

January 2015

Volume IX, Number V

A Conversation from the Kitchen with Artistic Director Rachel Lampert

COUNT ME IN - JANUARY WORLD PREMIERE

We're stepping out in January with a new comedy filled with music and dance by yours truly. I am thrilled to be working with a wonderful company of actors all new to the Kitchen Theatre Company. My work as a writer seems to fall into two categories: 1. musicals and plays about people I invent, and 2. performance pieces about my life and real people I know. In my dance days, one critic called my work "auto-choreography." I guess this is auto-performance.

Everything referred to in the play has some truth to it; they are real stories with some artistic license. The characters are long-time dancer friends remembering good times when the stakes were high, but life was in front of us; the future was ours. They contrast long-lost high school friends who haven't connected in years. My character, Rachel, considers the value and importance of all these relationships and more. Underlying everything is the inevitability of aging and deciding—what will fill the third act?

I set out to write a comedy and a fantasy. I think both are present in the play.

The company of KTC newcomers includes **Avery Sobczak**. He's a recent Ithaca College graduate, now living in NYC. He danced last year in our Dance the Night Away gala, and this is his Main Stage debut. **Tucker Davis*** recently moved to Ithaca and has been teaching dance and choreographing around town. He directed Opera Ithaca's inaugural production this fall. He also serves as choreographer for *Count Me In*. If **Keith Pillow*** looks familiar, it might be because he has been in many, many TV shows and films. It is exciting to have him working with us at the Kitchen. **Lydia Gaston*** is a former member of Rachel Lampert & Dancers, twenty plus years ago. In the interim, she became an actor and has been in five Broadway shows as well as working often with Pan Asian Rep. She is playing an interesting amalgam of the women in my company. I appreciate her permission to mold the past to make it work for *Count Me In*. The final cast member is **David Squires**. He is my real-life husband who plays himself fairly well on stage. When you live a life in the theater, like I do and "all the world's a stage," sometimes the stage and the real life combine.



On the set of *COUNT ME IN* (from left to right): Lydia Gaston*, Keith Pillow*, Rachel Lampert*
(*member, AEA)



COUNT ME IN by Rachel Lampert runs January 14 - February 1.

Tyler M. Perry (*The House, Venus in Fur, Lungs*, and many more) has designed a delightfully imaginative combination of "stage space" and "real life" space. **Hunter Kaczowski** (*Lonely Planet*) is designing the costumes. I am very happy to work with him again. **Lesley Lisa Greene** will be making magic as sound designer. My composer partner **Larry Pressgrove** (*Tony & the Soprano, Bed No Breakfast, Angle of the Sun, Waiting for Spring*) wrote the music for an original song for the piece. We will be in the insightful hands of director **Emily Jackson**, our Artistic Associate, making her Main Stage directing debut.

Previews for *Count Me In* begin on Wednesday, January 14 and opening night is January 17. The show will close on February 1. Thanks to underwriter C.S.P. Management and media sponsor Lansing Star.

PHYSICS FAIR, A MUSICAL BY RACHEL LAMPERT AND LESLEY GREENE - JANUARY 24 AND 31. TWO PERFORMANCES ONLY!

Physics fun for the whole family comes to Kitchen Theatre Company for two Saturday afternoons: January 24 and 31 at 1:00pm. KTC collaborates with Xraise (the outreach arm of the Cornell Laboratory for Accelerator-based Sciences and Education) and young actors from Running to Places Theatre Company. It has been an exciting theater and physics-filled rehearsal period. Lora Hine, director of educational programs and Erik Herman, education and outreach coordinator of Xraise have been sharing their scientific knowledge with our middle and high school age cast of actors, who are not only singing and dancing, but are also learning to explain and demonstrate some marvelously fun physics demos.

This project grew out of an early family musical written by Rachel Lampert and Lesley Greene for KTC's Family Fare series. Erik Herman and Lora Hine approached KTC to see if we might be interested in working with them on some kind of theater/science theatrical event, and we jumped at the opportunity. Lesley and I have missed working on plays for family audiences and this seemed like a great way to stick our toes back in. The project is supported in part from a grant from the American Physical Society.



The cast of *PHYSICS FAIR* with their experiments.

Physics Fair is directed by Emily Jackson with interns Zoe Benditt and Jenni Kuhn as assistant directors and Patrick Young as music director. The cast includes: Elisheva Glaser, Christian Henry, Erin Hilgartner, Imri Leshed, Caitlin Mallory, Kayla Markwardt, and Lucian Mead-VanCort as the students, with Running to Places' Joey Steinhagen as their teacher, and Lesley Greene as the school principal.

Don't miss experiencing how Mildweather Middle School's shy and retiring science teacher Mr. Mundani risks everything to support the 6th graders' Physics Fair. And maybe learning about science can transform even the set-in-her-ways principal Ms. Standard.

There are only two performances, so tickets will be in demand. Call us at (607) 272-0570 or purchase online at www.kitchentheatre.org.

LIGHT UP THE KITCHEN FOR 2015



This year's interns are a great group. In addition to their regular assignments, they each set goals to reach during their year at KTC. Our graphic design intern, Laura Hoelzl, looked at the outside of the building and thought it needed more light. Artistic intern Zoe Benditt wanted to try her hand at fundraising, and Artistic intern Jenni Kuhn joined in. With help from our Artistic Associate, Emily Jackson, they have initiated a modest fundraiser to provide exterior lighting for the front of our beautiful theater. The "Light Up the Kitchen for 2015" campaign aims to raise \$2,015 in the month of January. Please visit their campaign page at <http://tinyurl.com/kitchen2015>. We are very grateful to have such committed and thoughtful young professionals on the Kitchen's team.

KITCHEN THEATRE COMPANY'S FIRST NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT RESIDENCY

KTC will host its first-ever new play development residency at the Saltonstall Foundation from February 5-9. Two actors, one playwright, and Artistic Associate Emily Jackson (director) will enjoy a retreat setting to focus on the development of a play. Their daily work will culminate in an informal reading on the final day. The Kitchen has always produced new plays, but we have not had a formal development period that was not connected to the rehearsal/production process. This is a first step exploring this early involvement with a new play-in-progress. We all thank the members of the Artistic Director's Excellence Fund, whose support makes this residency possible.

UPDATE ON ANNUAL FUND CAMPAIGN

Thanks to everyone for your generous support of the Annual Fund Fall and Year-End Campaign. We asked you to stretch this season to help us begin to address some long-standing staffing concerns, and you did. We thank you so much for joining us. We surpassed our \$95,000 goal and raised \$99,861.

The Annual Fund supports all aspects of Kitchen Theatre Company's activities including production and administration. Once again, thank you for your enthusiastic encouragement.

THE HOUSE TEDDY BEAR FINDS A NEW HOME

Congratulations to Linda Pope, the winner of the silent auction from Ye Olde Holiday Shoppe. She takes home the famous teddy bear from *The House*. Thanks to everyone who supported the Kitchen through purchases at the Holiday Shoppe. We hope you enjoyed the holiday season and wish you the best in 2015.



Linda Pope and Stephen with the bear.

KITCHEN SINK SERIES

Civic Ensemble will be holding a staged reading of *A More Perfect Union* by Vern Thiessen at the Kitchen on Sunday, January 25 at 7:30pm. The reading is directed by Godfrey L. Simmons, Jr. and stars Jennifer Herzog* and Ryan Hope Travis*. Visit www.civicensemble.org for more information.

NEXT UP ON THE MAIN STAGE

Director Michele Minnick (last season's *Lungs*) returns to the Kitchen to direct *A Body of Water* by Lee Blessing, a mystery about family and memory. A middle-aged couple awakens every morning in a beautiful house surrounded by water, not knowing who or where they are. When a young woman arrives, her explanations only add to the uncertainty. Previews at the Kitchen start February 18. Opening night will be February 21, and the show closes on March 8. This production will move to Rochester's Geva Theatre Fielding Theatre series following its run at KTC.



The cast for *A BODY OF WATER* from left to right: Lesley Gurule*, James Leaming*, Carmen Roman* (*member, AEA)

DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY 2015

Dust off your dancing shoes and join us for delicious food, great cocktails, and fun dance tunes from Little Joe and the Big Shots on March 21. Dance the night away and watch local celebrities take the floor in exhibition dances. For tickets, call us at (607) 272-0570 or purchase online at www.kitchentheatre.org. Get your tickets now before this event sells out!