Proudly present the World Premiere of

Laura and the Sea

An Unhappy Comedy

by Kate Tarker

Directed by Devon de Mayo

Performances begin October 25, 2019

2019 SEASON

Laura and the Sea was developed during a residency at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center’s National Playwrights Conference in 2016

Preston Whiteway
Executive Director

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Artistic Director

Laura and the Sea was developed at Vineyard Theatre in New York City

Dining Sponsor

www.RivendellTheatre.org
CAST (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Joe .......................................................................................................................................Jordan Arredondo
Annie ...................................................................................................................................Adithi Chandrashekar
Stan .................................................................................................................................................Alex Gillmor
Laura ......................................................................................................................................... Tara Mallen *
Mary ....................................................................................................................................... Paula Ramirez +
Jack ............................................................................................................................................ Mark Ulrich *+

The play runs approximately one hour and thirty minutes with no intermission.

TIME
Ode to 2011: This digital age.
Labor day weekend and some weeks thereafter.

PLACE
Manhattan and surrounding waters

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director and Movement Director ..................................................................................Devon de Mayo #
Production Stage Manager............................................................................................Lucia Lombardi *
Scenic Design...................................................................................................................... Courtney O’Neill ^
Projections Design.............................................................................................................Anthony Churchill
Assistant Lighting Design ..................................................................................................Nadya Naumaan
Lighting Design and Piano Accompaniment ..............................................................Heather Sparling
Sound Design ....................................................................................................................Hannah Foerschler
Costume Design .............................................................................................................. kClare McKellaston
Properties Design and Assistant Scenic Design .........................................................Jonathan Berg-Einhorn
Assistant Costume Design ...............................................................................................Courtney Michele
Production Manager .............................................................................................................. Catherine Allen
Violence Director ..............................................................................................................Rachel Flesher
Technical Director ............................................................................................................Evan Sposato
Script Supervisor ..................................................................................................................Zoe Johnson
Assistant Violence Director ...............................................................................................Ian Maryfeild
Assistant Director and Dramaturge .................................................................................. Gaby Sant’Anna #
Box Office Manager ........................................................................................................... Trisha Hooper +

RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE STAFF

Producing Artistic Director .................................................................................................Tara Mallen+
Managing Director ............................................................................................................Jackie Banks-Mahlum
Director of Audience Services and Business Manager ................................................. Trisha Hooper+
Marketing Director .............................................................................................................. Tanya Ward
Graphic Design .................................................................................................................Tony Churchill
Casting Director ..................................................................................................................Ashley Neal+
Artistic Associate & Outreach Coordinator .....................................................................Kristen Osborn
Development Consultant / Grant Writer ........................................................................... Catherine Painter
Public Relations ...................................................................................................................Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.

* Denotes member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional stage actors and managers; + Denotes member of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble; # denotes a member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical and labor union; ^ denotes a member of United Scenic Artists, The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
PLAYWRIGHT’S NOTE

The short version of my statement is:
DON’T JUMP.

Now that we’ve established that...

There’s a painting by Gerhard Richter that I love, and that I kept at the top of my Word document as I was writing this play. “Betty” is a hyper-detailed, photorealistic portrait of a blonde girl (actually the painter’s daughter)—but the portrait is only of the back of her head and her shoulders, as she turns away from us. We see this person up close, in incredible detail, and at the same time, we don’t see her at all. I’m fascinated by this conceal-while-you-reveal dynamic.

Working with people in an office can be very much like this. (Yes, I’ve done my stints at offices, including at two travel agencies in New York City.) We only catch glimmers of fractions of our co-workers. Often that’s all we can bear to see. And often, that’s all we want to share. We are there to work. We just happen to also sort of, kind of, be together. Sometimes for decades at a time.

This play asks questions about how we treat one another and the planet. It looks toward the future with a secret agenda of rooting us more deeply in the present. Various characters wonder if they could have done more to help Laura—and maybe they could have. But catching truthful glimpses of a depressed person can also be very hard. The more shame someone feels, the more they tend to put up walls.

I personally am no stranger to depressive episodes. I wrote this play out of a need to make sense of how my brain was working against me, even in the best of times. And I have come to understand it better, though it also sometimes feels like a never-ending puzzle. I think a depressed mind is a lot like the internet—a little too disembodied, unable to turn itself off, and trying to emotionally process all the information, large and small, all at once. Laura, like many a clever depressive, is a kind of court jester who speaks unvarnished truths. She sometimes sees things with sharp clarity. But other times, her lack of optimism (or generosity, or serotonin) deletes her sense of possibility. Most unjustly, depression is a corner you can think yourself into. But you absolutely can’t think your way back out: You have to swim.

In my mild-mannered, mainstream, backed-up-by-science opinion, we’ve thought ourselves into a corner as an entire species. I hope we chose to swim our way back out again.

Kate Tarker
Playwright

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We would also like to thank the 48th Ward Alderman Harry Osterman, State Representative Kelly Cassidy, the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce, and the Edgewater Chamber of Commerce and their staffs for their support of and generosity to the Edgewater community.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Jordan Arredondo (Joe) is thrilled to be making his Rivendell debut! His previous Chicago credits include: Much Ado About Nothing (Verges/Messenger) at OPFT, First Love is the Revolution (Basti) at Steep Theatre, American Jornalero (Marcelo) & Romeo and Juliet (Romeo) at Teatro Vista, Waiting For Godot (Lucky) at Tympanic Theatre, The Party House (Jake) at The Runaways Lab Theater. TV/Film Credit include: Chicago Fire, Killing Eleanor, Defer, Binx, and Tantalization. He graduated with his B.F.A in Acting from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Jordan is represented by Gray Talent Group.

Adithi Chandrashekar (Annie) is an actor and writer hailing from Chicago. Adithi’s solo performance piece Open Season is currently under development, and was originally written and produced as part of The Gift Theatre’s inaugural 4802 residency. Chicago credits: Dance Nation (Winter 2019, Steppenwolf Theater), Bull in a Shop (About Face Theatre), We’re Gonna Be Okay (American Theater Company), and Wit (The Hypocrites). TV credits include: NBC’s Chicago Med and ABC’s Betrayal. Adithi is a proud 2015 graduate of the School at Steppenwolf. She is represented by Stewart Talent Agency.

Alex Gillmor (Stan) is excited to be working with Devon de Mayo again and working with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble for the first time. Some of Alex’s favorite roles are: Mugsy in Dealers Choice, Bruce in Bang the Drum Slowly, The Man in The Vandal, and Dale in Parlour Song—all at Steep Theatre.

Tara Mallen (Laura) is an actor, director, producer and the Artistic Director at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Tara was most recently on stage in the Midwest premiere of The Cake by Bekah Brunstetter, for which she was honored with a 2018 Jeff Award for Performer in a Principal Role. Other recent credits include Sweat (Arena Stage); world premiere productions of Look, we are breathing, The Firebirds Take the Field, Rasheeda Speaking (Rivendell); and How Long Will I Cry: Stories of Youth Violence (Steppenwolf for Young Audiences). Tara received a Joseph Jefferson award for Supporting Actress for her work in WRENS as part of that production’s Jeff-winning ensemble. She was nominated the following year for Actress in a Principal Role for her work in My Simple City. Screen credits include Empire (Fox); Boss (Starz); Chicago Fire (NBC); Doubt (CBS/Sony Pictures pilot); Controversy (Fox Pilot); Chicago P.D. (NBC) and Sense8 (Netflix
Original series); Steven Soderbergh’s film Contagion and the upcoming feature Swing Shift starring Richard Jenkins. Tara co-conceived and directed the critically acclaimed world premiere of Women At War and directed the Jeff nominated Midwest premieres of The Electric Baby by Stefanie Zadravec, 26 Miles (in co-production with Teatro Vista); Fighting Words by Sunil Kuruvilla; Psalms of a Questionable Nature by Marisa Wegerzyn; and Elliot, a Soldier’s Fugue with Stageworks/Hudson in Hudson, New York. Tara is the recipient of a 2017 3Arts Award for her work as a Chicago theatre artist.

Paula Ramirez (Mary) is thrilled to be back at Rivendell, where she is an ensemble member and was last seen in WOMEN AT WAR. Originally from Venezuela, Paula has spent the last two years touring the country performing scripted and improvised material as a Sexual Assault Prevention Educator with Catharsis Productions. Other Chicago stage credits include Another Word for Beauty (Goodman Theatre; ensemble + u/s), Fefu and her Friends (Goodman Theatre/Rivendell Theatre as part of the Latino Theatre Festival), Heat Wave (CBD/Steppenwolf Garage), PUTAS!, Crossed, GL2010 and Gen Sex (Teatro Luna). Recent TV/Film credits include Mixtape (Netflix), Chicago Fire (NBC) and Brujos (OTV).

Mark Ulrich (Jack) is totally besotted with happiness to be back with his favorite theatre company in the universe, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, for Laura and the Sea. Mark has been a proud member of RTE for the past twelve seasons. Previous Rivendell credits as an actor include Silence, The Walls, Falling: A Wake, and American Wee Pie; and as director, Mary’s Wedding and Winter (co-directed by Megan Carney). Other Chicago area credits include Remy Bumppo, Steppenwolf, TimeLine, Goodman, The Raven, A Red Orchid, 16th Street, Silk Road Rising, Artistic Home, Northlight, and Writer’s Theatre.

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Kate Tarker (Playwright) Tarker’s plays include Thunderbodies (Soho Rep., NY Times Unforgettable Theater Moments of 2018), Dionysus Was Such a Nice Man (The Wilma, FoolsFURY), and Laura and the Sea. Her works have been developed across the country at The Lark, The Vineyard, Rattlestick, The Wilma, Ars Nova, NYTW, Magic Theatre, Cutting Ball, the Playwrights’ Center, Theatre503, and The O’Neill, among others. She is the recipient of a Jerome Fellowship, The Vineyard’s Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, the National Science Playwriting Award, Theater Masters’ Visionary Playwright Award, and a PWCenter/NET Ensemble Collaboration Grant. She has been featured twice on the Kilroys List. Her work has also been a finalist for the Weissberger Award, Princess Grace Award, and Relentless Award. Residencies: Tofte Lake Center, SPACE at Ryder Farm, and two-time MacDowell Colony Fellow. Alum of Ars Nova Play Group, New Georges Jam, and Playwrights’ Center Core Writer. Tarker has collaborated with Pig Iron and SITI Company Conservatory, and she currently holds commissions from Theater Masters, Soho Rep., and Playwrights Horizons. MFA Yale.

Devon de Mayo (Director and Movement Direction) directed the world premiere of Scientific Method by Jenny Connell Davis for Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. Other directing credits include: If I Forget (Victory Gardens Theatre); First Love is the Revolution (Steep Theatre); Women Laughing Alone With Salad (Theatre Wit); The Burn (Steppenwolf Theatre), Harvey (Court Theatre), Sycamore (Raven Theatre), You on the Moors Now (The Hypocrites), Animals Out of Paper (Shattered Globe Theatre), You Can’t Take it With You, and Lost in Yonkers (Northlight Theatre), Jet Black Chevrolet (side project); Compulsion and Everything is Illuminated (Next); Roadkill Confidential, The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler, and Clouds (Dog & Pony). Directing and devising credits: Don’t Look Back/Must Look Back (Pivot Arts); Guerra: A Clown Play (La Piana, Mexico); The Whole World is Watching, As Told by the Vivian Girls and The Twins Would Like to Say (Dog & Pony). She received her MFA from Middlesex University in London and did further studies at the Russian Academy of Dramatic Arts in Moscow and the Indonesian Institute for the Arts in Bali, Indonesia.

Lucia Lombardi (Production Stage Manager) has over forty years of experience in both the commercial and nonprofit theatre communities. Her national touring credits include The Lion King, Billy Elliot, Love Loss and What I Wore and Scrooge the Musical. Here in Chicago she has worked at the Broadway Playhouse, Drury Lane Theatre, Royal George Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Briar Street Theatre, Northlight, Victory Gardens, Porchlight, Ivanhoe Theatre, Body Politic, Organic Theatre Company, Remains Theatre Company, and Friends of the Zoo. Lucia is delighted to be making her Rivendell debut.

Rachel Flesher (Violence Director) is so excited to make her Rivendell debut with this amazing creative team! Rachel (she/her/hers) is an instructor with Fight Directors Canada, and a Lead Instructor, Intimacy Director, and Intimacy Coordinator with Intimacy Directors International. Select Chicago credits include Rutherford and Son, In The Next Room or The Vibrator Play (Timeline Theatre); Twilight Bowl (Goodman Theatre); Wolf Play, Hang Han (The Gift Theatre); Hoodoo Love, How I Learned To Drive (Raven Theatre); First Love Is The Revolution (Steep Theatre); The Dutch Masters (Jackalope Theatre); and The Niceties, Twelfth Night (Writers Theatre). Her intimacy coordination is featured on Glow on Netflix, as well as shows on FX, FOX, CBS, SHOWTIME, HBO, and HBO MAX. Change the world.

Courtney O’Neill (Scenic Design) is a Chicago-based scenic designer who works nationally as well as locally. She is the recipient of the 2017 Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award, the 2013 USITT Scene Design Award, and her designs were featured in the 2011 Prague Quadrennial United States Student Exhibition. Courtney won a Jeff award for Mud (The Hypocrites) and has received multiple nominations. Her work has been featured in Live Design, American Theatre, and Washingtonian magazines. She holds an MFA from Northwestern University, a BFA from The Theatre School at DePaul University, and currently teaches part-time at both institutions.
Anthony Churchill (Projections Design) collaborates on media for theatre, events, and installations. Recent projections and media include work with: Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Strawdog Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Greenhouse Theatre, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Raven Theatre, The Cher Show, Q Brothers, Porchlight Music Theatre, Silk Road Rising, Theatre Wit, Stage Left, Museum of Broadcast Communications, Big Noise Theatre, and 16th Street Theatre, Berwyn. Tony has been nominated for five Jeff Awards for Projections, and awarded one. When not working on plays, he enjoys sculpting tiny astronauts in peril, and exploring with his beautiful wife Sara and rescue pit bull Cheetoh. www.artlabchicago.com

Heather Sparling (Lighting Design and Piano Accompaniment) is grateful to be working with Rivendell again after Scientific Method. Recent design credits include The Fly Honey Show (The Inconvenience), Empower Youth! (Lyric Unlimited); The Burn (Steppenwolf); Twelfth Night and The Heart of Robin Hood (Door Shakespeare); These Birds (Theatre Vista), Longer! Louder! Wagner! (Lyric Opera of Chicago), The Way She Spoke (Greenhouse Theater). Heather is a proud alum of Boston University. For more information on her work, visit www.sparlingdesigns.com.

Hannah Foerschler (Sound Design) is thrilled to be working on Laura and the Sea as her first show with Rivendell! Hannah holds a BA in Music from Kenyon College, and she apprenticed with The Purple Rose Theatre Company for their 2015-2016 season. Most recently, Hannah graduated from the MA in Sound Arts & Industries program at Northwestern University in 2018. Sound credits include: Women of 4G (Babes With Blades); Seagulls (Steppenwolf LookOut & The Sound); Unwell: a Midwestern Gothic Mystery (Hartlife NFP); Candide! (Mudlark Theatre); The Death of Gaia Divine (Momentary Theatre); Spirits to Enforce (The Passage Theatre).

kClare McNeill (Costume Design) is a Chicago-based costume designer, construction artist, and educator. Tours: Pemberley Production’s of The Woman in Black (Associate Designer). Regional: Steppenwolf’s How to Be a Rock Critic (Wardrobe), The Second City’s 100th Mainstage Revue: Who Do We Think We Are? and We’re All in This Room Together (Designer). Fashion: International Casual Furnishings Association Gala. As an educator, she serves as Adjunct Faculty and Costume Shop Manager at Dominican University, where she has recently designed Waiting for Godot, Mother Courage and her Children, and The Addams Family Musical. www.kClare.com

Jonathan Berg-Einhorn (Properties Designer) is a Chicago-based designer and artisan. Jonathan has previously worked with Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Paramount Theatre, and Lookingglass Theatre, among others. Scenic Design: Alice in Wonderland, The ARC Trials (Mudlark Theatre); Curious George: The Golden Meatball (Hope Summer Repertory Theater); Brooke Astor’s Last Affair (Chicago Musical Theatre Festival); The Seven Deadly Sins, Endgame (Boston University). Prop Design: Scientific Method, I Wanna Fucking Tear You Apart (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble); Hela, The Ridiculous Darkness (Sideshow Theatre); Haymarket (Underscore Theatre); Hannah and Martin (Shattered Globe Theatre); Johnny 10 Beers’ Daughter (Shattered Globe); Bomber’s Moon (William Street Rep); I Know My Own Heart (Pride Films and Plays). Jonathan holds a BFA in scenic and costume design from Boston University. jonathanbergeinhorn.com

Catherine Allen (Production Manager) is thrilled to continue her work with Rivendell where she previously production managed I Wanna Fucking Tear You Apart, Scientific Method, The Cake, and Cal in Camo. Other production management credits include work with Steep Theatre, where she is an Artistic Associate, Sideshow Theatre, About Face Theatre, Griffin Theatre, Route 66, Congo Square, Oak Park Festival Theatre, Pegasus Theatre Chicago, Haven Theatre, and many circuses with Actors Gymnasium where she is the Staff Production Manager. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she received a BFA in Acting.
Gaby Sant’Anna (Assistant Director and Dramaturge) is a Chicago-based director and dramaturg, originally from San Jose, California. She is thrilled to be working on another Kate Tarker play, following her direction of *An Almanac for Farmers and Lovers in Mexico* (Northwestern University) and an SDCF Observership on *Dionysus Was Such a Nice Man* (The Wilma). Gaby has interned in the literary departments at San Francisco Playhouse and the Goodman Theatre and holds a BA in Theatre and English Literature from Northwestern University.

Kristen Osborn (Artistic Associate & Outreach Coordinator) is a Chicago-based director and theatre maker who is passionate about sparking compassion through storytelling. Currently, Kristen serves as Artistic Associate and Outreach Coordinator at Rivendell and as Literary Manager and Casting Associate at Northlight Theatre. She is founder and producing artistic director of JoyistLA. Directing credits include: Eugene O’Neill’s *Fog*, JoyistLA’s *First Embrace*, and an original adaptation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, *Lift*. Assistant directing credits include *Henry IV* (dir. Daniel Sullivan, Shakespeare Center LA,) *The Scene* (dir. Kimberly Senior, Writers Theatre,) *Sex With Strangers* (dir. Kimberly Senior, Geffen Playhouse,)

Relativity (dir. BJ Jones, Northlight Theatre,) *The Cake* (dir. Lauren Shouse, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble,) *Choir Boy* (dir. Trip Cullman, Geffen Playhouse,) and *Fighting Shadows* (dir. Robert Egan, Inner-City Arts.) Kristen’s previous work with the Ojai Playwrights Conference, serving as Artistic Associate and Associate Director, has ignited in her an insatiable appetite for new play development processes. She is a graduate of UCLA’s School of Theater, Film and Television. [www.kristenosborn.com](http://www.kristenosborn.com)

Jackie Banks-Mahlum (Rivendell Managing Director / Producer) is an arts manager, producer, and educator based in Chicago. Jackie is also the Membership and Development Associate at Arts Alliance Illinois, and the Co-Producer for Theatricum Botanicum. Previously Jackie was in the Los Angeles area where she worked with Center Theatre Group’s P.L.A.Y., the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Theatricum Botanicum. She has also freelanced regionally where she has had the opportunity to work in a variety of performing arts including opera, ballet, modern dance, improv, and theatre. She is a member of Actors’ Equity Association, has a Bachelor of Science in Theatre Production and Business Management from Bradley University, and a Masters of Fine Arts in Producing from the California Institute of the Arts.
Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is an award winning, critically acclaimed professional theatre company committed to recognizing and cultivating the talents of women in theatre—from playwrights and actors to designers and managers. Rivendell’s productions explore the unique female perspectives of everyday stories in an intimate, salon environment. For more than twenty years, Rivendell has grown to fill an important role in the Chicago theatre community as the only Equity theatre in Chicago committed to advancing the lives of women through theatre. Rivendell is a leader in new play development and a major port for new writers, and also offers a brick and mortar artistic home for women theater artists.

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