

WILLIAMSTON ANTHOLOGY

VOLUME I



WILLIAMSTON
THEATRE

This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, events, and organizations portrayed in this novel are either products of the authors' imaginations or used fictitiously.

Williamston Anthology - Volume 1

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WILLIAMSTON ANTHOLOGY

VOLUME I

AN ANTHOLOGY OF PLAYS
FROM 10 YEARS
OF GREAT THEATRE



The Williamston Theatre's mission is to produce professional theatre that excites and engages our audiences while challenging us all to explore our lives. This mission statement is supported by the following objectives: to be an integral part of the cultural fabric of Michigan; to pursue innovative collaboration in every aspect of our work; to establish a home for Midwest artists; to engage audiences of diverse ages, cultures and economic backgrounds.

We believe that theatre can enrich our lives and make a positive difference in our community, both culturally and economically. We believe that theatre should be accessible and affordable to everyone, whether they live in a large coastal city or a small Midwestern town. We believe that there are voices in the Midwest worth hearing, and our goal is to create moving, entertaining, professional theatre for, by, and about this part of the world.

In 2014, the American Theatre Wing recognized the Williamston Theatre as one of the most promising small theatre companies across the country with its National Theatre Company Award. With support from a strong donor base, the theatre was able to purchase its building in 2014, securing both its financial stability and its future in the Williamston downtown for seasons to come.

As the only professional, resident theatre in the central Michigan area, the Williamston Theatre fills an important role in providing high-quality theatre experiences for its community, and in keeping the voice of the Midwest alive and vibrant. Since opening in 2006, the Williamston Theatre has mounted six full productions each season including, by the conclusion of our 10th season in August 2016, fourteen World Premieres. We're honored to present those new plays to you, here, in this anthology.

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**WILLIAMSTON
THEATRE**

THE WILLIAMSTON THEATRE FOUNDERS

John Lepard, Executive Director

Tony Caselli, Artistic Director

Chris Purchis, Managing Director

Emily Sutton-Smith, Development Director

FOREWORD

The way in which the Williamston Theatre started would probably make a pretty good script. I will pitch it to you:

“A ragtag team of misfits decides to start a professional theatre in a Mid-Michigan town with a population the size of a Carnival Cruise Ship. While enduring a national recession and a leaky roof, our heroes rally the town around their cause, and find that even the craziest of dreams can come true.”

Pretty romantic, huh? And over the course of the last ten years, a lot of wonderful things have happened for the ragtag cofounders: Tony Caselli, Chris Purchis, Emily Sutton-Smith and me, but the thing that I am most proud of is the family of patrons and artists we have gathered. It is part of our mission to employ Michigan talent in all areas of our theatre, including actors, directors, stage managers, set, lighting, costume, and sound designers prop masters, and technical directors. Our aim is to keep our home-grown talent here in our state.

Another of our missions is to tell stories for, by, and about people in this part of the world, and that is where this anthology comes in.

Michigan has a voice, and that voice is conveyed through our playwrights. In an atmosphere of nurturing and trust, these talented wordsmiths have allowed us to take their ideas, add the artistry of our designers, actors, and directors, and bring to life the stories of the Midwest.

I hope you enjoy these, our earliest world-premiere plays.

John Lepard
Executive Director
Williamston Theatre

FLAP

A PLAY BY
ANNIE MARTIN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

GAIL: late 40s–early 50s, soon-to-be divorced woman

NAOMI: late 40s–early 50s; Gail’s new neighbor

BILL: Gail’s soon-to-be ex-husband

SAM: early 20s, bat catcher

Time and Place:

Present day, the outside of a house in a Detroit suburb

FLAP received its world premiere on July 5, 2007 at Williamston Theatre (Williamston, MI). It was directed by Lynn Lammers. Set design by Bartley H. Bauer, Lighting Design by Laura Munson, Costume Design by Melanie Schuessler, Sound Design by Emily Sutton-Smith, Stage Managed by Erica N. Koski.

The cast was as follows:

GAIL: Teri Clark Linden

NAOMI: Dana Brazil

BILL: Brian Harcourt

SAM: Jesse Miller

For production rights, contact Annie Martin at annielmartin@gmail.com.

FLAP

ACT I

(A front porch. Behind it is a large door and large glass windows. Outside on the porch are boxes and moving materials. Inside more boxes are slightly visible. GAIL is walking around the inside of the house. She is looking out the window impatiently. She finally takes out her phone and dials)

GAIL

Hi Lizzy. *(pause)* Well I was just wondering if you were gonna come over and... *(sniffing)* I'm fine. Everything looks like it's here. *(pause)* I'm trying to get settled. *(opening a box)* So, I kind of need your help. I can't move half of this stuff by...

(Something whips by her)

GAIL

(to the air) What? *(into the phone)* No. Sorry. My back can't take... *(walking further offstage)* ...any more lifting. I've got to move the furni—

(Offstage, GAIL lets out a blood-curdling scream. GAIL comes running and flapping into view)

GAIL

YEOW!!

(She throws the phone down and runs out the door, slamming it behind her)

GAIL

(screaming) Oh my god! Oh my god! *(jumping up and down)* Oh! My! God! *(She checks herself, tries taking deep breaths. She looks around and picks up a rock. She tosses it in her hand a few times as if she's trying out the weight and feel. She goes to the door and looks in. She starts to cry and then immediately stops. GAIL goes in, shutting the door behind her. All is quiet for a moment until we hear another scream and the sound of glass breaking as the rock flies through a window. GAIL comes running and rams directly into the door)*

GAIL

Aaagghh!

(She opens the door and slams it. Her nose is bleeding)

GAIL

No. *(looks at the house)* No. *(then yells)* NO!

NAOMI

Hey there neighbor.

(NAOMI has appeared in the yard)

NAOMI

I heard your hollering.

GAIL

Yes.

NAOMI

I'm Naomi Campbell. Obviously not the supermodel.

GAIL

Obviously.

NAOMI

I'm in the brick house right there. *(points)* Your screams pierced right through.

GAIL

I've got a...

NAOMI

I didn't catch your name.

GAIL

Name?

NAOMI

What people call you?

GAIL

Gail.

NAOMI

Well, Gail, welcome.

GAIL

Uh, thanks. Listen, I'm a little busy here so...

NAOMI

I saw those movers. Seemed slightly...

GAIL

Unprofessional?

NAOMI

Stoned. But I suppose I would be too if I had to lug furniture around all day. Probably helps relax the muscles.

GAIL

Well, they scratched my antique cobbler's table.

NAOMI

Maybe it'll just add character. I'd love to see it. *(heads for the door)* I mean it's a cobbler's table. There's gotta be some scratches on it already, right? *(opens the door)*

GAIL

BAT! Bat, bat, bat, bat. Bat in the house!

(NAOMI jumps back)

NAOMI

Gail, you probably shouldn't have bats in your house.

GAIL

I know.

NAOMI

They're like mice with wings.

GAIL

I hate mice.

NAOMI

Disease carriers—Plague.

GAIL

Maybe you could help me?

NAOMI

Oh yeah, well I don't think so. Bats and me... We don't mesh well.

GAIL

I got it.

(pause)

NAOMI

Gail, you do know you've been bleeding since I got here?

GAIL

Yes.

NAOMI

Just checking. *(takes off her t-shirt, leaving her only in a sports bra. Tries to hand it to GAIL)* Here you go.

GAIL

What?

NAOMI

For your nose.

GAIL

No.

NAOMI

Well, you're not going back in there. What else you gonna use?

GAIL

It would ruin it.

NAOMI

Naw. I've been sweating in the yard all day, it's already ruined. *(sniffs)* And it's a little ripe.

GAIL

Perfect.

NAOMI

Here. Take it.

GAIL

Um...

NAOMI

Take it.

GAIL

Fine, okay.

(NAOMI tosses the t-shirt to Gail)

NAOMI

You need to tip your head back.

GAIL

(smells the shirt) I know. *(reluctantly holds the shirt to her nose)*

NAOMI

There you go. *(pause)* You're welcome.

Put pressure on.

GAIL

I don't think I can take anymore.

NAOMI

(pauses) Well, if you're talking about the nose, then you're pressing too hard.

GAIL

This can't be a good sign.

NAOMI

The bleeding will...

GAIL

The bat. Bats can't be lucky.

NAOMI

Well...

GAIL

And then running into the door with my nose.

NAOMI

It's really not unlucky. It's more unfortunate.

GAIL

And I think I knocked my front tooth loose. Great. Hopefully it'll fall out and I'll be toothless.

NAOMI

Might be a good look for you.

GAIL

I can't afford to fix them. Can't go in there. *(points to the house)* Can't go out without teeth.

NAOMI

Gail. Gail.

GAIL

I'll probably get a blood clot in my brain—it'll start hemorrhaging and I'll die out here because I can't get into my house. And you know what? Nobody'll care. It won't even make the papers.

I'll be eaten out here by birds, shrivel up like a prune. No dignity, nothing like that and you know what... when some people find out what a horrible and lonely death I've had, they'll be happy. They'll laugh and say I got what I deserved. But I don't want to die. Die alone and afraid of... of the bat and I'll still be toothless.

NAOMI

Wow!

GAIL

Toothless and dead.

NAOMI

Listen, I'll come. I'll be here.

GAIL

Yeah?

NAOMI

You think I want to smell a rotting corpse in this heat? *(looks at GAIL)* You watch - that bat will probably just fly out through that hole the rock... it was a rock I saw coming through that window, right?

(GAIL nods)

NAOMI

We'll just wait, OK?

(GAIL nods again)

NAOMI

We'll just wait.

(GAIL takes the shirt away from her nose)

GAIL

I feel like it might have stopped.

NAOMI

Yeah. *(looking at it)* Yeah. It looks like it.

GAIL

(holding up the shirt) I'll wash this.

NAOMI

Whenever. No worries.

(NAOMI sits. They look at the house)

NAOMI

Moving can certainly suck.

GAIL

Yes it can.

NAOMI

But this house, well, I've always liked it.

GAIL

Really?

NAOMI

Oh yeah. If not for my house, which I love, I'd definitely buy this one.

GAIL

I just got a vibe walking through it. And that fireplace—that's what really sold me.

NAOMI

How could it not?

GAIL

The carved wood mantel. The Pewabic tile—you can't buy craftsmanship like that today.

NAOMI

I've always loved the fact that Christopher designed it and then she threw him in it. Cracks me up.

GAIL

Who threw what?

NAOMI

Maggie Fritzer. The Fritzers.

GAIL

Who?

NAOMI

You know.

GAIL

No. I don't.

NAOMI

Mad Maggie Fritzer? Back in 1956?

GAIL

The name is sort of familiar.

NAOMI

Are you from the area at all?

GAIL

I was born in Detroit and then we moved out to the suburbs.

NAOMI

And you don't remember Mad Maggie? This was her house. Mad Maggie lived here with her husband, Christopher, and their two kids. I don't remember their names... they're not important to the story. Maggie was this terrific wife and mother—a real stand out in the neighborhood.

GAIL

She died here, didn't she?

NAOMI

One evening, Christopher comes home. You know I don't think anyone ever called him Chris, at least not in anything I've heard. Don't you think that's funny?

GAIL

No.

NAOMI

Well, he comes home and the kids are out—someplace else—again it doesn't matter. All that matters is they weren't home. Maggie was making his dinner. Typical 1950s thing. Anyway, story is they had some sort of argument. Christopher wanted to leave, take the kids, start a new life away from her.

GAIL

Why? Why would he want that?

NAOMI

I don't know. It doesn't matter.

GAIL

He just comes home and says this without any warning?

NAOMI

Men are bastards. Anyway Maggie loses it—something snaps. She takes the pot roast out of the oven and clobbers him to death with it.

GAIL

This happened here?

NAOMI

Right in your kitchen.

GAIL

My realtor never mentioned this.

NAOMI

But that's not it. Then Mad Maggie chops him up using his prized tools out in the garage, buries his head out back here, and used his limbs as kindling in the fireplace.

GAIL

Oh my god.

NAOMI

I know. In fact—now I should tell you that this part is just a myth, but when the police arrived, Mad Maggie was supposedly with her children standing around that exact fireplace making s'mores.

GAIL

The head was buried out here?

NAOMI

Don't worry. They found it and buried it someplace else.

GAIL

How could nobody tell me?

NAOMI

It was the trial of the century—that's how they billed it.

GAIL

Somebody was murdered here.

NAOMI

People have lived in it since. Life went on. Except for the tour buses.

GAIL

Tour buses?

NAOMI

Because of the house's history, there's a local bus tour that takes people around to see where famous murders and deaths happened. You know, they go past the Red Fox where Jimmy Hoffa was. It's actually pretty cool. I took it with my—

(GAIL explodes into tears)

NAOMI

Oh. Oh. *(starts to rub Gail's back)* It's hard. I know.

GAIL

(sobbing)

You... this... I...

NAOMI

You've looked on the verge since I got here.

GAIL

I've been on the verge for months.

NAOMI

It's okay. I sensed something was a little off. But you know what? Everything will work out. It will.

GAIL

You don't know that.

NAOMI

Yes I do. I mean, it's not like you're gonna murder someone in there, right?

GAIL

Who knows?

NAOMI

(GAIL just stares at NAOMI) I do feel real bad. I figured you knew.

GAIL

Well, I didn't

NAOMI

I mean, if I were you and I didn't know, I'd be raising hell about now.

GAIL

I don't have the energy to move again ... or the money.

NAOMI

Listen, there's been a few families in there since.

GAIL

Were they happy?

NAOMI

(pause) Well, everyone has their issues, Gail. But I think they were, yeah. I think the Adams were the first to move in after the... and then the next were the... oh... the... Polish people... the something-ski... Kelwinskis. Mrs. Kelwinski passed away—not in the house though. She was older.

GAIL

So it was natural causes?

NAOMI

I wasn't there, Gail. And then Mr. Kelwinski went to live in Arizona. And then the last folks were Jim and Sharon. You met them. Been great neighbors.

GAIL

They seemed nice.

NAOMI

Oh they are. Really. Just good people. Raised all three kids here, but when they finally all left Jim and Sharon decided to head up North to their place near Grayling.

GAIL

I think they mentioned that.

NAOMI

Those three kids though. What a bunch of assholes. You have to wonder what turns kids into numbnuts because I can't believe Jim and Sharon were bad parents.

GAIL

Sometimes you never really know what happens in a family unless you are part of it.

NAOMI

They had a good childhood. Lots of love and laughing. So see it's not all bad here.

GAIL

I don't know.

NAOMI

You know what? It's a beautiful evening out. We should have ourselves a little housewarming party or something.

GAIL

I just want the bat out.

NAOMI

(interrupting) A bat party! Perfect. I'll be right back. Okay? Don't go anywhere.

GAIL

Don't worry...

(NAOMI runs offstage)

GAIL

My keys are inside.

(GAIL sits out with her head in her hands. A few seconds later, a long rumbling is heard

offstage and it gets closer. GAIL perks up a bit. Around the corner comes NAOMI with a wheelbarrow full of stuff)

GAIL

That was quick.

NAOMI

Good, you're still here.

GAIL

Where else would I go?

NAOMI

Brought out the welcome wagon—I prepacked it before I came over...just in case.

GAIL

Uh-huh.

NAOMI

Any movement in there?

GAIL

No.

NAOMI

Well, he'll come out sooner or later. *(Begins to unfold lawn chairs)* Four bucks at CVS. Can't beat it. *(grabs something from the wheelbarrow and tosses it to GAIL)* Heads up.

(The package hits GAIL right in the face—the nose)

GAIL

Ah!

NAOMI

Sorry. You've got some bad hand-eye coordination.

GAIL

(picks up the package) Frozen peas?

NAOMI

For the nose. To keep swelling down. Frozen peas fix anything.

ACT II

(Fifteen minutes after the end of Act I. NAOMI alone onstage)

NAOMI

Gail? *(pause)* Gail? *(pause)* They're gone. *(pause)* All right, it's time to come out. I'm not foolin' around.

(GAIL comes out from hiding. Leaves and dirt all over her. She carries an arm full of sticks and twigs)

NAOMI

Well, look at you, Miss Piggy. Listen, don't worry. I explained the situation. They aren't calling the police.

GAIL

(places the sticks around the house) Okay.

NAOMI

I mean, I didn't tell them the actual situation. I made one up.

GAIL

Okay.

(GAIL goes back off-stage)

NAOMI

Jake ... The tour guide... could not have been sweeter and helped with Bill. I told him Bill has narcolepsy.

(GAIL carries another arm full of sticks and twigs and heads for the house to set them down)

GAIL

Okay.

NAOMI

I know. I was gonna go the alcoholic route, but then well I decided to work the other direction and guess what... Jake's granddaddy used to have it, so it worked out well. *(picks up the tequila bottle)*

GAIL

Okay.

NAOMI

Plus they took some pictures.

GAIL

Okay.

(GAIL heads back off stage)

NAOMI

The sightseers took'em of everything. The whole event. Even one of me in my bra.

(NAOMI heads over to where GAIL disappeared)

GAIL

Okay.

(GAIL reappears again with an arm full of sticks and twigs, but is stopped by NAOMI)

NAOMI

What's going on with you?

GAIL

Nothing. *(moves around NAOMI to the house)*

NAOMI

You seem funny.

GAIL

Okay.

NAOMI

Stop saying okay.

GAIL

Fine.

NAOMI

And none of that "fine" crap either.

GAIL

Sure.

(GAIL heads back out)

VOICES OF
THE MIDWEST

MAIDENS,
MOTHERS, &
CRONES

A PLAY BY

ANNIE MARTIN & SUZI REGAN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

All women. This play was originally cast with 4 women and a female troubadour, but it can be performed with as many as 48 women.

TROUBADOUR, female, plays guitar and sings

SANDY: a middle aged (40-50) female, actor; can change name to the actor playing the role

SARAH: an older female (60 or above), actor; can change name to the actor playing the role

TIFFANY: a young female (18-25), actor; can change name to the actor playing the role

EMILY: a female (25-40) female, actor; can change name to the actor playing the role

STAGE MANAGER: the actual play's Stage Manager

WOMAN #1

WOMAN #2

WOMAN #3

WOMAN #4

ROSALIE: an elderly woman

CARRIE: a young female

GIRL #1

GIRL #2

GIRL #3

GIRL #4

WOMAN

JENNY: young girl, 11 or 12; then becomes a woman in her 20s or 30s

MOM

ALEX: Jenny's friend in her 20s or 30; then shifts to a 52 year old

DOCTOR: middle aged OBGYN

KATHY: a young girl, 11-12; can be played by the actor who played MOM earlier in the scene

BONNIE: a young girl, middle school aged

KALI: between 18-50 years old

KRISTI: A middle aged woman; best friends with JULIE

JULIE: A middle aged woman; best friends with KRISTI

FRANNY: Can be any age.

MAYA: Middle aged to older woman

SIAN: A mother; between 25-40 years old

LILLY: cheerleader

JUDY: cheerleader

EILEEN: cheerleader

SAMANTHA: cheerleader

AUDREY: cheerleader

JESSICA: Older woman

BETH: 27 year old veterinarian

JOAN

MOM #1

MOM #2

MOM #3

MOM #4

LITTLE GIRL: played by the troubadour

SHANA: a yoga instructor, young.

THERESA: woman taking SHANA's yoga class

TAMARA

MARIA

ERIN

SUE

THE VOICES FROM THE MIDWEST series of plays was created by the Williamston Theatre to explore and embrace what life is like in our part of the world. Directors and playwrights on the project developed questionnaires, and sent them all over the Midwest, inviting submissions from people of all walks of life. Those submissions were then taken and adapted into three evenings of theatre exploring the life of women, men, and families in the American Midwest.

MAIDENS, MOTHERS, AND CRONES was written, in part, thanks to submissions from the following people: Norma Baker, Juanita Baldwin, Margaret Beard, Sandra Birch, Laurie Binns, Dana Brazil, Judith Bridger, Megan Buckley, Quetta Carpenter, Mariah Cherem, Connie Cowper, Sherry Deatrack, Mary Eckert, Kathy Ellis, Sarah Fruitig, Linda Rabin Hammell, Rachelle Harper, Sandy A. Hopkins, Ameena K. Jier, Kali Jones, Terry Junger, Deborah Kellogg-Lewis, Lynn Lammers, Teri Clark Linden, Cynthia Malow, Annie Martin, Patricia P. Miller, Tiffany Mitchenor, Shirley Munson, Amanda Northrup, Bridgette Redman, Suzi Regan, Kari Ringer, Mary Rux, Barbara Sharpe, Deborah Solo, Emily Sutton-Smith, Clarice Thompson, Jennifer C. Weil, Shey Zenker, and many women who wish to remain anonymous.

MAIDENS, MOTHERS, AND CRONES: VOICES FROM WOMEN OF THE MIDWEST received its world premiere on May 8, 2008 at Williamston Theatre (Williamston, MI). It was directed by Suzi Regan. Set & Lighting Design by Daniel C. Walker, Costume Design by Lori Sands, Music by Suzi Regan. Stage Managed by Megan Buckley. VOICES OF THE MIDWEST series concept by Tony Caselli.

The cast was as follows:

Sarah Benoit
Sandra Birch
Tiffany Denise Mitchenor
Deborah Solo
Emily Sutton-Smith

For production rights, contact Williamston Theatre.

MAIDENS, MOTHERS, AND CRONES

ACT I SCENE ONE

(Lights up and reveal a clearing in the middle of an ancient grove)

TROUBADOUR

Ready?

(starts to sing)

WE ARE THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR
GRANDMOTHER'S DAUGHTERS

WE HAVE THE SAME STRONG HANDS,
SAME KNOWING EYE

WE THREE WADE

THRU THE MYSTIC WATERS

SEEDED WITH BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS
OF ALL THAT IS LIFE

STAGE MANAGER

(calls out)

Cue dancers. Go.

(Out come the actors dancing—auditioning for a play)

TROUBADOUR

WE ARE THE MOON

FULL CIRCLE

HER PHASES

OH, LUNA

WE ARE THE MOON

SILVER SILVER

FULL BODIED

OH, DIANA

WE ARE THE MOON

THE TIME KEEPERS

THE SHAPE SHIFTERS

WE ARE THE MOON

THE RIVER

THE OCEAN

THE TIDE

ACTORS & TROUBADOUR

(sing the chorus together)

WE ARE THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR
GRANDMOTHER'S DAUGHTERS

WE HAVE THE SAME STRONG HANDS,
SAME KNOWING EYE

WE THREE WADE

THRU THE MYSTIC WATERS

SEEDED WITH BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS
OF ALL THAT IS LIFE

TROUBADOUR

WE ARE CREATOR

DESTROYER

THE HUNTER

THE WARRIOR

WE FEED

WE CARRY

WE ROCK

FROM CRADLE

TO GRAVE

WE ARE THE WHALE

THE OTTER

THE TURTLE

THE SPIDER

WE WEAVE LION AND LAMB

IN SACRED MELODY

ACTORS & TROUBADOUR

(singing the chorus together)

WE ARE THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR
GRANDMOTHER'S DAUGHTERS

WE HAVE THE SAME STRONG HANDS,
SAME KNOWING EYE

WE THREE WADE

THRU THE MYSTIC WATERS

SEEDED WITH BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS
OF ALL THAT IS LIFE

STAGE MANAGER

Hold please. *(they freeze)* You can have
a seat. *(they break)*

SANDY

What is this?

EMILY

I love this song.

SANDY

I didn't know I was auditioning for a
musical.

SARAH

Seems to be a little bit of everything.

SANDY

I'm an actor Sarah, not a monkey.

TIFFANY

The audition notice says it's an "explora-
tion of life from the point of view of
the modern Midwestern woman."

SARAH

Sandy's right. Doesn't say musical.

SANDY

What? I'm sorry. I'm fallin' asleep
here.

STAGE MANAGER

Sandra Birch.

SANDY

I've got a few problems with the script
already.

STAGE MANAGER

Sandra Birch?

SANDY

What? Yes?

(pause)

STAGE MANAGER

Read Act I, scene 1, "Home," please.

SANDY

(auditioning with a monologue)

Growing up in a small Michigan
town, I would stomp my feet and
swear to anyone who would listen
to my supposed teenage wisdom that
there was nothing worth anything
in that town. No life. No culture.
And all I wanted to do was move
away from what felt like a prison
and start my real life. But in the end,
I married a factory rat, had kids,
and stayed near my hometown and
created an actual fulfilling life. My
Midwestern life has given me stabil-
ity and roots. And still has allowed
me to grow and succeed. It is my
home. And I...

STAGE MANAGER

Stop please.

SANDY

Thank you.

TIFFANY

(to SARAH) What exactly constitutes
the Midwest?

SARAH

Well... Michigan.

EMILY

It's Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Minnesota

TROUBADOUR

And Kansas.

EMILY

No, that's a plain state.

SARAH

The plains are part of the Midwest.

TROUBADOUR

North Dakota?

TIFFANY

Pennsylvania is one.

EMILY and SARAH

No.

SANDY

Iowa?

TUBADOR

If Kansas isn't than Iowa can't be either.

EMILY

This should be in the audition breakdown, don't you think?

TIFFANY

Someone should know.

SANDY

(to the STAGE MANAGER) Megan?

STAGE MANAGER

Sarah. You're next. Can you read Clarissa?

SARAH

Sure.

TIFFANY

How can we keep going if nobody even knows what the Midwest is?

STAGE MANAGER

Can you act like it?

(pause)

TIFFANY

Ok. Yeah.

STAGE MANAGER

Begin when you're ready, Sarah. Can we have a little guitar?

(TROUBADOUR begins to play the guitar)

SARAH

(auditioning as "Clarissa") I technically moved away from the Midwest with my parents at 16 and haven't been back in 47 years. But my core still holds dear the soil and farming of the region... at least in my childhood.

STAGE MANAGER

Sarah, can you pull back your hair, please?

(SARAH puts her hair back)

TIFFANY

Why does the Midwest only mean small towns and farms? I'm a Detroit. I didn't ever milk a cow.

SANDY

I know.

TIFFANY

There are big cities, urban areas.

SARAH

(to the actors) Can I finish? *(silence)* Thank you. *(becomes Clarissa)* I live in California now. As I drove along a gravel road the other day, I saw a sign nailed on a fence: "organic fruits, vegetables and fresh eggs." Funny...I grew up on organic...it was just food from our yard, garden, and shingled hen house. We knew no other way. I turned off the main road, followed the small lane, and stopped my car beside a weathered building with screened

windows. Inside, I was alone. The note on the front entrance said: "We are on the honor system. Take what you want, weigh it, put the money in the green coffee tin with the blue lid." California dimmed and I took in everything around me: the sights, sound, and taste. I closed my eyes. I had come home.

STAGE MANAGER
Great. Thank you.

TIFFANY
(to SANDY) So Sarah's the crone?

SANDY
Yep.

SARAH
I am not the crone

TIFFANY
Oh, then it's you Sandy?

SANDY
Tiffany, I'm the mother. Megan, I'm the mother, right?

STAGE MANAGER
Probably not. We'll let you know.

SANDY
Oh. Ok. (to the actors) This is so insulting. Maiden, Mothers, and Crones... who names a play that?

EMILY
It's not so bad.

SANDY
Call me when you're fifty, Emily.

EMILY
It's beautiful. It's the cycle of life.

SARAH
Um, Crone is a withered old woman. A hag.

SANDY
The playwright probably doesn't even

know what it means.

SARAH
It's a woman director – she'll spin it into something, to empower us, right?

TIFFANY
I'd just like it brought to their attention that there needs to be more diversity. Where are the Muslims, the Asians, the Jews...

TROUBADOUR
(interrupting) I'm a Jew.

EMILY
They've only got an hour and a half.

SANDY
And I'm not a mother or a crone. So where does that leave me?

STAGE MANAGER
Tiffany, we'd like you to read the welfare mother.

TIFFANY
(to SANDY) Better off than me.

STAGE MANAGER
Wait. Wait. I'm sorry. The director would like to see the dance again, but this time, we need more energy and would like it in slow motion including the music. Also does anybody object to nudity?

SANDY
(aside) I object to everything.

(Lights change)

SCENE TWO

(Actors chant and march in time)

ALL

WAKE UP

MEDITATE

EAT BREAKFAST

PRAY

LEAVE HOME

GO TO WORK

GO HOME

STAY

OR GO

TO THE GYM

TO A MEETING

TO MY SECOND JOB

OR TALK

OR VISIT

OR WALK

THE DOG

FIX DINNER

CHILL

GET READY FOR BED

READ

REFLECT

CLEAR MY HEAD

AND SLEEP

(This is repeated through the lines below)

WOMAN #1

Wait I forgot to mention finishing the laundry. . . never ending laundry.

WOMAN #2

I don't do cooking. I had the good fortune to finally marry a man who bakes his own bread and stirs up sauces and makes a steak to die for. So, he figures this entitles him to slack on any other household work.

WOMAN #4

There is no relaxation. I can do that

in twenty years when I have more time. Until then, I work at home, at the office... I need to make it.

(Chanting stops)

WOMAN #3

I am retired and do as I please.

(Chanting resumes)

WAKE UP

MEDITATE

EAT BREAKFAST

PRAY

LEAVE HOME

GO TO WORK

GO HOME

STAY

OR GO

TO THE GYM

TO A MEETING

TO MY SECOND JOB

OR TALK

OR VISIT

OR WALK

THE DOG

FIX DINNER

CHILL

GET READY FOR BED

READ

REFLECT

CLEAR MY HEAD

AND SLEEP

(Lights change)

SCENE THREE

TROUBADOUR

*(with women harmonizing)**MAIDENS, MOTHERS, AND CRONES**MAIDENS, MOTHERS, AND CRONES**MAIDENS, MOTHERS, AND CRONES**MAIDENS, MOTHERS, AND CRONES*

ROSALIE

Sit on the edge of the bed

listen

to the house settle

to the memories dance

to my heart beat in time

beating to demand attention

Attention all: The clock keeps ticking

Sit on the edge of the bed

where I used to sleep

even when he stumbled in

from a house call

even when he snored loudly

enough to chip the paint

even when he chose to end

with a hospital bed

it was in the room

at the foot of the bed

so we knew we were each here and near

Sit on the edge of the bed

Night used to be peaceful

Night used to be quiet

but night is now too long

too painful

too full of the ifs and

the ands and the buts

I remain unable to lie down

and take my place in this new bed

in this new life.

Sit on the edge of the bed

Until the sun rises

Until the paper comes

Until the coffee needs to be made

Until my distractions arrive

Sit on the edge of the bed

Tracy is first

she the young help of 50

comes through the door

calling my name.

“yes, yes. I’m still here.

I’m still breathing.”

That gets a laugh every time

Hired help since I have officially retired

from cleaning

from cooking

from the work that

used to be mine

Tracy will run a bath

fix breakfast

and give me a break from night

Sit on the edge of the bed

The visits begin with my sons,
daughters, and the holy ghost

almost daily

to do my bills

to answer my mail

and then come my friends

who dwindled at first,

year by year

and then month by month

and now week by week

but the last of them still come

to discuss the weather

our families

the obituaries

I get the occasional visits from my
grandchildren, the Reverend Miller,
and the sweet girls from church

Sit on the edge of the bed

Move to the family room

to work on my great-grand-
daughter’s booties

or read my large print novel

which is easier to read but

almost too heavy to lift

or watch my Tigers—win or lose

Tracy makes popcorn and we
cheer in silence

while the chair by the window
remains empty
and will continue to be

Sit on the edge of the bed
and watch nightfall begin
to creep up again
Tracy makes her way home
and for the first time in 93 years
I am alone.

So I take my place on the edge of the bed
remember my life
pray for my family
and wait for him to come.

(Lights change)

SCENE FOUR

(TROUBADOUR starts to play "When I was a Girl" and CARRIE sings)

CARRIE

(sings)

WHEN I WAS A GIRL

I WANTED TO BE

SOMEONE RICH, FAMOUS, AND FREE.

I'D ACT ON THE SCREEN,

I'D WRITE THE BESTSELLER

AND THEN I'D FIND ME

A MIGHTY NICE FELLER

I'D LEAVE THIS PLACE

WITHOUT A TRACE

NEVER AGAIN TO SHOW MY FACE

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

WHEN I WAS A GIRL

I WANTED TO TRAVEL

THE WORLD PAST MY DRIVEWAY

OF SAND AND GRAVEL.

THE LAST SUPPER, DAVID, THE MONA LISA;

SEE THE ARCH, THE SINE,

THE TOWER OF PISA

INVITED TO SEE ART

IN EVERY COURT

LOVE MEN NOT BOYS

IN EVERY PORT

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

(Harmonica break)

WHEN I WAS A GIRL

I WANTED TO PLAY

WITH THE BOYS IN MUD

THE DIRT AND THE CLAY

MOMMA SAID NO, NO

GIRLS DON'T GET MESSY

NOW I AM DIRTY

AND A LITTLE TESTY

SURE MAMA I SAID

BUT BROKE MY WORD

OH JOY SWEARIN', SMOKIN'

AND FLIPPIN' THE BIRD

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

GIRL #1

Dear Diary,

Oh my gosh, I so want to be a waitress at Friendly's. I'd get to meet so many cool people and eat all the fries I want.

GIRL #2

Dear Diary,

I want to be famous

GIRL #3

Dear Diary,

I am going to be a ballerina. My bun is already perfect... I pin it and use just the right amount of gunk. I don my tights and toe shoes and stand, staring in the mirror. Now, if I just get skinny enough, it would all be perfect.

GIRL #4

I just want to play in the dirt all the time.

GIRL #1

I want to be with my dad. He's so cool

VOICES OF
THE MIDWEST

**FLYOVER,
U.S.A.**

A PLAY BY

DENNIS E. NORTH &
JOSEPH ZETTELMAIER

THE VOICES FROM THE MIDWEST series of plays was created by the Williamston Theatre to explore and embrace what life is like in our part of the world. Directors and playwrights on the project developed questionnaires, and sent them all over the Midwest, inviting submissions from people of all walks of life. Those submissions were then taken and adapted into three evenings of theatre exploring the life of women, men, and families in the American Midwest.

FLYOVER, U.S.A. was written, in part, thanks to submissions from the following people: Jack Bates, Christopher Abraham, DE Alchin, Dean Atkins, Bruce Bennett, Patrick J. Brazil, David Briston, Steve Berglund, Dominic Caselli, Frank Caselli, Jake Christensen, Jim Daugherty, Ronald Dorr, Richard J. Enbody, Jay Fosgitt, Rick Foster, Edward J. Gillespie, Kurt Guter, Bill Haggerty, Bob Hanna, Gordon Hicks, Tobin Hissong, Frank J. Leahey, John Lepard, Timothy Lewis, Hugh Maguire, Clif McChesney, Scott Norman, Duane Reum, Kevin Schumacker, John Seibert, Marty Smith, Dr. Robert L. Smith, Todd E. Walter, John Zettelmaier, and many men who wished to remain anonymous.

FLYOVER, U.S.A.: VOICES FROM THE MIDWEST received its world premiere on May 21, 2009 at Williamston Theatre (Williamston, MI). It was directed by John Seibert. Set and Lighting Design by Daniel C. Walker, Costume Design by Melanie Schuessler. Stage Managed by Rochelle P. Clark. VOICES OF THE MIDWEST series concept by Tony Caselli.

The cast was as follows:

GUY 1: Tobin Hissong
GUY 2: John Lepard
GUY 3: Scott Norman

For production rights, contact Williamston Theatre.

FLYOVER U.S.A.

ACT I SCENE ONE

(The sound of a busy airport. Three travelers enter from different spots, all hitting the stage at the same time. All are on cell-phones)

GUY 1
No, that's not what I said...

GUY 2
You're not listening to me. I didn't say that...

GUY 3
I need for you to stop and listen to me...

GUY 1
This trip was not my idea...

GUY 2
Then who's idea was it...?

GUY 3
No one's taking credit but me. This was all my idea.

GUY 1
This was not what I had intended.

GUY 2
I'm telling you, I didn't plan on this.

GUY 3
No, it's a good plan and we just need to stick to it.

GUY 1
All I'm saying is we're on a deadline here.

GUY 2
We're on a deadline here and time's running out.

GUY 3
Give me some options...

GUY 1
That's really not an option.

GUY 2
What do you mean we're out of options?

GUY 3
There is always another way.

GUY 1
What about a different direction?

GUY 2
A road less traveled.

GUY 3
Look, we need to stay on course here.

GUY 1
I think we're way off course here.

GUY 2

No, I'll meet him on the golf course.

GUY 3

Is that really the fair way to do this?

GUY 1

I'll need a driver then.

GUY 2

See, all we do is putter around the issue.

GUY 3

I can pick it up if you want?

GUY 1

No wait. This is not a gimmie.

GUY 2

Seriously, I'm off coffee now. Just tea.

GUY 3

We got too many balls in the air.

GUY 1

What happen to ours?

GUY 2

No, still in the bags.

GUY 3

Both of them?

GUY 1

I'm telling you, I can't find them but I'm willing to look.

GUY 2

Where? Where do you suggest I look?

GUY 3

I'm telling you, my hands are tied on this.

GUY 1

Are you listening to me? My hands are tied on this.

GUY 2

My hands are tied on this.

GUY 3

On this, my hands are tied.

(Airport announcement. They are all inaudible)

ANNOUNCEMENT *(short)*

GUY 1,2,3

Hold on...

ANNOUNCEMENT *(longer)*

GUY 1

Ah great.

GUY 2

Perfect.

GUY 3

Just wonderful. We're delayed.

GUY 1

I'm going to be late.

GUY 2

I knew this was going to happen.

GUY 3

I had a bad feeling about this.

ANNOUNCEMENT *(short)*

GUY 1,2,3

Hold on...

ANNOUNCEMENT *(longer)*

GUY 1

Alright, it's official. I'm stuck.

GUY 2

We're all stuck. It's official.

GUY 3

They said officially, nothing's moving. We're all stuck.

GUY 1

Well, what are you gonna do?

GUY 2

Alright, here's what I think we should

do.

GUY 3

We dominate the line of scrimmage.

GUY 1

It's fourth and long.

GUY 2

No way we're going to punt on this.

GUY 3

We're going for the win.

GUY 1

It's a win, win.

GUY 2

Everybody wins on this.

GUY 3

Look, the Irish just need to play Notre Dame football, you know what I'm saying?

GUY 3

You get what I'm saying, right?

GUY 1

I think we are saying the same thing.

GUY 2

Enough said, but, what I'm saying is we can score from anywhere on the ice.

GUY 3

We can put that biscuit in the basket.

GUY 1

You go high on the top shelf good things happen.

GUY 2

It's crunch time.

GUY 3

It's gut check time.

GUY 1

The fat lady does not sing until we goose her in the butt.

(Slight pause as the two look at GUY 3)

GUY 3

We're a blue-collar team.

GUY 1

We got a blue-collar work ethic.

GUY 2

Grindstones, noses, let me tell you something; we don't even have noses anymore.

ANNOUNCEMENT *(short)*

GUY 1,2,3

Hold on...

ANNOUNCEMENT *(longer)*

GUY 1,2,3

No, they're just telling us that there's nothing to tell us.

GUY 1

We're going to make the best of it. That's what we're going to do.

GUY 2

As soon as I know, you'll know.

GUY 3

Yeah, I know.

GUY 1

Just keep looking on the bright side.

GUY 2

Just find the silver lining.

GUY 3

Yeah, whatever.

GUY 1,2,3

Alright, I'll call. Bye.

(A nice pause as the guys look around. Simultaneously they all dial their cell phones)

SCENE TWO

(An announcer is heard as the lights slowly rise. GUYS 1, 2, & 3 are seated at an airport bar, glued to a football game on the TV. A scorpion in a glass is next to GUY 2)

ANNOUNCER

Now seating row D through H for Northwest Flight 136, non-stop to San Francisco. Please have your tickets...

(A fumble in the game. The 3 men react accordingly. 3 is by far the most intoxicated of all of them)

GUY 1
Oh come on!

GUY 2
Are you kidding me? Are you freaking kidding me?!

GUY 3
How hard is it to hold on to the ball?!

GUY 2
One game! Please! I'm begging you!

GUY 3
If that's how you're gonna run the trap, then just don't show up!

GUY 1
You're killing me! Honest to god, you're freaking killing me!

GUY 2
How much you put on 'em?

GUY 1
Two hundred bucks.

GUY 3
(Turning around) Please tell me you're joking. Or that I'm not as drunk as I think I'm drunk.

GUY 1
Hey. There's no law about putting money on the Lions.

GUY 3
Not yet.

(GUY 3's cellphone goes off)

GUY 3
Wonderful.

(He looks at the numbers, hangs his head in a moment of defeat, then picks up)

GUY 3
Malcolm! Buddy! What can I do you for?

(He talks in a corner as GUYS 1 & 2 chat)

GUY 2
So San Diego, huh? Was it a vacation or...?

GUY 1
Job interview.

(Beat)

GUY 2
Oh.

GUY 1
Human resources for Pfizer.

GUY 2
What?

GUY 1
I'm saving you the trouble of guessing. I was in Human Resources for Pfizer. Assistant manager. Got laid off 12 months ago.

GUY 2
I'm sorry.

GUY 1
Not your fault.

(GUY 3 notices the TV)

GUY 3
Malcolm.

GUY 1
I had an interview to run HR at Dolan Pharmaceuticals, San Diego Branch, so...

GUY 2
Hey, that's something.

GUY 1
Yeah, that's something all right.

GUY 3
Malcolm.

GUY 2
Better pay?

GUY 1
Better pay, more vacation time. And the freaking San Diego Chargers.

GUY 3
Gotta go, Malcolm. The game's back on.

GUY 1
So my options are, don't move and hope to God I can find another job. Or move my wife and kids to San Diego - where we know nobody - and try to make things work there.

GUY 3
Hey, man. You're cutting out.

GUY 1
But you know what really sucks? I got two boys... 10 and 12.. and we've got season tickets to the Lions. We're out there every damn game, screaming our heads off no matter how bad they lose. My dad did that with me and I just...

GUY 2
It won't be the same. Not with the Chargers.

GUY 1
Exactly. Exactly.

GUY 3
Yeah, I can barely hear you. Gotta go. Bye. Bye. BYE! *(hangs up, then goes right back to the game)* That's it. Run, baby, run.

GUY 2
A man's only really got one home, so he's only really got one home team.

GUY 1
What?

GUY 2
That's a Buckism.

GUY 1
A what now?

GUY 2
A Buckism. Something my dad used to say. He had hundreds of 'em. And his name was Buck. That's why we call them...

GUY 1
NO, I got it.

(Beat. GUY 2 offers his hand)

GUY 2
Archie Ruebens. You can call me Buck. That's what everyone calls me.

GUY 1
Rob Graff.

GUY 2
Nice to meet you.

GUY 1
You too.

GUY 3
Time out?! Are you kidding me?!

GUY 1
So I gotta ask... what is this thing?

GUY 2
Hmmm?

(GUY 1 points to the scorpion)

GUY 2
It's a scorpion. In glass.

GUY 1
It sure is.

GUY 2
They don't have these in Fargo.

(Beat)

GUY 1
They sure don't.

GUY 2
That's where I'm from. Fargo.

GUY 1
Got it.

GUY 2
I was down in Albuquerque and my son wanted a souvenir. I thought this was kina cool.

GUY 1
Albuquerque? That's worse than San Diego.

GUY 2
I hear ya. But I had to go. My sister had her first baby and...

GUY 1
Hey, congratulations.

GUY 2
Thanks.

GUY 1
Boy or girl?

GUY 2
It's a boy. They named him Buck.

GUY 1
What's his real name?

GUY 2
Buck.

(Beat)

GUY 2
Yeah, it's not a nickname.

(They sit in silence for a bit, with GUY 3 staring enraptured at the TV. GUY 1 raises his glass to GUY 2)

GUY 1
To fathers and sons.

GUY 2
Here, here.

(They clink glasses and drink. GUY 3 quickly moves towards them. His eyes are still fixed on the TV)

GUY 3
Hey, look. *(points to the TV. They look)*

GUY 1
Oh my god.

GUY 2
GO! GO!

GUY 3
Run, you magnificent bastard!

GUY 1
Dear lord in heaven please let him make it to the goal line. If it's your will.

(They stare in silence. A touchdown. The three men jump & shout excitedly. The ANNOUNCER speaks again)

ANNOUNCER
Northwest Airlines regrets to announce the cancellation of Flight 134 to scenic but inconsequential Flyover Country USA.

(Beat. Throughout the following, the announcer never loses her pleasant soothing tone)

GUY 3

Did I hear that right, or am I just that drunk?

GUY 2

What did she say?

GUY 1

(Calling up at the voice) What did you...?

ANNOUNCER

Northwest Flight 134 to Indianapolis has been canceled.

GUY 3

That's not what you said.

ANNOUNCER

It is so.

GUY 2

No, you said something about scenic but inconsequential...

ANNOUNCER

I assure you, sir, I said nothing of the kind.

GUY 2

You did! You totally did!

GUY 3

(Looking around) Are we the only ones hearing this?

ANNOUNCER

If any of you gentlemen are supposed to be onboard Flight 134...

GUY 2

What the hell is Flyover Country?

ANNOUNCER

Come on. You know.

(Beat. All three just stare in the air)

ANNOUNCER

You know.

(Beat)

ANNOUNCER

The whole... you know... bunch of states that you... fly over. When you're flying between important places.

GUY 1

Am I to imply that these state are, therefore, unimportant?

ANNOUNCER

Actually, I'm implying that. You're inferring that.

GUY 2

And just what states constitute "Flyover Country?"

ANNOUNCER

You know. The Midwestern States.

GUY 3

Which are...?

(The ANNOUNCER says nothing)

GUY 3

You don't even know! You're the voice of the airport and have no idea...

ANNOUNCER

Oh please. You don't know then either.

GUY 2

Excuse me?

GUY 1

Illinois.

GUY 2

Indiana.

GUY 3

Iowa.

GUY 1

Kansa.

GUY 2

Michigan.

GUY 3
Minnesota.

GUY 1
Missouri.

GUY 2
Nebraska.

GUY 3
North Dakota.

GUY 1
Ohio.

GUY 2
South Dakota.

GUY 1
BAM! The Midwestern States! All 11
of them!

ANNOUNCER
There's twelve.

GUY 1
Come again?

ANNOUNCER
I just Googled it. There are 12
Midwestern states. You missed one.

*(Beat. The guys come together and talk
quietly to themselves)*

GUY 1
Did we miss a Dakota?

GUY 3
I don't think so.

GUY 2
Was it one of the Great Lakes ones?

GUY 1
Which ones are the Great Lakes ones?

GUY 2
Michigan, Ohio,...

GUY 3
What about Indiana? Is that...

GUY 1
Wisconsin! It's Wisconsin!

ANNOUNCER
You got a gold star. Now if you'll
excuse me, some of us still have jobs.

GUY 1
What?! Was that a crack at me?

GUY 3
"Flyover Country." Where does she
get off?

GUY 1
I've heard it before. It's this BS term
people came up with when they're
working in the east and west coasts.
They think the rest of the state are
just this cultural wasteland.

GUY 2
Despite the fact that the third biggest
city in the US is part of that waste-
land.

(Beat)

GUY 2
It's Chicago.

GUY 1
City of Big Shoulders.

GUY 3
You got that right.

GUY 3
(Raises his drink) To the City of Big
Shoulders!

(They drink)

GUY 2
Hey, to Wisconsin. Sorry we forgot
you, baby!

GUY 1
To Wisconsin!

(They drink, GUY 2 laughs a little)

GUY 2

I can't believe I forgot Wisconsin. My dad went to school there.

GUY 3

Go Badgers!

GUY 2

If he was here, He would've torn me a new one.

GUY 1

That's what fathers are for.

GUY 3

Not mine. He didn't give a crap about sports. He liked... ballet. *(pause)* You heard me.

(Beat. They let that sink in. GUY 1 finally raises his glass again)

GUY 1

I said it before. I'll say it again. To fathers and sons.

(GUYS 2 & 3 raise their glasses)

GUYS 2 & 3

Here, Here.

(Lights fade)

SCENE THREE

TOBIN

My old man didn't worry about being "happy" in his job. It wasn't his "mission" in life... his family was. The job was just that, a job. And the hard work did not bother him.

JOHN

Dad was a salesman. At age 65, the time of his death, he was still the number one salesperson in his national company. He was in food packaging. I liked to walk the grocery store shelves with him where he'd point out prod-

ucts he helped design packaging for that allowed them to "jump off" t of the shelves and into people's carts. He constantly drilled into me the fact that I should never look at something for what it is, but rather what it can be. And that included people. Me as well.

SCOTT

My dad was working as a baker in this large bakery and one time they made a bunch of peach pies, but the pies didn't sell. So the boss tells my dad to throw them away but my dad asks if he could have them. His boss says yes. About two months later, dad presented his boss with a bottle of peach brandy he had made from all the peach filling in the pies. My dad used to say "have integrity... it doesn't cost anything and no one can take it away from you." I've tried to live by that.

TOBIN

My father was a disaster.

JOHN

My old man would say, "It's not the mistakes you make, it's how you respond to them."

SCOTT

"If you're waiting on me, you're wasting your time."

JOHN

"Give it away when you can. It was never yours to begin with."

SCOTT

"Don't be generous with my money. It's my money."

TOBIN

I have a haunting suspicion that my dad's best stories are the one's he hasn't told me yet.

(Lights change)

SCENE TWELVE
THE END

(All three guys are asleep at the airport. Late night, early morning. One of their cell phones starts to ring)

SCOTT

(Still asleep) Not it.

(SCOTT turns over and goes back to sleep. TOBIN mumbles something but is out again. JOHN, sits up, realizing it's his phone that's ringing)

JOHN

Yeah, what, hello? *(looking at the number to see who called, still waking up)* Hello?...Yeah, yes. Speaking... really...? No, that's fine. Gosh, what time is it?... Not at all, I'm just still stuck at the airport so I haven't made it home yet to check e-mail... No, I, absolutely will and uh, thanks. Thank you. Very much... As soon as I get home and thank you again. *(He closes his phone. Pause. He dials a number)* Did I wake you...? I know, I don't sleep well without you either...everybody okay? ...Okay, so here's the deal. They want me. They just offered me the job... Yeah, just called... Really early but they hadn't heard from me and wanted to give me first shot before they moved on to choice number two... Yeah. That's something huh?... I don't know... Yeah, no, the money's right. Not great, not what it was, but right... Forget all that. What do you think we should do? What so you want us to do?... I guess I'm thinking that too. I mean, I've been stuck here all night and all I want to do is get home. But that's what's sink-



IT CAME FROM MARS

A PLAY BY
JOSEPH ZETTELMAIER

CAST OF CHARACTERS

QUENTIN FARLOWE - 40s-50s, director/writer/actor

MAUDE MYRTLES - 30s-40s, secretary

WERNER KREILIG - 20s, sound effects technician

GEORGE LOOMIS - 40s, actor, former soldier

DOLORES BRECKINRIDGE - 20s, actress

JULIA CRANE - 40s, actress

TIME

October 30, 1938

PLACE

The rehearsal room of WHQN Studios, New York

IT CAME FROM MARS received its world premiere on Feb. 18, 2010 as a co-production between The Performance Network Theatre (Ann Arbor, MI) and Williamston Theatre (Williamston, MI). It was directed by Tony Caselli. Set Design by Janine Woods Thoma, Lighting Design by Daniel C. Walker, Costume Design by Sally Converse-Doucette, Sound Design by Will Myers, Prop Design by Charles Sutherland. Stage managed by Rochelle P. Clark.

The cast was as follows:

QUENTIN FARLOWE: Wayne David Parker

MAUDE MYRTLES: Morgan Chard

WERNER KREILIG: Jacob Hodgson

GEORGE LOOMIS: Joseph Albright

DOLORES BRECKENRIDGE: Alysia Kolasz

JULIA CRANE: Sandra Birch

For information about production rights, visit www.jzettelmaier.com

IT CAME FROM MARS

ACT I

(Lights up. MAUDE is carving a pumpkin onstage, listening to the radio. The door flies open and QUENTIN enters dramatically. He has coffee with him, clearly agitated)

QUENTIN

Maude. We're doomed. *(downs the coffee)*

MAUDE

I beg your pardon?

QUENTIN

How does he expect me to do it?! That's what I'd like to know! Damn you, Jerome Albertson! Damn you straight to the very bowels of hell!

MAUDE

What did Mr. Alberts...?

QUENTIN

The man's a damned fool, that's what he is! One rehearsal?! If he wants to bend me over, he could at least buy me dinner first! It's not enough that I'm trying to put on a quality program with a skeleton crew. Now he expects me to perform a miracle, and gives me no time to do it! What did I do to

deserve this, Maude? THAT'S what I'd like to know.

MAUDE

I'm sure it's nothing pers—

QUENTIN

I was on Broadway, Maude. Did I ever tell you that?

MAUDE

You may have mentioned it, yes.

QUENTIN

It was glorious. The resources, the adoration... and now this. Left to rot in the soulless vacuum of radio, alone.

MAUDE

You're not alone, sir. You've got a fine company of...

QUENTIN

Of what? Actors? I have no actors! I have a debutante who barely qualifies as an idiot. A sound-effects man with almost no grasp on the English language.

MAUDE

What about George?

QUENTIN

Between you and me, Maude, the man has one voice and two volumes: Loud and Louder. He's as subtle as an epileptic chimpanzee. No, the only two actors in this ragtag lot are me and Agnes.

MAUDE

Oh! Mr. Farlowe! I almost forgot! Agnes...

QUENTIN

Of course! Agnes! The jewel in my crown. I tell you, if it weren't for her, I'd drive this whole company into the Hudson. If we are to pull off Mr. Albertson's miracle, it will be because of her brilliance.

MAUDE

That's lovely. But...

QUENTIN

She brings a sort of untamed sexuality to every role she plays. A smoldering intensity that forces you to hang on her every word, wouldn't you agree?

MAUDE

Oh. Um. I suppose so?

QUENTIN

Yes, she is a creature of great passion. If you get my drift. Maude.

MAUDE

I get it, sir.

QUENTIN

By god, you're right! We can do this!

MAUDE

What?

QUENTIN

With my words and Agnes' talent, we may yet prevail! Thank you, sweet Maude. Thank you.

MAUDE

But I didn't...you're welcome?

QUENTIN

My god, I want to fuck something! *(notices the jack-o-lantern for the first time)* Maude, there's a jack-o-lantern in my rehearsal space.

MAUDE

Yes, I'm sorry. I was just carving it for the children.

QUENTIN

I thought you were barren.

MAUDE

No, sir. My Dominic and I just...

QUENTIN

Fascinating. Make it go away.

(She puts the pumpkin on her cart)

QUENTIN

Doesn't trick-or-treating happen tomorrow? Not on the eve of All Hallows' Eve?

MAUDE

It's a community program, sir. A lot of parents are concerned about their children running into hooligans on Halloween proper.

QUENTIN

Well, there's church-folk for you.

(MAUDE starts setting up the space)

QUENTIN

Just keep those urchins out of the building.

MAUDE

I'll just greet them at the doorway.

QUENTIN

See that you do. I'll not have them interrupting my rehearsal with their trick-or-treatery.

MAUDE

I'll keep them out of your hair.

(Beat. QUENTIN runs his hands through his thinning hair)

MAUDE

I'm so sorry.

QUENTIN

Out.

MAUDE

Mr. Farlowe, I...

QUENTIN

Out, damn you! OUT!

(She bolts. He takes out a flask and takes a long drink. He puts it back in his jacket)

QUENTIN

Maude. Come back.

(She does so)

QUENTIN

I'm sorry about that. I don't mean to shout.

MAUDE

It's all right.

QUENTIN

You've the patience of a saint.

MAUDE

I don't know about all that.

QUENTIN

I'm not an easy man to work for. I know that.

MAUDE

With. *(Beat)* I work with you. I work for WHQN.

QUENTIN

I am WHQN.

MAUDE

I'm not sure the Board of Directors would agree. Sir.

QUENTIN

I gave this station art, I gave it legitimacy.

MAUDE

Good thing for Mr. Welles then, hmm?

(QUENTIN glares at her)

MAUDE

I just mean... because that's where the station got the idea for your show. From Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre of... the umm... Air.

QUENTIN

Our work is completely different. They do trash! Dracula, Treasure Island...

MAUDE

I like Trea....

QUENTIN

What I give people are original stories! Plucked from my own mind and painstakingly put to paper. I create, Maude. Orson Welles merely... re-creates.

MAUDE

I suppose you're right. His program's just as bad off as yours.

(Beat)

QUENTIN

Where is Agnes? She's always early.

MAUDE

OH! Mr. Farlowe, I'm sorry. I forgot that...

QUENTIN

What? What is it?

MAUDE

Agnes phoned.

QUENTIN

Ah. Is she going to be late?

MAUDE

She just said to phone her back.

ACT II

(Lights up. The cast has gathered around the radio, mesmerized and terrified)

ANNOUNCER

We now return you to Carl Phillips at Grover's Mill.

CARL PHILLIPS

Ladies and gentlemen... am I on...? Ladies and Gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen, here I am at the back of the stone wall that adjoins Mr. Willman's garden. From here, I get a sweep of the whole scene. I'll give you every detail as long as I can talk, and as long as I can see. More state police have arrived, they're drawing up a cordon in front of the pit. About 30 of them. No need to push the crowd back now, they're willing to keep their distance. The captain's conferring with someone... can't quite see who... ah yes, I believe it's Professor Pearson. Yes, it is. Now, now they've parted and the professor moves around one side, studying the object, while the captain and two policemen advance with something in their hand. I can see it now. It's a white handkerchief tied to a pole. Flag of truce. If those creatures... know what that means... what anything means.

(A strange sound is heard in the background)

CARL PHILLIPS

Wait a minute... something's happening...

A humped shape is rising out of the pit.... I can make out a small beam of light against a mirror.

What's that?

A jet of flames springing from the

mirror. It leaps right at the advancing men! It strikes them head on! Oh lord, they're turning into flames!

(Men are heard screaming over the radio)

CARL PHILLIPS

Now the whole fields, followed by the woods... the fires!... there's gas heading everywhere... coming this way now, about 20 yards to my right...

(The broadcast is cut off. All wait in terror what seems like an eternity. Finally—)

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, due to circumstances beyond our control, we are unable to continue to broadcast from Grover's Mill. Evidently, there's some difficulty with our field transmission. However, we will return to that point at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, we have a late bulletin from San Diego, California. Prof. Endelcoffer, speaking at the California Astronomical society, expressed the opinion that the explosions on Mars are undoubtedly nothing more than severe volcanic disturbances on the surface of the planet.

GEORGE

Idiots.

ANNOUNCER

We continue now with our piano interlude.

(The broadcast continues underneath the following dialogue)

QUENTIN

Turn it off.

DOLORES

I want to hear this.

JULIA

He's right. Turn it off.

VOICES OF
THE MIDWEST

HOME

A PLAY BY

ANNIE MARTIN & SUZI REGAN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

This play was originally cast with 2 women and 2 men with a troubadour, but it can be performed with as many as 39 actors: 18 women and 21 men.

Songs indicate whether a male or female should sing it.

TROUBADOUR

MARIA: Mother to HENRY and SUZI; wife to JACK
JACK: Father to HENRY and SUZI; husband to MARIA

HENRY: 13-15 year old boy

SUZI: 13-16 year old girl

JOHN: 83 year old man

LITTLE GIRL #1

LITTLE GIRL #2

LITTLE BOY #1

LITTLE BOY #2

SAM: 40ish husband to THERESA; father to LINDSAY and BRENDAN

THERESA: 40ish wife to SAM; mother to LINDSAY and BRENDAN

LINDSAY: teenage daughter of SAM and THERESA

BRENDAN: teenage son of SAM and THERESA

DAD: Father to TOM

TOM: 17 year old son

DAVE: late 20s-early 30s; AMY's husband

AMY: late 20s-early 30s; DAVE's wife

ROE: elderly woman

STEVE: late 20s-early 30s; married to MARGO

MARGO: late 20s-early 30s; married to STEVE

SARAH: 16-17 year old girl; babysitter to TOMMY

TOMMY: 7 or 8 year old boy

HELEN: late 30s-early 40s; TIM's sister
TIM: late 30s-late 40s; HELEN's brother

WOMAN #1

MAN #1

MAN #2

WOMAN #2

CHARLEY: 5 year old girl

BILL: father of SARAH, ex-husband of OLIVIA

OLIVIA: mother of SARAH, ex-wife of BILL

SIMON: OLIVIA's date

SETH: 24 year old bartender; Jim's boyfriend

NANCY: late 50s-early 60s; mother of Jim

PETE: retiring teacher

COACH

HAZEN: little boy

SANDY: little girl

MAGGIE: little girl

SETTING and TIME

The set is a house; almost looks like a dollhouse.

Upstairs is a bedroom and bathroom.

Downstairs is a kitchen with working oven and table and a living room.

Next to the bedroom stands a tree and a tree house,
in which sits the troubadour with his guitar.

He narrates and plays from his perch (can sing some songs).

The time is here and now.

THE VOICES FROM THE MIDWEST series of plays was created by the Williamston Theatre to explore and embrace what life is like in our part of the world. Directors and playwrights on the project developed questionnaires, and sent them all over the Midwest, inviting submissions from people of all walks of life. Those submissions were then taken and adapted into three evenings of theatre exploring the life of women, men, and families in the American Midwest.

HOME was written, in part, thanks to submissions from the following people: Fran Ahern, Norma Baker, Sandra Birch, Christine Boesen, Judith Bridger, Dennis Brunzell, Julie Brunzell, Megan Buckley, Eileen Burns, Tony Caselli, Erin Clossen, Linda Kay Clossen, Hazen Cuyler, Ron Dorr, Llewellyn Drong, Brian Jones, Edmund Alyn Jones, Kaliandra Jones, Patti Kenney, Kate Koshnick, Frank J. Leahey, John Lepard, Danielle Lobdell, Spencer Lyons, Annie Martin, Margaret Martinelli, Theresa Martinelli, Margaret Meyer, Jane McChesney, Trever McTaggart, Margaret Miller, Patricia P. Miller, Sidney Miller, Helen Murray, Patty Nolan, Gina Phipps, Erin Roth, Abbie Scott, Danna Segrest, Cheyenne Shemwell, Carolyn Swanson, George H. Swanson, Toby Ten Eyck, Gloria Watson, Kathryn Wildfong, Louis Wildfong, Liz Wright, Emily Zimmer, and many people who wish to remain anonymous.

HOME:VOICES FROM FAMILIES OF THE MIDWEST received its world premiere on May 13, 2010 at Williamston Theatre (Williamston, MI). It was directed by Suzi Regan. Set and Lighting Design by Daniel C. Walker, Costume Design by Amber Marissa Cook, Music by Suzi Regan. Stage managed by Erin K. Snyder.VOICES OF THE MIDWEST series concept by Tony Caselli.

The cast was as follows:

Sandra Birch
Hazen Cuyler
John Lepard
Maggie Meyer
and Nick Hinz as the Troubadour

For production rights, contact Williamston Theatre.

HOME

ACT I SCENE ONE FAMILY TREE SONG

*(Cast moves slowly from each room singing
with the TROUBADOUR)*

ALL

DEEP ARE THE ROOTS

HIGH IS THE TREE

WIDE ARE THE BRANCHES

FRAGILE THE LEAVES

THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS

-ONE SEED

THOUSANDS BY THOUSANDS

HOLD FAST IN THE BREEZE

THRU GALE WIND AND STORM

HEART WOOD REMAINS STRONG

LULLABIES OF SPRING TIDE

US THRU WINTERS LONG

GNARLED AND FLAWED

OUR BARK, BITING TONGUES

HUMBLED AND HOPE FILLED

WE TURN TO THE SUN

WE

CLING TO THE FORTRESS

BLIND IS THE SEARCH

BELOW AND ABOVE

WE

ENCIRCLED BY THE ELDERS

WE

RETURN TO THE CENTER

LOVE

SOMETIMES MY ENEMY

AT TIMES MY ALLY

ALWAYS THE THICK LIFE BLOOD

BETWEEN YOU AND I

BUT I WILL HOLD YOU UP

WHEN DAY FALLS TO NIGHT

ROCKING YOU GENTLY

TIL MORNING SKY

WE

CLING TO THE FORTRESS

BLINDLY WE SEARCH

BELOW AND ABOVE

WE

ENCIRCLED BY THE ELDERS

WE

RETURN TO THE CENTER

TAKE ROOT

RAIN FALLS

GROW A LITTLE

SUNSHINE

GROW A LITTLE MORE

LIVE A LITTLE
 RAIN FALLS
 GROW A LITTLE
 SUNSHINE
 GROW A LITTLE MORE

FORGIVE A LITTLE
 RAIN FALLS
 GROW A LITTLE
 SUNSHINE
 GROW A LITTLE MORE

GROW A LITTLE
 GROW A LITTLE
 GROW A LITTLE
 GROW A LITTLE MORE

WE
 CLING TO THE FORTRESS
 BLIND IS THE SEARCH
 BELOW AND ABOVE
 WE
 ENCIRCLED BY THE ELDERS
 WE
 RETURN TO THE CENTER
 LOVE

DEEP ARE THE ROOTS
 HIGH IS THE TREE
 WIDE ARE THE BRANCHES
 FRAGILE ARE WE

(Lights change)

SCENE TWO

TROUBADOUR
 The Lyons Home. Wayne, MI

*(DAD is setting up the camera and tripod.
 MOM is directing)*

MOM
 Henry! Suzi!

DAD
 Where do you want me to aim this

thing?

MOM

I want to start on the couch and then maybe try the stairs. *(yells)* Henry!

HENRY

Yep. Comin. *(runs down the stairs)*

MOM

(to HENRY) You look so handsome. Let me just— *(licks her hand and tries to flatten his hair)*

HENRY

Mom.

MOM

Go sit on the couch. *(yells)* SUZI! NOW!

SUZI

This is ridiculous!

MOM

No it's not. *(to DAD)* Can you do something?

DAD

What do you want me to do?

MOM

Anything.

DAD

Fine. *(goes to SUZI)* Come on.

SUZI

Dad, this is so stupid.

DAD

It's not stupid. Do we look stupid? Maybe. But it's not stupid, it's memories.

SUZI

Why does she make us...

DAD

Because time flies by before you know it. You're gonna go off on your own

sooner than we think and... it's 10 minutes Suzi. Come on. We'll look back and laugh at these.

SUZI

Fine. *(walks over to the couch)*

MOM

(to SUZI) You look beautiful.

SUZI

Thanks.

MOM

(to SUZI) Do you want to run a brush through your hair?

SUZI

God. I'm sorry if I don't look the way you think I should.

DAD

(to MOM) Honey.

MOM

I was trying to help.

SUZI

Uh-huh.

HENRY

(whispers to SUZI) I think it looks good.

SUZI

Thanks.

HENRY

Not.

(SUZI punches HENRY)

HENRY

Mom!

(MOM ignores them)

MOM

Henry stop whining.

SUZI

(interrupting) Yeah, Henry.

MOM

(to HENRY) I need you on that arm of the couch. And Suzi I want you on the other one.

HENRY

(interrupting; to SUZI) I wonder if she'll be able to fit your fat butt in the picture.

MOM

(to DAD) Babe will you go sit so I can see what this looks like.

(DAD sits. MOM looks through the camera lens)

MOM

This looks good. Really good.

DAD

Hon, do you remember how to program it? You have to...

MOM

Yes. Yes. I remember. *(tinkers then sits down)* When the red light shines we have 5 seconds, ok? *(pause)* Ok?

DAD, HENRY, and SUZI

Yes.

MOM

There it is. And...

(Click. MOM and HENRY were the only ones smiling. MOM gets up and checks the camera)

MOM

A couple more. Let me just get it re-set. *(looks at the shot)* Jack!

DAD

What?

MOM

You and Suzi aren't smiling.

DAD

I look like an idiot when I smile.

SUZI
Me too.

HENRY
(to SUZI) Yeah. You do.

(MOM stares at DAD with that look)

DAD
Fine. *(Looks at SUZI)* We'll smile, right?

SUZI
Sure.

(MOM runs back over to the couch)

MOM
Get ready. Get ready. Red... Cheese!
(Click. They all blink. MOM back up)

MOM
Hold on. No one move. *(Tinkers with the camera)* Darn. Blinked. Ok. Let's do this again.

(MOM runs back to the couch)

MOM
Alright. Smile guys.

(SUZI gives the finger and HENRY sees)

HENRY
She just gave the finger, Mom.

(Click)

SUZI
No I didn't.

MOM
Are you kidding me?

DAD
(laughing) Suz.

MOM
You know, I just want one nice picture of us all and it's like I'm expecting the world from all of you. So all of you zip it and smile before I lose it.

Now get up and get on the stairs. The couch isn't working anymore.

SUZI
Calm down, Ma.

(They move to the stairs. DAD goes to MOM and gives her a kiss)

MOM
(to DAD) Don't start.

DAD
I'm sorry.

MOM
Uh-huh. Go sit on the top stair will you. *(to HENRY)* Henry sit beside your dad. Suzi below Henry. *(They move)* Closer please. *(tinkers with the camera)* Ok. Now smile and we can be done. *(runs to the stairs and sits)* Red light and...

(Everyone smells something bad. Click. MOM gets up quickly and runs to the camera)

HENRY
It wasn't me?

SUZI
Dad?

DAD
That wasn't me.

(They all look at MOM)

MOM
I didn't think it would be so foul.

(They all start laughing)

MOM
Oh this picture is horrible.

(HENRY gets up)

HENRY
I wanna see.

MOM

Fine. Here.

(HENRY laughs. SUZI gets up and comes over)

HENRY

That's awesome!

SUZI

Oh my god. Mom, you're the only one smiling.

MOM

Stop it.

HENRY

This is a keeper.

(DAD gets up)

DAD

Now I gotta see this.

(Everyone is laughing)

MOM

I'm deleting this.

SUZI

No way!

HENRY

(at the same time) Mom.

DAD

It is a memory, Sweetie.

MOM

(trying not to laugh) I won't delete it if I can just get a normal one of us. One more. Get back there.

(They get back on the stairs as MOM resets the camera)

MOM

Ok. Let's do this. *(MOM runs back to the stairs)*

HENRY

Mom, let us know if you're gonna drop

another one.

SUZI

Yeah, right.

(They all smile. Click. Lights change)

SCENE THREE

HOMEBOODY

TROUBADOUR

The Harpster Home. Bloomington, IN.

(JOHN sits on the bed and works to get up and down to make a couple of tea)

JOHN

Still standing after 83 years,

Weathered the storms

Soaked in the sun

A new part needed here or there.

The lights are still on

sometimes too much

and the plumbing still works

with an occasional leak.

The roof has thinned out,

but it's still all mine.

Walls are cracked, bubbled, and uneven

and the paint is the color

of faded paper

A sweater is needed

since the thermostat barely works

and sometimes there is a faint

smell of must.

But the windows still open

seeing what the new day brings.

And the foundation,

even after all this,

has never faltered.

May not look like much now

but in my day, I could

lift 3 kids and still

OEDIPUS

A PLAY BY

SOPHOCLES

ADAPTED BY

ANNIE MARTIN &

TONY CASELLI

CAST OF CHARACTERS

OEDIPUS

JOCASTA

CREON

TIRESIAS

MESSENGER

ALEC THE HERDSMAN

DRUNKEN SERVANT

TELLER

MAN #1

MAN #2

MAN #3

WOMAN

CHORUS

CELLIST/NARRATOR

OEDIPUS received its world premiere on January 27, 2011 at the Williamston Theatre (Williamston, MI). It was directed by Tony Caselli. Set Design by Daniel C. Walker, Lighting Design by Dana L. White, Costume Design by Holly Iler. Stage managed by Erin R. Snyder.

The cast was as follows:

OEDIPUS, MAN #1: John M. Manfredi

JOCASTA, TIRESIAS, WOMAN: Sandra Birch

CREON, MAN #2, DRUNKEN SERVANT, HERDSMAN: Barton Bund

MAN #3, MESSENGER, FORTUNETELLER: Brandon Piper

CELLIST/NARRATOR: Jamie Weeder

There is no intermission.

For information about production rights, contact:
Tony Caselli at tony@williamstontheatre.com.

OEDIPUS

ACT I

(Lights are on and only the CELLIST is there, playing in the corner)

CELLIST

This is a story about darkness.

(Lights go out. CHORUS then enters with candles)

MAN #3

A city in darkness.

MAN #1

Cursed.

MAN #2

Famished.

WOMAN

A town of death

MAN #3

Plagued.

MAN #1

A town begging to be saved.

MAN #2

By a hero.

CELLIST

Oedipus.

MAN #3

Oedipus.

WOMAN

Oedipus.

MAN #1 and #2

Yes, Oedipus.

MAN #1

So this is really the story of a King.

MAN #2

No. This is the story of a man.

WOMAN

And his fall.

MAN #3

This is a story of dark versus light.

WOMAN

A story about the dangers of being human.

MAN #1

Of being flawed.

MAN #2

Of having the best of intentions.

CELLIST

This is a story about truth.

CHORUS

This is the story.

(Lights alter. MAN #1 becomes OEDIPUS)

CELLIST

Thebes, for reasons unknown, had always had the attention of the Gods, who showered the city with their love or their anger. When Oedipus first arrived on the outskirts of town, the gods anger was apparent.

CHORUS

The sphinx.

CELLIST

The sphinx had made her home on the border of Thebes waiting for those who sought passage in or out of Thebes.

CHORUS

The riddle.

CELLIST

She would ask only one question

CHORUS

One riddle.

CELLIST

It seemed so simple.

MAN #2

Wrong.

WOMAN

Wrong.

MAN #3

Wrong.

CELLIST

Men, women, children disappeared. Killed, eaten, vanished into the sky. All at the hands of the sphinx and a wrong answer.

CHORUS

Terror reigned.

CELLIST

The answer came.

(OEDIPUS has been stopped by the sphinx and has heard the riddle)

OEDIPUS

(to the Sphinx) You leave me very little choice, dear Sphinx. I am sure to die if I run, right?

CHORUS

Correct.

OEDIPUS

And I may die if I don't try.

CHORUS

Correct.

OEDIPUS

Then my only way to survive is to answer your question. Your riddle.

CHORUS

Correct.

OEDIPUS

Hmm. It is a good riddle, if I may compliment you so. So, what has four legs at sunrise, two at midday, and three legs at sunset? I can see from your healthy and happy appearance that this question has kept you well fed.

CHORUS

Correct.

OEDIPUS

Does man really fascinate you so much? He must. For man starts his life crawling on all fours, but then we learn and grow... walking on our own two feet, yet age demands much of our bodies. So much so that the last years of our life are spent using a cane, a third leg as you call it. The answer, dear sphinx, is me. Me and all humanity.

(Sphinx screams - the cello's screech)

CELLIST

Upon hearing the right answer, the Sphinx collapsed and died for all to hear. Oedipus was surrounded by all and offered adoration and gratitude.

WOMAN

Embraces and cheers.

MAN #2

Blessings and gifts.

MAN #3

A crown.

(A crown is placed on OEDIPUS)

CELLIST

A humble young man lead Thebes to its most prosperous times, and for nearly twenty years the Gods did shine down their love. Until the darkness came...

CHORUS

(echoes multiple times) Darkness, plague.

(The CHORUS becomes citizens and they pray silently in the courtyard. OEDIPUS walks to his people)

OEDIPUS

Citizens. We are all one in this nightmare. I know you are all ill, as am I. I see the pain every day and night as do you; it follows us all. It is important that every one of you know that I do not sit above you. I sit with you. I not only see the effects of this plague, I feel it deep within me. You have all entrusted me as your king and I suffer not just as an individual, but as a King I suffer for the entire city. When you weep, my soul weeps with you. When you lose hope, when you suffer, I too feel it. Your pain is mine. We are all brothers. And as your brother, I promise you, I am doing everything I can. EVERYTHING. I have not, will not, cannot sleep or eat with Thebes in such pain. You are my only concern. But countrymen, I am not without hope. I have hope, people of Thebes. I have hope and I continue to press forward for resolution.

WOMAN

But what are you going to do?

OEDIPUS

I have been...

MAN #3

My family is starving

OEDIPUS

I hear you.

MAN #2

My family has died.

OEDIPUS

I have seen the daily funerals.

MAN #3

Then my family will be next.

OEDIPUS

Brothers, remain calm. Stay with me. Answers are being sought this very moment: I sent Queen Jocasta's brother, Creon, to Apollo's temple many days ago to see what he could learn. I hoped to have had word from him sooner, but I expect him back at any time. And when he gets here, we will follow all that Apollo commands of us until the city is well once again.

WOMAN

Bless you.

MAN #2

Thank you.

MAN #3

Bless you, King.

OEDIPUS

You have not been forgotten. Not at all. Your Queen prays every morning and night for resolution as do I. Let me see if perhaps we can get you some drink and bread. For strength as we wait for Creon's return.

NORTHERN AGGRESSION

ORIGINALLY ENTITLED
AND THE CREEK DON'T RISE

A PLAY BY
JOSEPH ZETTELMAIER

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROB GRAFF - an unemployed automotive engineer, 45
MADDIE GRAFF - his wife, a veterinarian, 30
DR. BENJAMIN “DOC” BOGGS - a retired physician, 70s

TIME

The Present

PLACE

Various locations in Carson, Georgia

NORTHERN AGGRESSION (originally entitled AND THE CREEK DON'T RISE) received its world premiere on July 7, 2011 at Williamston Theatre (Williamston, MI). It was directed by Joseph Albright. Set Design by Daniel C. Walker, Lighting Design by Reid G. Johnson, Costume Design by Holly Iler, Sound Design by Will Myers. Stage managed by Nan Luchini.

The cast was as follows:

ROB GRAFF: John Lepard
MADDIE GRAFF: Kate Peckham
DOC BOGGS: Thomas D. Mahard

For information about production rights, visit www.jzettelmaier.com.

NORTHERN AGGRESSION

ACT I SCENE 1

(The kitchen of ROB & MADDIE's new house. It is set up-tables, chairs, etc. MADDIE is checking everything out. ROB can be heard offstage shouting)

MADDIE
Honey?! What is...

(ROB rushes onstage, holding a large suitcase)

ROB
Oh my god. I just...oh god...it was...

MADDIE
What was it?

ROB
Like a rat...except huge...possibly prehistoric...

MADDIE
Just slow down.

ROB
You should've seen this thing! It was... like... *(He spreads out his hands, showing her how large the animal was)* And it hissed!

MADDIE
Hissed? Like a snake?

ROB
No! Like some sort of demon-rat! Get me a gun and a bible.

MADDIE
Rob. Rob.

ROB
Yeah?

MADDIE
Was it a possum?

ROB
No! It was...I don't know.

MADDIE
Grey. Hairless tail. Close-together eyes?

ROB
Yes! Prehistoric demon rat!

MADDIE
Honey, that was a possum.

ROB
That's a possum?

MADDIE
Don't worry. They're harmless. It just hissed because you scared it.

ROB

No, no, no. It hissed to scare me. I'm very confident about that.

MADDIE

Stay here. I'll take care of it. *(She heads off)*

ROB

No! Trust me! That thing is looking for a fight!

MADDIE

I've got this. *(She can be heard offstage)*
Go on! Go! Get out of here! *(After a moment, she returns)* The possum says you scream like a girl.

(He laughs)

ROB

Please just tell me it's not living here.

MADDIE

It ran into a burrow across the street. I think it was just investigating. You've really never seen one before?

ROB

Yeah. On the Discovery Channel, I think. *(Beat)* So let's just load everything back into the car and get out of here.

MADDIE

Rob...

ROB

No, no. The possum has clearly marked his territory. I say we just give him the house and cut our losses.

MADDIE

You're hilarious. *(She goes to him, hugs him)*

ROB

New rule - you have to deal with the wildlife.

MADDIE

That's fair.

ROB

I'll handle the home-repair, you handle the giant rodents.

MADDIE

It's a marsupial, actually.

ROB

Show off. *(Beat. ROB looks around the room)* Wait. This place looks different.

MADDIE

Is it because we've got everything moved in?

(He stares at her, shocked & thrilled)

ROB

We're moved in?

MADDIE

We're moved in.

(She runs at him, jumping up. He catches her)

ROB

Careful. I stink.

MADDIE

I don't care. I do not care. We're unpacked.

ROB

Yes we are. *(He kisses her, then sets her down)*

MADDIE

How's your back, old man?

ROB

It's fine.

(He sits down tenderly in a chair. She stares at him)

ROB

It's fine.

MADDIE

Uh-huh.

ROB

This is not my back. This is an old baseball injury.

MADDIE

Located in your back.

ROB

It's an amazing coincidence.

MADDIE

Pansy.

(She rubs his shoulders. He winces in pain)

MADDIE

Too hard?

ROB

Yeah.

MADDIE

Want some ice?

ROB

No, just... *(He rises, then lies down on the table)* Oh yeah. There we go.

MADDIE

I threw your back out.

ROB

No, no, no. No. It's from moving.

MADDIE

Am I getting heavy?

ROB

Oh dear lord...

MADDIE

'Cause you can tell me if I am.

(Beat)

ROB

You're getting heavy.

(She hits him. He laughs)

ROB

See?! You told me I could tell you, but you lied.

MADDIE

It's the damn food here! You don't know! I was here for a month before you got here. You don't know what it was like. Set up the office, go to the Chic-Fillet. Meet with the staff, go to Krystals. It's all fat, Rob. It looks like meat, like vegetables, but it's all fat. And the next thing I know, I...

ROB

(taking her hand) Honey, I was joking. You're like 110 pounds. No one anywhere, ever, would call that heavy.

MADDIE

Oh! New rule-If you make fun of my weight, I can make fun of your age.

ROB

Sure. Why not? *(He rises and heads offstage)*

MADDIE

Where are you going?

ROB

Tylenol.

(They continue talking, though he remains offstage)

MADDIE

Know what you need?

ROB

Tylenol?

MADDIE

You need to get out. Check out the town.

ROB

This isn't a town. It's where culture goes to die.

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IT CAME FROM MARS

NORTHERN AGGRESSION
(formerly AND THE CREEK DON'T RISE)

THE SCULLERY MAID

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