

by William Inge • Directed by Adrian Elfenbaum

Picnic



September 9 – October 9, 2022



TICKETS RossValleyPlayers.com | 415-456-9555

Design: Mark Shepard shepgraphics.com

From the Executive Producer

Welcome to Ross Valley Players, the theater in residence at the Marin Art & Garden Center. Thanks to all of you who made RVP's 2021-2022 season a success! You loved the comic forces of *Ripcord*, the legend of King Arthur in the Mountain Play's production of *Camelot*, the wit and cunning of *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of The Jersey Lily*, RAW's production of *The Packrat Gene* and the wildly satirical *The Government Inspector* in the Barn Theatre—now included on the National Register of Historic Places.

To keep everyone comfortable and healthy, RVP will continue to follow all Marin County and California State mandated health and safety protocols. RVP has recently installed MERV filters on the HVAC system at The Barn. Based on the most recent health guidelines, RVP is no longer requiring proof of vaccination for patrons (Marin County is 97% vaccinated!). RVP will return to offering concessions to our patrons, but masks are still required except when eating and drinking.

During the 2021-2022 season RVP cast approximately 30% of its shows with actors of color and frequently in leading roles. For many years RVP has hired women in over 50% of its jobs including directors and playwrights. RVP will continue to welcome artists and patrons of all genders, races and identities at The Barn.

RVP's 2022-2023 season subscription package is one of the best values for live theater in the Bay Area with its affordable tickets prices, comfortable seating, beautiful location and exciting theater productions! Please join us and bring your family and friends. Enjoy our new lobby, our new seats, our new roof and soon-to-be new kitchen!

See you at The Barn (built in 1860)!

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**Please join
RVP for our
93rd Season**

Picnic

by William Inge

Directed by Adrian Elfenbaum

September 9 – October 9, 2022

Gypsy, A Musical Fable

Music by Jule Styne

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by Arthur Laurents

Directed by Zoë Swenson-Graham

A Mountain Play Production

Presented by Ross Valley Players

November 11 – December 18, 2022

Reservations

A new play by Joe Barison

Ross Alternative Works

January 27 – February 12, 2023

Pride & Prejudice - The Musical

Adapted from Jane Austen's novel by Josie Brown

Music & Lyrics by Rita Abrams

Directed by Phoebe Moyer

March 17 – April 16, 2023

Native Gardens

by Karen Zacarias

Directed by Mary Ann Rodgers

May 12 – June 11, 2023

Photo by Robin Jackson

"The summer's flower is to the summer sweet..."

Shakespeare, Sonnet 94

Independence, Kansas . Labor Day, 1953

The backyard shared by Flo Owens and Helen Potts

Act 1 – Early Morning

Act 2 – Same day, just before sunset

INTERMISSION

Act 3 – Scene 1 – Early the next morning, before daylight

Act 3 – Scene 2 – A few hours later

CAST (in order of appearance)

Hal Carter, *hired by Helen, Alan's college friend*Max Carpenter*
Helen Potts, *Flo's neighbor* Tamar Cohn
Millie Owens, *Flo's younger daughter* Lizzy Bies
Bomber Gutzel, *the paperboy* Dalton Ortiz
Madge Owens, *Flo's elder daughter* Dale Leonheart
Flo Owens, *Madge and Millie's mother* Tori Truss
Rosemary Sydney, *Flo's boarder, a schoolteacher* Valerie Weak*
Alan Seymour, *Madge's boyfriend* Evan Held
Irma Kronkite, *a schoolteacher* Jen Marte
Christine Schoenwalder, *a schoolteacher* Raysheina de Leon-Ruhs
Howard Bevans, *Rosemary's boyfriend* Steve Price

PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive ProducerSteve Price
Director Adrian Elfenbaum
Stage Manager Benjamin Vasquez
Costume Design Michael A. Berg
Sound Design Billie Cox
Set Design Tom O'Brien
Lighting Design Robin DeLuca
Property Design/Scenic Artist/Set Dressing Dhyanis Carniglia
Choreography Jannely Calmell
Stage Combat/Intimacy Director Richard Squeri
Intimacy Advocating Witness Madge Grahm
Dialect Coach Danielle Levin
Set Construction Michael Walraven
Assistant Stage Manager Raysheina de Leon-Ruhs
Understudy Trevor Braskamp
Light and Sound Board Operator Benjamin Vasquez
Photography Robin Jackson
Graphic Designer Mark Shepard
Volunteer Coordinator Eleanor Prugh
Program Consultant Suzie Hughes
Webmaster Andrew Wilson

Special Thanks: Randall Stuart, Tracy Ward, Leslie McCauley, Eliot Fintushel, Tony's Haircutting @ Frank's, Greg Nelson and the College of Marin, Maureen Scheuenstuhl, Malcolm Rodgers, Mike Burns at Mike's Bikes, San Rafael, Adriana Gutierrez and First Church of Christ, Scientist.

Presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

The running time is roughly 2 hours and 30 minutes.

There will be one fifteen-minute Intermission.

*Appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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Visit www.rossvalleyplayers.com for more information

Director's Notes

Many theatre people of my vintage first became familiar with William Inge's *Picnic* in acting class in college. While working on the scenes, my classmates and I unanimously fell in love with Inge's evocative writing and his deeply vulnerable characters. No matter how many times a scene was rehearsed, we always found something new.

Now, many years removed from those early acting class explorations, I was excited to find that our process on this production of *Picnic* yielded the same results. Each rehearsal revealed new discoveries about the characters' motivations, challenges, or desires.



Our cast's journey with Inge's script will continue in this respect with each performance.

Picnic originally was scheduled as part of RVP's canceled 2020-2021 season. During the early days of pandemic quarantine, sensing that the planned production might be delayed, a group of us met on Zoom and read the play together. In a lively post-reading discussion, we were surprised by the play's specific resonance to our world today. As we each struggled with our own levels of seclusion, isolation, and longing for stronger interpersonal connection, the repressed desires of Inge's characters seemed very present, very contemporary.

An unfortunate by-product of "the pandemic that we're all pretending is over" (as a friend of mine described it) is provinciality. During periods of quarantine, we all retreated to our homes, taking comfort and refuge in the corners of the world that we each knew best. Today, as we warily continue to emerge from those corners into our pandemic-changed world, perhaps we can look to characters in *Picnic* for inspiration. In Inge's play, characters challenge themselves to imagine a world outside the world that they already know, characters risk new experiences with that uncertain world, and characters embrace motivating desires that brew within. These characters carry courage in their souls and joy in their hearts.

I am grateful for the collegiality and wisdom of the entire team that has worked on this play. I hope that you enjoy the show.

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Director's Bio

Adrian Elfenbaum (Director) is thrilled to return to Ross Valley Players, where he directed award-nominated productions of *The 39 Steps* (2017) and *The Mousetrap* (2019). Other North Bay credits include *Medea* and the BATCC-nominated *Dead Accounts* at College of Marin and several plays at Sonoma State University, including *Much Ado About Nothing*, and the musicals *A Little Night Music*, *Company*, *Oklahoma!* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Adrian has worked with many Bay Area theatre



companies as an actor or director, including Marin Shakespeare, TheatreWorks, the Magic Theatre, and San Francisco's Word for Word. He holds an MFA in Acting from UC Davis. Adrian gratefully thanks RVP for inviting him to be part of the team, and his family for their continuous patience and loving support.



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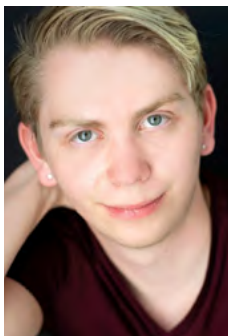
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The Cast



Lizzy Bies (*Millie Owens*) is no stranger to playing the role of the annoying little sister. Aside from being one in real life, she played the role of Tilly Evans in Santa Rosa Junior College's production of *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms*. She attended Marin School of the Arts, and right before the pandemic, played Simon in *Lord of the Flies* at Cinnabar. In addition to being a theater student at Santa Rosa Junior College, she works as a voiceover actor.



Trevor Braskamp (*Understudy*) is a graduate of George Fox University with a BA in Acting and Directing. He is a resident of Santa Rosa and most recently performed as Merriman in Santa Rosa's Summer Repertory Theatre production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



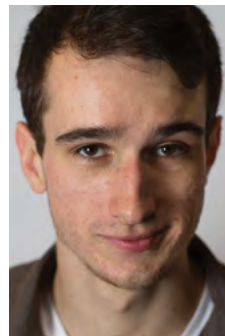
Max Carpenter (*Hal Carter*) has performed with SF Playhouse, Center Rep, The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Co, Word for Word and Bay Area Playwrights foundation. REGIONAL: *Come Back Little Sheba* (Huntington Theatre, Boston), *A Few Good Men* (The Alley Theatre, Houston) NY: OFF OFF BROADWAY: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Precariot Productions). FILM/TV: *Law and Order: SVU* (NBC), *What Would You Do* (NBC). UPCOMING: Leads in *Blossom* (BET+ Jan 2023) and *Into the Wild Frontier* (INSP Feb 2023). COMMERCIALS: If you're ever in Fresno scrolling through the broadcast channels you might see his local solar energy spot. He thanks you for coming to the show.



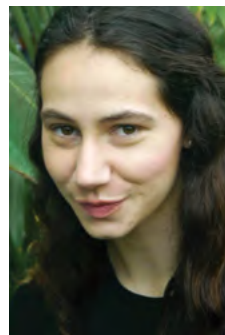
Tamar Cohn (*Helen Potts*). Tamar (she/her) loves working with friendly companies like RVP, and talented, cool directors like Adrian Elfenbaum. Previously with Adrian: *Dead Accounts* at College of Marin. At RVP: *Sherlock Holmes & the Case of the Jersey Lily*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Children's Hour*, *The Clean House*, and more. She has also worked with Central Works, Symmetry Theatre, Ubuntu Theatre Project, Theatre Rhinoceros, Cutting Ball, TheatreFIRST, CenterREP, Alter Theater, A Traveling Jewish Theatre, and others. Now, especially, thank you to all who appreciate, participate in, and support live theatre.



Raysheina de Leon-Ruhs (*Christine Schoenwalder*) is a College of Marin alumna. She performed in several theatre productions as a student, including *The River Bride*, *The Tempest*, and *As You Like It*. She transferred to SF State and received her BA in Theatre Arts with a focus in acting. She has enjoyed being Assistant Stage Manager for Ross Valley Players' productions *Ripcord* and *Sherlock*, as well as recently performing as Bobchinsky in *The Government Inspector*. In her free time, she can be found out in the woods looking for wild mushrooms.



Evan Held (*Alan Seymour*) is a graduate of the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts (PCPA), and is excited to be working with Ross Valley Players! He's been involved in numerous productions across the Bay Area with companies including Shakespeare in the Cannery, Redwood Theater Company, Spreckels, Word for Word, and Marin Summer Theater. Evan is currently leading the education department of San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

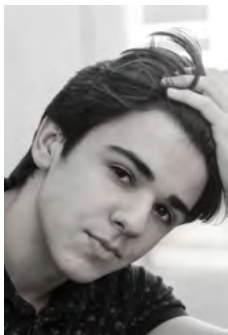


Dale Leonheart (*Madge Owens*) is a Bay Area actor, teaching artist, writer, and waitress. Most recently, she appeared as Cassie in *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* (Spreckels) and Caroline in *I and You* (Left Edge). Dale earned her BA in Theatre Arts and Literature at Mount Holyoke College where favorite roles included Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Pearl in *Bull in a China Shop*. Off stage, she dreams of leaving it all and becoming a cowgirl. Dale is very pleased to make her Barn debut among such talented and thoughtful artists.



Jen Marte (*Irma Kronkite*) is very happy to be working with Ross Valley Players. She has been seen on stage at Killing My Lobster, Half Moon Bay Shakespeare Company and Shotgun Players, and behind the scenes at the San Francisco Playhouse and Cutting Ball Theater. Previous productions include *Gruesome Playground Injuries* (Kayleen), *In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)* (Annie) and *Company* (Marta).

The Cast



Dalton Ortiz (*Bomber Gutzel*) first graced the stage at the age of eight as a youngster in *The Outsiders*. Presently, he is thrilled to embody the role of Bomber Gutzel in this production of *Picnic*. While honing his acting chops, while also being a high school wrestler and a member of the Future Farmers of America, his dream was to continue acting on stage with a goal to someday star in a sitcom. He is grateful to now be a part of Ross Valley Players.



Steve Price (*Howard Bevans*) recently appeared in the role of The Mayor in *The Government Inspector* to close RVP's 2021-2022 season. Steve has played over a dozen roles at RVP, including Atticus Finch in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Elwood P. Dowd in *Harvey*, and Major Metcalf in *The Mousetrap* directed by Adrian Elfenbaum. Steve has also played many roles with Marin Shakespeare Company and College of Marin, including Polonius in *Hamlet*, Jaques in *As You Like It*, Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Gonzalo in *The Tempest* for which he received a Bay Area Critics Circle nomination.



Tori Truss (*Flo Owens*) was last seen as Abby in RVP's *Ripcord*. Her North Bay credits include Linda Loman in *Death of a Salesman* with Daniel Benzali (6th Street Playhouse), Ruella in *Communicating Doors*, and Chickabiddie in Shaw's *Misalliance* (College of Marin). She has played Sabina in *Skin of Our Teeth*, Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and Olivia in *Night Must Fall* (Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, Pennsylvania). Tori is a professor emeritus at Sonoma State University, Theater Arts & Dance Department and a former K-8 drama teacher. She is delighted to return to RVP.

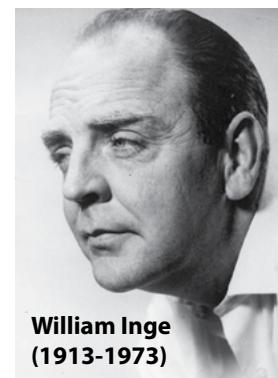


Valerie Weak (*Rosemary Sydney*). Valerie (she/her) is thrilled to collaborate with the RVP team for the first time. She has performed throughout the Bay Area with companies including Marin Shakespeare, SF Shakes, Shotgun Players, and CenterREP. Favorite roles include Macbeth in *Macbeth* at Women's Will and Officer Miller in *The Box* at Z Space. She played Mrs. Miller in Season 2 of *13 Reasons Why* (Netflix) and has been in many indie films. She is a Theatre Bay Area TITAN winner, trained at Skidmore College with Anne Bogart/SITI Company, and holds a Theatre Arts BA from UCLA. www.valerieweak.com

About the Playwright

William Inge, in full William Motter Inge, American playwright is best known for his plays *Come Back, Little Sheba* (1950; filmed 1952); *Picnic* (1953; filmed 1956), for which he won a Pulitzer Prize; and *Bus Stop* (1955; filmed 1956).

Inge was educated at the University of Kansas at Lawrence and at the George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tenn. He taught school from 1937 to 1949, also serving as drama editor of the Star-Times in St. Louis, Mo., from 1943 to 1946. His first play, *Farther Off from Heaven* (1947), was produced in Dallas, Texas, at the recommendation of Tennessee Williams, to whom Inge had sent the script; 10 years later it was revised



**William Inge
(1913-1973)**

for Broadway as *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (filmed 1960).

Inge was one of the first American dramatists to deal with the quality of life in the small towns of the Midwest, and he achieved notable success throughout the 1950s. His later plays—*A Loss of Roses* (1960; filmed as *The Stripper*, 1963), *Natural Affection* (1963), *Where's*

Daddy? (1966), and *The Last Pad* (1970)—were less successful. Inge received an Academy Award for his original screenplay *Splendor in the Grass* (1961). His shorter works included *Glory in the Flower* (1958), *To Bobolink, for Her Spirit* (1962), *The Boy in the Basement* (1962), and *Bus Riley's Back in Town* (1962).



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Backstage Bios

Benjamin Vasquez (*Stage Manager*) is more than happy and excited to be working with Ross Valley Players and working on this production. He has worked on over 40 productions in the local area. Some of the most memorable past plays he has stage managed at the Barn are *She Loves Me*, *Mousetrap*, *The 39 Steps*, *Sylvia*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. He is thankful for all the training he received at the College of Marin's drama department and their staff.

Michael A. Berg (*Costume Design*) has created costumes for many Bay Area theatrical organizations, including Center Rep in Walnut Creek, the Mountain Play, Marin Shakespeare and the College of Marin. Michael is Resident Costume Manager for RVP. His knowledge of the current extensive costume stock and the ever-expanding costume shop he has created at the Barn are invaluable assets to RVP productions. In addition to Michael's RVP responsibilities, he is on the costume staff of Center Repertory Company in Walnut Creek, and he costumed *Spamalot* at the Marin Shakespeare Company.

Billie Cox (*Sound Design*) has worked in many capacities for RVP over the years, as well as Marin Shakespeare, Custom Made Theater, 6th Street, NTC, SF Playhouse, COM, Actors Ensemble of Berkeley, TCM, Masquers, SF Fringe and many others. Her work as composer/sound designer has

earned her seven BATCC nominations, a TBA nomination, two Falstaff awards and a Dean Goodman Award.

Tom O'Brien (*Set Design*) is pleased to be back at Ross Valley Players. Tom has designed sets for theatre and still photography for many years. Based in San Francisco, he has had opportunities to work with very talented theatre groups. Credits include *Universal Robots* (Quantum Dragon Theatre), *Passion* (Custom Made Theatre), *Cake* (New Conservatory Theatre), *She Loves Me* (Mountain Play), and *The Full Monty* (Bay Area Musical). He has been nominated for a BATCC scenic design award for *Mousetrap* (Ross Valley Players).

Robin DeLuca (*Lighting Design*) started her theatrical career in 2013 and bounced between shows and union calls until the start of COVID. After eight months, she transitioned to a new full-time job but maintains some core gigs.

Dhyanis Carniglia (*Scenic Artist*) was introduced to the Barn Theatre in 1986 and has served many roles here and at other Bay Area theatres, including Head Costumer and Designer, Scenic Artist, Choreographer and Prop Designer. She is currently assistant to designer Ron Krempetz at College of Marin. She designs and produces her own line of dance costumes and clothing, teaches belly dance and is a Grief Coach. Past credits at the Mountain Play include

Costume Designer for *The King and I* (1987), *South Pacific* (1988), *Brigadoon* (1989), and *Anything Goes* (1990). She also served as Scenic Artist on the Mountain up to and including *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). Awards for costuming include Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (*Follies*, 1994), four Shellies (Contra Costa Civic Light Opera musicals) and a Solano College Award for *Elephant Man* (1995).

Jannely Calmell (*Choreography*) is very excited to be involved in RVP's production of *Picnic*. Dancing has always been another passion for Jannely, and she is grateful for the opportunity to not only perform dance on stage but to choreograph. Some of her most recent work includes College of Marin's production of *The Nutcracker*, directed by Lise Morse and *Peter Pan, Jr. The Musical* through the YES Foundation. Jannely thanks you for your continued support of the arts and hopes you enjoy the show!

Richard Squeri (*Stage Combat/Intimacy Director*) is an award-winning Fight and Intimacy Director and Choreographer. He is a Master-fabricator of onstage special effects, ("practical effects"), as well as specialty prop and weapon fabrication. He is also Executive Producer and Assistant Director of Birdbath Theatre. As a Stunt and Stage Combat Instructor, he has 40 years of experience and a record of safety. His work has appeared in every media genre. He is an adjunct faculty member at the College of Marin and EBCPA with fight directing credits for over 400 productions, including

Romeo and Juliet, *Uncle Vanya*, *Richard II*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Arabian Nights*, *Deathtrap*, *Rhinoceros*, *Aliens*, *Macbeth*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Mousetrap*, *I Hate Hamlet*, and *King Lear*. Film credits include Quentin Tarantino's first film, *My Best Friend's Birthday* and Craig Hamann and Roger Avery's *Boogie Boy*. He also worked on television shows, including the original *Battlestar Galactica* and *Cagney & Lacey*.

Danielle Levin (*Dialect Coach*) is a dialect coach and actor in the Bay Area and is delighted to return to RVP after coaching the production of *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily* this past spring. Other coaching engagements include San Francisco Playhouse's productions of *Follies*, *Born in East Berlin*, and *The Daughters*, and Shotgun Players' *Blasted*. As an actor, Danielle has been seen at Marin Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, Crowded Fire, TheatreWorks, and SF Playhouse. She is a company member of Playground SF and the Actors' Reading Collective (ARC). She received her MFA in Dramatic Art from UC Davis.

Michael Walraven (*Set Construction*) is pleased to be back in the theatre. Michael has also performed on stage at RVP in *Pirates of Penzance* and *The Polynesian Lounge* and in the Mountain Play's *Sound of Music* and *Guys and Dolls*. Favorite roles include Teyve in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Boyd Bendix in *A Case of Libel*, Mr. Cladwell in *Urinetown*, Mr. Mushnik in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Jean in *Miss Julie* and Hogan in *Moon for the Misbegotten*.

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RVP is part of the Marin Art and Garden Center, which sits within the unceded ancestral homeland of the Coast Miwok people. RVP respects and honors past, present, and future generations of Miwok and their continued connection to this land. RVP is grateful for the opportunity to gather in this place and gives respect to its first inhabitants.

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