Br!NK New Play Festival

Presents the Sixth Annual

September 3-8, 2019

Showcasing the works of Midwestern women playwrights

‘RAIN ON FIRE
By Karen Saari
Directed by Libby Amato
Dramaturgy by Jessica Kahkoska

STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER
By Inna Tsyrlin
Directed by Samantha Martinson
Dramaturgy by Erika Kirkstein-Zastrow

Stage Manager: Bailey Wegner

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September 3-6, 2019

Br!NK New Play Festival Weekend
September 7 & 8, 2019
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Milwaukee Ballet, The Nutcracker, 2017, Marize Fumero, Photo by Mark Frohna;
First Stage, The Wiz, DiMonte Henning, Darrington Clark and Reese Parish, Photo by Paul Ruffolo;
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra, Photo by Ron Oshima
ABOUT Br!NK NEW PLAY FESTIVAL

Brink (brɪŋk) n. a critical point. On the verge.

Or…

A New Play Initiative, created in 2013 by Renaissance Theaterworks to encourage and support the work of women playwrights throughout the Midwest.

Why focus on women playwrights?

Women's Stories are critically underrepresented on the American Stage. It is a shocking fact that the percentage of female playwrights produced in the US has remained essentially unchanged for the past 100 years (12.8% in 1909 and 12.6% in 2009).

The absence of Women's Stories results in a chronic lack of employment opportunities for women in all areas of professional theatre. According to the US Department of Labor, women make up less than 25% of the professional theatre workforce.

Every season, RTW requests submissions from women playwrights in the Midwest. Two plays are then chosen to workshop and develop. The plays are presented as world premiere staged readings during our Br!NK New Play Festival.

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!

CAST OF ‘RAIN ON FIRE

Marie Peterson ................................................................. Madeline Wakley
Caleb Perterson ................................................................. Shayne Steliga
Nan Peterson ................................................................. Carrie Hitchcock
Eino Peterson ................................................................. James J Gallagher
Chuck Thomas ................................................................. Bryant Mason
Gloria Ramirez-Jones ........................................................ Rana Roman
Stage Directions ............................................................. Max Pink

CAST OF STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER

Aleksandra ................................................................. Rayne Kleinofen
Dimitri ................................................................. Sean Duncan
Zeverev ................................................................. Stephen Roselin
Vera ................................................................. Rae Paré
Maria ................................................................. Maggie Marks
Konstantin ................................................................. Indy Valentin
Irina ................................................................. Caroline Fossum
Ilya ................................................................. Graham Billings
Stage Directions ............................................................. Emily Elliott

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**ABOUT ‘RAIN ON FIRE’**

Marie, a failed musician, returns home to plan her pill addict mother Lorraine’s funeral. She discovers “Rain,” a closet poet, left a surprising final request for Marie to carry out with her cousin Caleb. They must compose a song out of one of Lorraine’s poems to perform at her funeral in this sometimes funny, sometimes painful look at the opiate crisis in Michigan’s north woods.

**ABOUT STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER**

Aleksandra, a 17-year-old political prisoner in a Soviet Gulag, joins the camp’s unlikely theatre troupe. Soon, she discovers the troupe is a scheme to make the world believe that she and the millions like her across the USSR don’t exist.

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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](http://www.r-t-w.com/br!nk-festival)
BIOGRAPHIES

Karen Saari
(Resident Playwright, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
Karen Saari’s IN A CLEARING premiered at Magnetic Theatre Company (Asheville, NC) in 2018 following development via Last Frontier Theatre Conference and Wisconsin Wrights New Play Festival and was an O’Neill Conference semi-finalist. Her one-acts have been performed across the country. Her comedy, BAD IN BED (A Fairy Tale), premiered with Acadiana Rep (Lafayette, LA) in 2018. She is a member of Dramatists Guild and Playwrights Center.

Libby Amato
(Director, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
Libby is excited and humbled to step into the role of director for this thoughtful and touching play, and to work with such a talented cast. Previously, she’s joined Renaissance as an actor and house manager. Many thanks to the women of Renaissance, and lots of love to Mom.

Madeline Wakley
(Marie Peterson, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
Madeline is thrilled to be working with RTW again after appearing in last year’s Br!NK Briefs. She was most recently seen in THE TEMPEST (Bard & Bourbon) and TO FALL IN LOVE (The Constructivists). She received her B.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and a degree in Classical Performance from LAMDA.

Shayne Steliga
(Caleb Peterson, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
This is Shayne’s first collaboration with Renaissance and he couldn’t be happier to work with this splendid group of artists. Earlier this year, Shayne portrayed Virgil in Milwaukee Chamber Theatre’s Young Playwrights Festival showcase (THE DIVINE KOMEDY) and also co-wrote and performed music for Off the Wall’s CALL ME ISHMAEL. Future projects include RUDDIGORE (OR THE WITCH’S CURSE) and EVITA, both with Skylight Music Theatre.

Carrie Hitchcock
(Nan Peterson, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
Carrie is pleased to come back to Renaissance Theaterworks for Br!NK! Theater credits include OUR TOWN (Professor Willard) at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, ANNE (Miss Hannigan) at Skylight Music Theatre, OUTSIDE MULLINGAR (Aoife) at Forward Theatre, VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE (Masha) at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, HOW TO WRITE A NEW BOOK FOR THE BIBLE (Mary Cain) at Next Act Theatre and LETTICE AND LOVAGE (Lotte Schoen) at Renaissance Theaterworks. Carrie has also appeared in the soon to be released film, COMING UP FOR AIR.

James J Gallagher
(Eino Peterson, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
Jim has acted for many Milwaukee theater companies over the last 20 years including Milwaukee Shakespeare, Theatre X, Windfall, Boulevard Theatre, Cornerstone Theatre and Comedy Sportz. He is also a director and has recently directed
numerous plays for Milwaukee Irish Arts that have performed in the United States, Canada and Ireland.

Bryant Mason
(Chuck Thomas, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
Milwaukee: Acacia, Bard & Bourbon, Milwaukee Entertainment Group.

Rána Roman
(Gloria Ramirez-Jones, ‘RAIN ON FIRE)
Rana Roman is a Milwaukee native and proud graduate of the Milwaukee H.S. of the Arts. Previous RTW credits include ENFRASCADA (Alicia), HALL OF FINAL RUIN (Dona Sebastiana), and AGNES OF GOD (Agnes). Next up, you can catch her in ON THE WINGS OF A MARIPOSA at First Stage. Rana is always excited to be a part of developing new works in our beautiful city.

Inna Tsyrlin (Resident Playwright, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Inna Tsyrlin received the Trisolini Graduate Fellowship (Ohio University) for STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND HAMMER, and the play is the 2020 Alliance/Kendeda Playwriting Competition finalist (Atlanta, GA). Her work has been presented in New York City at The Rising Sun Performance Company, Emerging Artists Theater, HB Playwrights Theatre, and Manhattan Repertory Theater.

Samantha Martinson
(Director, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Education Associate at Milwaukee Chamber Theater & Statera Arts Mentor/Mentee Regional Coordinator. Recent performances: SAVIOR’S GRACE (RTW, Br!NK Br!fs); RICHARD III, THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM (Bard & Bourbon); GHOSTS, YOU CAN’T TAKE IT WITH YOU (Windfall). Recent directing: TEMPEST (Bard & Bourbon), MISS LULU BETT (Voices Freed Reading Series) & TWELFTH NIGHT (Milwaukee Youth Theater). Upcoming: Assistant directing THE ROOMMATE (RTW). samanthamartinson.com

Erika Kirkstein-Zastrow (Dramaturg, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Erika holds a BFA in Theatre and an MA in English. She specializes in English Renaissance drama and new work. She has practiced dramaturgy and produced theatre for several years. Recent dramaturgical credits include NUBIAN STORIES (Renaissance Theaterworks); LOVE STORIES (intern, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre); THE CRUCIBLE (UWM Theatre Dept); GOING DARK: THE SHORT PLAYS OF SAMUEL BECKETT, BENT, THE DUTCHMAN (The World’s Stage Theatre Co.) ErikaKZ.com

Rayne Kleinofen
(Aleksandra, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Rayne is so excited to be a part of this year’s Br!NK selection with Renaissance Theaterworks. She was recently in THE TEMPEST (Miranda) at Bard & Bourbon and
IS IT NOW OR HAD IT EVER BEEN (Skylar) for Milwaukee Chamber Theatre’s Young Playwrights Festival.

Sean Duncan (Dimitri, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Acting credits include CHRIS-MESS at In Tandem Theater; ARSENIC AND OLD LACE at Milwaukee Entertainment Group; JULIUS CAESAR, RICHARD III at Bard & Bourbon; A CHRISTMAS CAROL at Children’s Theater of Madison; THE CARROL BURNETT SHOW at Timber Mill Theater LLC; BONNY ANNE BONNY at Theater RED.

Maggie Marks (Maria, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Maggie is thrilled to be joining Renaissance Theaterworks for the Br!NK Series. Her most recent credits include THE TEMPEST (Antonio) and RICHARD III (Elizabeth, Ely, Richmond) with Bard & Bourbon, and THE LAST CYCLIST (Lunatic 2) with Cardinal Stritch University. She is grateful for the support of her family.

Indy Valentin (Konstantin, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
IndalecioDeJesus Valentin was most recently seen as Man 1 in SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD with All In Productions. Past credits include Purcell’s DIDO & AENEAS (Aeneas), IF/THEEN (Ben), CINDERELLA (Prince Charming) and WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN (Taxi Driver).

Rae Paré (Vera, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Rae Elizabeth Paré is excited to be working with Renaissance Theaterworks for the first time! Other credits include: NINE THE MUSICAL, BONNY ANNE BONNY with Theater RED, DOC DANGER AND THE DANGER SQUAD with Milwaukee Opera Theatre, PRIDE AND PANCAKES with Milwaukee Chamber Theater, and ELLA ENCHANTED with First Stage.

Graham Billings (Ilya, STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Graham is a recent graduate of UW-Milwaukee’s Acting BFA, and excited to put his Russian Certificate to use for this production. Other credits include RUSSIAN TRANSPORT (Language & Dialect Coach) at Renaissance Theaterworks; 9 TO 5 (Josh), MAJOR BARBARA (Cusins), and A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY (Aleksey) at UW-Milwaukee.

Bailey Wegner (Stage Manager, ‘RAIN ON FIRE & STITCHED WITH A SICKLE AND A HAMMER)
Bailey joined Renaissance Theaterworks as Production Manager following her role as Stage Manager for the 2017 Br!NK New Play Festival. Milwaukee Chamber Theatre credits include ASM for THE FEW, SM for the Young Playwrights Festival, and Interim Production Manager. 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 University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.
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Development Manager .................................................................................................. Dana Dossett
Production Manager ....................................................................................................... Bailey Wegner

SPECIAL THANKS

RTW Play Selection Committee, Arts @ Large, UW-Whitewater, Woodland Pattern, UW-Parkside, Marcus Promotions’ Footlights, 88Nine Radio Milwaukee, NO Studios, & Milwaukee Chamber Theatre

ABOUT RENAISSANCE THEATERWORKS

Renaissance Theaterworks is Milwaukee’s only women-founded, women-run professional theater company. Dedicated to promoting the work of women onstage and off, Renaissance Theaterworks creates moving theater that connects with our shared sense of being human. Founded in 1993 by Suzan Fete, Marie Kohler, Raeleen McMillion, Jennifer Rupp, and Michele Traband, RTW is the nation’s second oldest theater company with a mission to promote gender parity. RTW produces thought-provoking, intimate theater in the Studio Theatre at the Broadway Theatre Center, making a move to a new performance space at Next Act Theatre beginning in Fall 2020. www.r-t-w.com

Renaissance Theaterworks is a member of the National New Play Network, Theater Wisconsin, Samuel French’s Playwrights Welcome, Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee, Visit Milwaukee, and the Historic Third Ward Association. They receive support from the United Performing Arts Fund, Brico Fund, CAMPAC, the Evinrude Foundation, The Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Richard & Ethel Herzfeld Foundation, Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, Milwaukee Arts Board, Sempercor Foundation, the Shubert Foundation, the Steigleder Charitable Trust, Wisconsin Arts Board, and private donors and foundations.

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2019-2020

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