Br!NK New Play Festival

Presents the Fifth Annual

July 31 – August 5, 2018

Showcasing the work of Midwestern women playwrights

THE SUREST POISON
By Kristin Idaszak
Directed by Laura Gray
Dramaturgy by Amanda Schumacher
Stage Directions by Gabriella Ashlin

NUBIAN STORIES
By Nabra Nelson
Directed by Mallory Metoxen
Dramaturgy by Erika Kirkstein-Zastrow

Stage Manager: Bailey Wegner

Cast of THE SUREST POISON

Gettler...Jonathan Wainwright
Norris.........................John Kishline
Lipstick........................Sara Zientek
Chanteuse.....................Marti Gobel
Paesana........................Danielle Levings

Cast of NUBIAN STORIES

Nuba.................................Krystal Drake

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

Br!NK New Play Festival
YOUR OWN BACKSTAGE PASS
every day of the week

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MONDAY ARTS ANNOUNCEMENTS
WHAT’S TRENDING TUESDAY
WHO’S WHO WEDNESDAY
THROWBACK THURSDAY
FINAL CALL FRIDAY

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ABOUT Br!NK NEW PLAY FESTIVAL

Historically, it is difficult to get new plays produced, but that is especially true for women. Over the last 25 years the number of plays produced in the US that were written by women have vacillated between 12% and 17%. In 1908/09, only 12.8% of the productions on Broadway were written by women. Some 100 years later, the percentage of major New York productions written by women are around 12.6%. Br!NK is designed to help offset these percentages by supporting the development of these great plays by women.

Each year, Renaissance Theaterworks puts a call out for Midwestern women playwrights to submit their plays. Two playwrights are selected to receive the Br!NK Residency Award to develop and advance their work.

The Br!NK Resident Playwrights workshop their play with a director, full cast, and dramaturg; a team dedicated to researching and considering the play from every angle. Following the workshop week, the plays are presented as staged-readings for the public at the week-long Br!NK New Play Festival where the workshopping continues with audience feedback!

Our audience members play a vital role in the development process. Stick around after the reading for a talkback to help the Br!NK Resident Playwrights refine their work and take their scripts to the next level.

Thank you for being a part of a community of people passionate about supporting and enjoying new theatrical works. Enjoy the festival!

ABOUT THE SUREST POISON, FROM PLAYWRIGHT KRISTIN IDASZAK

Ensemble Studio Theatre and the Sloan Foundation commissioned me to write this play. I started off knowing two things: there was going to be a murder mystery, and it was going to be solved by two characters inspired by history, toxicologist Alexander Gettler and journalist/flapper Lois Long. As I dug into the research, I learned that during the 1920s, the federal government hired chemists to make denatured alcohol as deadly as possible, with the intention to kill individuals who drank this bootlegged liquor. The rational was that only the wrong kind of Americans consumed alcohol. However, wealthy Americans (white, often Protestant) were able to afford imported and therefore potable alcohol. This government policy of adding additional poisons to industrial alcohol was barely disguised xenophobia, racism, and classism.

That discovery shaped the play. For me, the theatrical vocabulary of murder mystery comedies such as Dashiell Hammett’s THE THIN MAN was a way of tackling these darker social and political issues that feel exceedingly timely and relevant to our world today.
BIOGRAPHIES – THE SUREST POISON

Kristin Idaszak (Resident Playwright)
Kristin, a two-time Playwrights’ Center Jerome Fellow, has received the Kennedy Center’s Paula Vogel Playwriting Award and the Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award. Her play ANOTHER JUNGLE (Relentless Award Honorable Mention) received its world premiere with Cloudgate Theatre and The Syndicate in April 2018. She is the Shank Playwright in Residence at the Goodman Theatre and a member of the 2017-2018 Goodman Playwrights Unit. Currently she is working on a commission from Ensemble Studio Theatre/The Sloan Foundation. Previously, Kristin served as Associate Artistic Director/Literary Manager of Caffeine Theatre and Associate Artistic Director of Collaboraction. MFA: UC San Diego. kristinidaszak.com

Laura Gray (Director)
Having participated in the Br!NK New Play Festival the past two years as an actor, Laura is thrilled to see what the view is like on the other side of the music stand. Most recent Renaissance Theaterworks appearance was LUNA GALE and she is looking forward to next season’s CHRISTMAS IN BABYLON with Milwaukee Chamber Theatre.

Amanda Schumacher (Dramaturg)
Amanda is thrilled to return to the Br!NK New Play Festival after serving as dramaturg in 2017 for ANNIE JUMP AND THE LIBRARY OF HEAVEN (now part of Renaissance Theaterworks’ RTW) upcoming 2018-2019 season! Amanda also serves on RTW’s Play Selection Advisory Committee and as their Head House Manager throughout each season.

Jonathan Wainwright (Gettler)
Jonathan is very excited to be a part of the Br!NK New Play Festival series, working on such an interesting script, and being directed by his wife Laura for the first time (in public). He considers it an honor to work with a company such as Renaissance Theaterworks to continue bringing new works to the stage.

John Kishline (Norris)
John has been acting, writing, directing, and designing professional theatre all his adult life on three continents. He was a founding member of Milwaukee’s Theatre X and won an OBIE a while back. He’s also done films and TV. John lives in Whitefish Bay with his wife Deborah Clifton.

Sara Zientek (Lipstick)
Sara is thrilled to be working with Renaissance Theaterworks! She was last seen as The Cat in THE CAT IN THE HAT at First Stage. Favorite past shows include: CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG (Boris), LOBBY HERO (Dawn), SLOWGIRL (Becky), THE TAMING (Bianca) and TWAS’ THE MONTH BEFORE CHRISTMAS (Mary). She received her BA in acting from UW-Milwaukee. You can see Sara next in CHRISTMAS IN BABYLON at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. A big thank you to her family, friends and teachers. www.sarazientek.com
Marti Gobel (Chanteuse)
Marti is a locally based actor, director and teaching artist. 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, SEX WITH STRANGERS, as well as directing THE BALLAD OF EMMETT TILL and NATIVE GARDENS (upcoming). Ms. Gobel currently serves as Education Coordinator & Resident Teaching Artist for Renaissance Theaterworks.

Danielle Levings (Paesana)
Danielle is delighted to be a part of this year’s BrINK New Play Festival. She was last seen at Renaissance Theaterworks in A ROBOT, A CLOWN AND A TURBAN and END OF THE ROAD during the inaugural BrINK BrIFEs during the 2017 BrINK New Play Festival. Danielle has recently worked with Optimist Theatre, Kohl’s Wild Theater, Bard and Bourbon, and as a Lead Teacher with First Stage’s Theater in Education and Academy.

Gabriella Ashlin (Stage Directions)
Gabriella is excited to return to Renaissance Theaterworks! She is currently performing at Kohl’s Wild Theatre for the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Her most recent role was with Renaissance Theaterworks in TOP GIRLS (U/S Dull Gret, Jeanine). Her acting credits from UW-Parkside include ANGELS IN AMERICA (Harper Pitt), A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (Eunice Hubbell), and CHRISTMAS CAROL: ON THE AIR (Belle, Ensemble).
My mother began writing down the folktales that she grew up with several years ago. After her village was flooded when she was a child by the construction of the Aswan High Dam and her family and many other Nubian families were displaced to Cairo, she realized that these stories that had been passed down solely through oral tradition may actually disappear now that her village had disappeared. She would write them and I would edit them (for better English-language adaptation). I had these stories stored on my computer for a long time, glad that they were finally written down but unsure what to do with them.

A couple years ago, I went through a period of artistic reflection in which I was searching for a topic of passion which would fuel me. I found that my own Nubian culture’s unique and tragic history was a subject of perhaps disproportionate anger and sadness for me – it felt almost as though I was born having already lost a piece of myself under Lake Nasser, the lake that drown my mother’s village. I resolved to write about Nubia.

That’s when the idea to revive the folkloric stories came to me. I realized that they needed to be heard again, told to an audience in the way that they had been in the past. I have also always thought that the stories that my mom told me about her own life were almost unbelievably fantastical – at least as much as the traditional folktales she told me as a child. The result is this play.

**BIOGRAPHIES – NUBIAN STORIES**

**Nabra Nelson** *(Resident Playwright)*

Nabra is from California, Egypt, and now Milwaukee. She is the Community Engagement Associate at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and has worked with Renaissance Theaterworks as a dramaturg for the Br!NK New Play Festival two summers in a row, and recently as the director of the Renaissance Theaterworks Groundworks production of BLISS (OR EMILY POST IS DEAD!). She has worked locally as a director and deviser at UW-Milwaukee, The Battery Factory, Milwaukee Rep’s Rep Lab, American Players Theatre’s Winter Words, and Ten Chimneys. Nationally, she has worked at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and Santa Cruz Shakespeare. Her short plays have been performed by the Multicultural Drama Company and Women’s Ensemble Theater Troupe in Santa Barbara, and

**Mallory Metoxen** *(Director)*

Mallory is Renaissance Theaterworks’ Artistic Associate and Director of New Play Development as well as 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 the Br!NK New Play Festival; Renaissance Theaterworks’ (RTW) play development series for Midwestern women 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. Br!NK
directing credits include 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 which RTW will fully produce in their 2018-2019 Season. Mallory will begin pursuing an MFA in Directing at DePaul University in Fall of 2018.

**Erika Kirkstein-Zastrow (Dramaturg)**
Erika holds a BFA in Theater-Acting and is currently pursuing an MA in Literature and Cultural Theory from UW-Milwaukee. She has served as a dramaturg for Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, The World’s Stage Theatre Company, and UW-Milwaukee’s Theatre Department. Erika is also The World’s Stage Theatre Company’s Artistic Associate. As a Milwaukee resident and artist, she is excited to work with Renaissance Theaterworks on the Br!NK New Play Festival.

**Krystal Drake (Nuba)**
Krystal is excited to be working with Renaissance Theaterworks! A Milwaukee native, Krystal cultivated her craft at UW-Milwaukee where she earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Theatre. Past theatre credits include: BLACK NATIVITY at Black Arts MKE & Marcus Center for the Performing Arts; THE BED at Theater LILA; and THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE at Children’s Theater of Madison. Krystal is grateful for this unique opportunity.

**Bailey Wegner (Stage Manager)**
Bailey has SM/ASM’d for UW-Milwaukee, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Kohl’s Wild Theater, and Renaissance Theaterworks. Bailey has a BFA in Theatre from UW-Milwaukee. She serves as Production Manager at Renaissance Theaterworks.

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SUBMIT YOUR WORK!

All women playwrights who currently live in the Midwest are strongly encouraged to submit to Br!NK

www.r-t-w.com/br!nk-festival
BrINK TOURING PARTNERS

THE BrINK NEW PLAY FESTIVAL WEEKEND

BrINK New Play Festival Weekend at the Broadway Theatre Center
August 4 – 5, 2018

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, August 4
11:00 – 1:00 PM Playwriting Lab with Kristin Idaszak
2:30 PM BrINK Br!ef Performance
7:00 PM BrINK Resident Play Staged-Reading of THE SUREST POISON by Kristin Idaszak

Sunday, August 5
11:00 – 1:00 PM Playwriting Lab with Jennifer Dobby
2:30 PM BrINK Br!ef Performance
7:00 PM BrINK Resident Play Staged-Reading of NUBIAN STORIES by Nabra Nelson

For a full BrINK New Play Festival calendar, including touring locations, please visit www.r-t-w.com/brink-festival

THE BrINK BR!EFS 10-MINUTE PLAYS

The BrINK Br!ebs consist of six, 10-minute plays written by Midwestern women playwrights under the prompts, “Slow Down, Happiness is Trying to Catch You,” “Pictures of Parity,” & “Perseverance is Stubbornness with a Purpose.” From whimsical comedies to thought-provoking dramas, this sample platter of theater features stories about love, loss, ambition, friendship, disparity, equality, and so much more.

The 2018 BrINK Br!ebs Plays & Playwrights:

SAVIOR’S GRACE by Linive Redlin
THAT BEAUTIFUL NOTHING by Parker Sterling
ALL OF THE EVERYTHING by Alayna Barnes
END OF AN ERA by Kelly McBurnette-Andronicos
BODIES by Rachel Bykowski
JUNIPER FILES by Maria Pretzl

All six 10-minute plays will be featured at each performance over the BrINK New Play Festival Weekend.
GENERAL INFORMATION

For more than twenty-five years, Renaissance Theaterworks has been Milwaukee’s only professional theater company dedicated to improving gender parity in the arts. Founded in 1993 by Suzan Fete, Marie Kohler, Raeleen McMillion, Jennifer Rupp and Michele Traband, the mission of Renaissance Theaterworks is to create moving theater that connects with our shared sense of being human, dedicated to promoting the work of women onstage and off. For more information, visit www.r-t-w.com.

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