sydney Theatre, AU; Blackwing Productions, Buenos Aires, AR; one of the most produced plays in the U.S. in ‘14-’17 seasons with over fifty separate productions) and Jules Verne’s, AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (director of world premiere at Lookingglass Theatre, Chicago; Baltimore Centerstage; KC Rep; St. James Theater, London, Royal Exchange, Manchester; New Vic, Stoke; 18 City UK Tour including London’s Cadogan Hall in 2017) among many others. Laura is a long-time Ensemble Member and the former Artistic Director of Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago (2011 Regional Theatre Tony Award). She is a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Television Academy, WGAE, AEA, SAG, SDC and ASCAP. Laura is an alumna of Northwestern University, Piven Theatre Workshop and the WP Playwrights Lab. A fourth generation Chicagoan, she now lives in Brooklyn with her husband, actor Erik Lochtefeld, and their daughter.

Mallory Metoxen (Director) Mallory is a freelance director dedicated to working with playwrights, developing new works, and narrowing the gender parity gap in theatre. She spearheaded and continues to run, refine, and expand Br!NK; RTW’s play development series for Midwestern woman playwrights. Mallory Co-Directed LUCKY NUMBERS by 2014 Br!NK playwright Gwendolyn Rice, which RTW took to the Samuel French OOB Festival in NYC and the inaugural MKE Fringe Festival. Favorite directing credits include THE UNDERSTUDY and THE DROWNING GIRLS (Renaissance Theaterworks); THESE SHINING LIVES (Umbrella Group); THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MAN-IN-THE-MOON MARIGOLDS (Splinter Group); and new works for Br!NK workshops and readings including PARTS OF SPEECH by Janet Burroway, THE HALL OF FINAL RUIN by Kelly McBurnette-Andronicos, TEN THOUSAND MOONS FROM HERE by Kathleen Allison Johnson & Gail Sterkel, and ANNIE JUMP AND THE LIBRARY OF HEAVEN by Reina Hardy.

Martinque M. Barthel* (Stage Manager) Martinique is from Madison, WI and is thrilled to be making her Milwaukee debut with Renaissance Theaterworks. Some favorite stage management credits include SPAMALOT, ASSASSIANS, KISS ME, KATE, and A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC at Four Seasons Theatre; THE BED: A THEATRE LILA INVENTION at Theatre LILA; and THE MOJO
AND THE SAYSO at Theatre LILA/Bronzeville Arts Ensemble; CHANGE YOUR MIND, CHANGE THE WORLD (2012) and THE WORLD WE MAKE (2016) panel discussions with His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama; THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN VARSI TY BAND SHOW (2015-2017); and PERFORMING THE JEWISH ARCHIVE a global event spearheaded by the University of Leeds in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Martie is also an Artistic Associate and the Production Manager for Theatre LILA.

Nick Narcisi (Ethan)
Nick is ecstatic to make his Renaissance Theaterworks debut. Nick is an actor based in Milwaukee with a BFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He recently finished dancing around a cold, empty warehouse as Sam/Itchy in MR. BURNS, A POST ELECTRIC PLAY with Luminous Theatre. He has also worked with the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, the Great River Shakespeare Festival, Theater RED, Theatre Lila, Truepenny Theatre, and Riverside Theatre in the Park (Iowa City). After SEX WITH STRANGERS, Nick will be heading to Madison to perform TUCK EVERLASTING with the Children’s Theatre of Madison. He would like to give a special thanks to KMC for her love and support. For more information visit www.NickNarcisi.com.

Sarah E. Ross~ (Set Designer) Sarah returns to Renaissance Theaterworks after designing scenery for THE DROWNING GIRLS last season which earned a Footlights Performing Arts Award nomination for best scenic design. Recently Sarah joined the faculty at University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. Prior to moving to Stevens Point, Sarah was a Chicago-based freelance scenic, properties and puppets designer working

Marti Gobel* (Olivia)
Marti is a locally based actor, director and teaching artist. Always honored to work with the Renaissance women, Ms. Gobel fondly remembers acting in past productions of THE PERSIANS, CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY (A Collaboration with UPROOTED Theatre), NEAT, STILL AND THE VIOLET HOUR, as well as directing THE BALLAD OF EMMETT TILL. Ms. Gobel currently serves as Education Coordinator & Resident Teaching Artist for Renaissance Theaterworks and continues to speak publicly on the need for diversity in the performance arts. Marti is represented by Jennifer’s Talent (Milwaukee) and Paonessa Talent (Chicago). She hopes you enjoy the show.
with American Blues Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Marriot Theater Lincolnshire, Paramount Theater, Shattered Globe, The Joffrey Ballet, The Second City, Theater Wit, BoHo Theatre, Writers' Theatre, Theater at the Center, Peninsula Players Theater and others. She is the recipient of two Jeff Awards for her designs. She is a proud ensemble member with American Blues Theater and an active member of the international Society of Properties Artisans Managers (SPAM). She is a member of Local USA 829.

Melissa Centgraf (Prop Designer)
Melissa is thrilled to be collaborating with Renaissance Theaterworks for the first time. Her design work includes FALLEN ANGELS, SLOWGIRL, LOVE STORIES, JEEVES TAKES A BOW, THE TRAIN DRIVER, and THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED) [REVISED] at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. She also spent seven years as a Props Artisan at Milwaukee Repertory Theater as well as a season as a Costume Craft Artisan at Utah Shakespeare Festival. When not propping for theater, Melissa can be found decorating restaurants, leading Girl Scouts, managing a team for Destination Imagination, traveling, or playing hockey. Thanks to my family, Mark, Cecilia and Bridget, for all your support!

Marisa Abbott (Lighting Designer)
Marisa is thrilled to be working on her first production with Renaissance Theaterworks. Marisa works as a freelance Lighting Designer, Electrician, and Scenic Artist around the Milwaukee area. Some recent design credits include VICTORY FOR VICTORIA (Milwaukee Opera Theatre); ANIMAL FARM and TXT U L8R (First Stage); MARY POPPINS (Divine Savior Holy Angels High School); SWEENEY TODD as Assistant Lighting Designer (Skylight Music Theatre); YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL as Scenic Charge (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre); ARTIFACTS (Wild Space Dance Company); SINGIN’ IN THE RAIN, LION KING JR., and SHREK JR. (Children’s Theatre of Madison); and SOUTH PACIFIC (Fireside Dinner Theatre). http://marisaeabbott.wixsite.com/marisaabbottdesign.

Megan B. Henninger~ (Sound Design)
Megan is thrilled to return to Renaissance Theaterworks! She is a Milwaukee-based designer and has served as designer and assistant designer on shows large and small. Favorite designs include: THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY (Peninsula Players); SWEENEY TODD (Skylight Music Theatre); A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, HANDS ON A HARDBODY (Williams Street Rep); RRRED (NYMF); 42ND STREET (TOTS tour); THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES (Fordham University); and TURN OF THE SCREW (Lyric Opera, Kansas City). Assistant

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**Kristina Sneshkoff (Costume Design)**
Kristina is happy to return to Renaissance Theaterworks for her second show! Her regional design credits include Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Forward Theater Co., McLeod Summer Playhouse, Ivoryton Playhouse, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Barrington Stage Co, Two River Theatre Co., Seaside REP, Florida Studio Theatre, Asolo REP, Opera New Jersey, Ballet Nouveau Colorado, Rutgers University, Monmouth University, Princeton University, Western CT State University, North Park University. New York credits include The Gallery Players, Stella Adler Acting Studio, The Looking Glass Theater, and Orange Hanky Productions. Her upcoming work can be seen at Children’s Theater of Madison. She is currently serving as the Assistant Professor of Costume Design and Technology at UW Stevens Point. She received her MFA in Costume Design at Florida State University. 

**www.kristinasneshkoff.com**

**Christopher Elst (Intimacy Design)**
A Certified Teacher and Secretary of the Governing Body with the Society of American Fight Directors, an Associate Instructor with Dueling Arts International, and one-half of the dynamic duo behind Milwaukee's Theater RED, Christopher has performed, directed, and designed violence and intimacy across the country, including Finger Lakes Music Theatre Festival, Ogunquit Playhouse, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, and The Alchemist Theatre. He thanks his wife, Marcee, for tolerating late nights and joint locks. To learn more about intimacy design, visit https://www.intimacydirectorsinternational.com/

**Tonia Sina (Intimacy Consultant)**
Tonia is currently the Intimacy Choreographer for the production of THE BAKKHAI at the Stratford Festival, as well as an international sexual harassment prevention advisor, Intimacy Director, Choreographer, and workshop teacher. Originally from Chicago, she is currently waiting for a kidney transplant while writing her book at home in Oklahoma City. Tonia has been specializing in Intimacy for the Stage and Sexual Harassment in the industry since she began research for her thesis in 2004. Tonia is the founder of Intimacy Directors International whose goal is to make the theatre industry safer and more professional when handling scenes containing sexual content. Also a director, actress, playwright, model, and former movement professor, Tonia is a double kidney transplant recipient and rare and chronic disease patient advocate and national motivational speaker.

**Anthony Lyons (Technical Director)**
This season marks Anthony's eleventh year as Technical Director for Renaissance Theaterworks. In all, he has worked in various capacities on well over thirty Renaissance productions over the last twenty years. Past credits include: light board operator for IMAGINING BRAD and TALKING WITH; Master electrician for SYRINGA TREE (remount), SYNCOPATION, and FULL GALLOP (second mounting). Anthony is also Technical Director for Wild Space Dance Company and Luminous Theatre. Anthony has worked for Alverno Presents (R.I.P.), Skylight Music Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, and Bialystock & Bloom (R.I.P). In a parallel universe, Anthony is a partner in a small custom carpentry firm.
Suzan Fete (Artistic Director) A graduate of University of Illinois, Suzan co-founded Renaissance Theaterworks in 1993. Favorite Renaissance Theaterworks projects include: directing TOPDOG/UNDERDOG, THE SHAPE OF THINGS, BLACKBIRD and THE ROAD TO MECCA, touring NEAT to Port Elizabeth South Africa in 2013 and finishing as a finalist with LUCKY NUMBERS in the Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival, 2015. She is especially proud that RTW won the prestigious 50/50 in 2020 International Applause Award for the 2015-16 season. The Applause Award is given to theaters in recognition of their commitment to women playwrights. Suzan lives happily in Wauwatosa with her husband Jeff.

Julie Swenson* (Producing Director) Julie became Renaissance Theaterworks’ Producing Director in 2001 having served on the Board of Directors since 1997. She received a BA in theatre from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, IL. She became a proud member of the Actors’ Equity Association in 1986 while working in New York City.

Lisa Rasmussen (Development Director) Lisa started as Renaissance Theaterworks’ Development Director with excitement in the summer of 2008. Recent experience includes stage management for ComedySportz-Milwaukee and more than five years in marketing. Lisa received her BA in Theater and Psychology from Cardinal Stritch University in 2003. Lisa is a member of The Association of Fundraising Professionals. She loves living in Bay View with husband Jake and daughter Anna.

Izetta Rees (Marketing Director) Izetta holds a BA in Theater with Minors in Art and Communication Arts from Cardinal Stritch University. This is her 5th season with Renaissance Theaterworks (RTW), having been promoted to Marketing Director in Spring of 2017. In addition to her work at RTW, Izetta is a local actor and the Costume Designer for UW-Rock County’s Theatre Department. She lives happily in Mukwonago with her supportive husband, Trevor.

Bailey Wegner (Production Manager) Bailey joins Renaissance Theaterworks as Production Manager following her recent role as Stage Manager for the Br!NK New Play Festival. She has worked with Milwaukee Chamber Theatre as a Stage Manager for Young Playwrights Festival, and an Assistant Stage Manager for THE FEW. Her UW-Milwaukee credits include TRANSLATIONS, DIDO & AENEAS, and DAMN YANKEES. In addition, she has also completed a practicum with Theatre Bonn, Germany. She has a BFA in Theatre from UW-Milwaukee.
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Director .........................................................................................................................Mallory Metoxen
Stage Manager .............................................................................................................Martinque Barthel*
Scenic Design ................................................................................................................Sarah E. Ross~
Props Design ................................................................................................................Melissa Centgraf
Lighting Design ............................................................................................................Marisa Abbott
Sound Design ................................................................................................................Megan Henninger~
Costume Design ...........................................................................................................Kristina Sneshkoff
Intimacy Design ...........................................................................................................Christopher Elst
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Master Electrician ..........................................................................................................Colin Gawronki
Head House Manager .................................................................................................Amanda Schumacher
House Managers ..........................................................................................................Libby Amato, Izetta Rees, Lisa Rasmussen, Mallory Metoxen

*Appearing through an Agreement between Renaissance Theaterworks and Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States
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Box Office Weekend Supervisor ..................................................................................Indalecio Valentin
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Custodian ......................................................................................................................Paul Kaishian

**SPECIAL THANKS**

JoAnne & Nick Anton, Amanda Ngoho Reavey, Woodland Patterns, Timothy Linn, Joel Penegor, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Jennifer Rupp, Wisconsin Romance Writers of America, Red Oak Writing, Burke Candy, Jason Fassl, Footlights, Audience Development Committee, Traveling Lemur Productions, LLC, Ross E. Zentner, Troy Freund
I met Julie Swenson for the first time in 1996, when she came in to audition for ZARA SPOOK AND OTHER LURES. I saw right away that she was beautiful, talented and funny.

We cast her in ZARA SPOOK and she was great, but at that time I had no idea she would go on to play a much more important and pivotal role in my life and in the life of Renaissance Theaterworks.

We had a lot in common, we were both from the Chicago area, we were both married to engineers, and we both had young children – rambunctious boys still in diapers.

After ZARA SPOOK closed, Julie and I - and the other RTW Co-Founders: Jennifer Rupp and Marie Kohler - became close friends. Julie joined the RTW Board and soon became an important part of the organization. RTW was a fledgling company then, we had one part-time employee and the artistic staff was not paid. By 2001, RTW was poised to hire our first full-time employee – a Producing Director. All summer we interviewed perspective candidates and there were some great people but no one was exactly right.

Until one day Julie called me and said, “Hey, what if I did it?” “Are you serious?” I asked “You would be awesome, but it’s a lot of work for little money.” “Yeah,” she answered, “But boy, would we have fun!” And she was certainly right about that!

Over the last sixteen years, we worked together to grow our theater. We produced many excellent shows, went on trips, read plays, ate lots of great meals and watched our kids grow up.

Julie has been essential to RTW’s success and growth. She is moving on now and there are great things in her future. I will miss her intensely, but we will stay in touch! I plan to call her often for support and advice. God speed my dear friend and good luck on your new adventure!

-Suzan
The mission of Renaissance Theaterworks is to create moving theatre connects with our shared sense of being human. We are dedicated to promoting women’s work onstage and off. Renaissance Theaterworks was founded in 1993 by Suzan Fete, Marie Kohler, Raeleen McMillion, Jennifer Rupp, and Michele Traband.

Bill Clinton began his first term as President, Microsoft launched Windows, Jurassic Park was number one at the box office and five women sat around a kitchen table and created Renaissance Theaterworks. We wanted to produce terrific plays with complex, meaty, “beyond ingénue” roles for women and to provide many other professional opportunities for women, too – onstage and off. Twenty-five years later, our creation, Renaissance Theaterworks has done that…and so much more.

Since 1993, RTW has produced over 100 full productions and staged-readings. Among these are nine original works by Wisconsin playwrights, seven World Premieres and one North American Premiere. We have introduced Milwaukee audiences to the work of many notable award-winning playwrights: Suzan Lori Parks, Neil LaBute and Rebecca Gilman. We have told many women’s stories and provided opportunities for over 700 theater professionals 75% of these have been women.

Renaissance Theaterworks has come a long way since 1993, but the mission and vision born at that kitchen table are still as vibrant and ambitious 25 years later. Yay us!

This show was fantastic! All my friends should come see! #theatre #love #greatshow

Awesome recommendation. Will purchase tickets asap! #lovetheatre #footlights
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Renaissance Theaterworks is a member of Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization of non-profit professional theaters, and of Theatre Wisconsin, UPAF, The Historic Third Ward Association and Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee.

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Each year, more than 30,000 individuals, corporations and foundations in greater Milwaukee annually support the UPAF annual campaign, making it one of the nation’s largest united arts funds. In addition to raising and allocation operating funds, UPAF is enhancing its value to the community, donors and performing arts by serving as a community wide resource for developing the excellence, reputation and impact of our performing arts.

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