



MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE



A WOMAN OF THE WORLD

MAY 15-30, 2021

COURTNEY SALE, NANCY L. DONAHUE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to our second show of the 42nd season; Rebecca Gilman's moving and thought provoking *A Woman of the World*. Artists have been



responding to great works by other artists for eons. In *Woman*, Gilman has crafted a fresh approach with a tertiary focus on Emily Dickinson and a more deliberate one on Mabel Loomis Todd, who brought Emily's poetry to the masses. The play reminds us the championing of great writing can come from surprising energies.

Mabel Loomis Todd lived life out loud. As I've learned more about her throughout this process, I can imagine the way small town life in Amherst, MA, impacted her giant personality. One of the greatest delights of my job is being astonished—in reading *Woman*, I found a native daughter, who was as complex and layered as the natural New England landscape she cherished. The heart of the play is the 13-year romantic relationship between Mabel and Austin Dickinson, Emily's brother. Dramatized with clarity and deep passion, Mabel sheds social expectation of her time to follow heart, art, and beauty. I hope she astonishes you as much as she did me.

We are thrilled to welcome back to MRT Denise Cormier in the title role. We are honored to work with this fabulous design team, including filmmaker Kathy Wittman, who has beautifully captured the essence of being in Liberty Hall through film. We extend enormous gratitude to the MRT Board and the entire MRT staff. Producing during Covid has required all "hands on deck" from every area of the theatre. We are consistently moved by the mission focus of our team. And finally, thanks to all of you—for showing up, for streaming, for carrying us through to the other side of the pandemic. While we can't wait to be in person together again, we are grateful to be invited into your homes with this piece.

In Service,
Courtney

**Welcome. This is a diverse, inclusive,
accepting and safe space.**

BONNIE J. BUTKAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you. Thank you for believing in us over the last 12 months and joining us for our spring 2021 season on video. I hope you felt some of the joy and energy of live performance in Liberty Hall when you streamed *Until the Flood* and *A Woman of the World*.



Although our spring producing season will end after *A Woman of the World*, we still have one big event—the **Lowell Together Gala on June 11**. This virtual gala is a partnership between Free Soil Arts Collective and MRT. Free Soil has been our Company in Residence for the 2020-21

Season, and it has been an honor to learn from, and partner with, them. Their most recent project, *Visualize Lowell's Black History*, can be seen throughout Lowell. **Learn more here**. For this gala, we are sharing new works performed by favorite artists from both companies. These plays and artists are lifting up important stories from Lowell, and all proceeds benefit our education, community, and artistic programs. Find out more and get **your tickets here**.

As always, thanks to all of you for supporting MRT. We would not be here without you. You are joined by a broad range of funders who gave generously to arts and culture organizations, giving all of us a little hope. Gratitude for a much-needed life raft of funding: Mass Humanities, Mass Cultural Council, Lowell Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, CARES Act, and the Payroll Protection Program. And for constant trust in our decisions, and great personal generosity: our Trustees; for the smartest problem-solving and flexibility: the MRT staff; and for true leadership in every way: Courtney Sale.

Special thanks to Enterprise Bank, who said yes when we had no idea how the spring would unfold.

Thanks again to all of you. I'll see you on June 11!

Thank you,
Bonnie



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
BLACK HISTORY

FOR MORE STORY

WALKER LEWIS

Walker Lewis, an ardent abolitionist, operated a barbershop at the Merrimack House Hotel (present-day Springfield Gas Station) in the 1830s. This barbershop was co-managed by Lewis and his brother-in-law John Levy. Lewis was also one of the founding members of the Massachusetts General Colored Association (MGCA), the first all-black organization in the country. Lewis (with the support of the MGCA) arranged for Boston to print David Walker's 76-page Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World in 1829, demanding unconditional and immediate emancipation of all slaves in the USA. Walker's son, Enoch ran a used clothing store, mainly to assist escaping slaves to change their appearances with new and better clothing. Walker would cut and style their hair to assist in their disguise. Lewis died on October 26, 1866, in Lowell of tuberculosis. He was buried in the family lot in the Lowell Cemetery.

USA 1866

For more information, visit vickibill.com



Lowell Together

for Free Soil Arts Collective &
Friday, June 10
LowellTogether.

CLICK FOR REGISTRATION, INFO



er: Virtual Gala

Merrimack Repertory Theatre
 e 11, 2021
 GiveSmart.Com



FORMATION, AND THE AUCTION!

INTERVIEW: PLAYWRIGHT REBECCA GILMAN

*We talked about Mabel Loomis Todd with playwright Rebecca Gilman during a break from her busy schedule as the MFA Playwright Program Director at Texas Tech University. A Pulitzer Prize finalist for *The Glory of Living*, her other plays include the critically acclaimed *Spinning into Butter* and *Boy Gets Girl*.*



MRT: What inspired you to write about Mabel?

Rebecca Gilman: The connection was birds (which are their own poetry, I think!). I'm a birdwatcher, and I went to the Hog Island Audubon Camp several years ago. While I was there, the camp's director, Steve Kress (also a professor at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Vice-President of the National Audubon Society, and the person responsible for re-introducing the Atlantic Puffin to the U.S.) mentioned that they were developing a play about Mabel. Somebody pointed to me and said, "She's a playwright." Long story short, I was the first artist-in-residence on Hog Island. I lived in Mabel's cabin, and I wrote the play at her desk. It was a remarkable experience – one I'll always treasure.

MRT: People seem to have very different opinions – some positive, some negative – about Mabel and her influence over Emily's body of work. How do you see her place in the history of this great poet?

RG: Mabel seems to be somebody you either love or hate. Personally, I love her dedication to Dickinson's poems and her fierce determination to see them published. She worked incredibly hard to make that happen. Of course, the difficulty is in trying to determine the motivations behind that goal. You could argue that she understood and appreciated Dickinson's genius and wanted to share it with the world. Or, you could argue that she was a narcissist, who saw the poems as a way to garner fame and attention for herself. I think the answer lies somewhere between those two interpretations, and I don't think they contradict each other. But whatever your take on Mabel, you could never say she was boring!

MRT: Mabel seems to have been such an intriguing character all on her own. She also seemed to be way ahead of her time. What do you find most fascinating about her?

RG: I see her as the ultimate explorer. She explored the world alongside her astronomer husband, David Todd. (She climbed Mount Fuji with a concussion!) She explored and reveled in her sexuality. Basically, when she saw something she wanted (including Austin Dickinson, Emily's brother) she went after it, without hesitation or apology. She was frank about her ambitions and her desires, which was revolutionary for a woman at that time. Like I said, she was never boring. If she were alive today, she'd have her own reality TV show.

VIDEO/CLICK Courtney Sale interviews actor Denise Cormier about her return to MRT. "There's nothing like the Boston theatre community. To come back, here, in my artistic home, just feels right."

VIDEO/CLICK Take a tour of Hog Island, Maine, the summer home of Mabel Loomis Todd. Courtesy of Audubon Camp.

VIDEO/CLICK "Before I Got My Eye Put Out - The Poetry of Emily Dickinson." A beginner's guide to the great poet, courtesy of Crash Course.



Denise Cormier
in *A Woman of
the World*. Photo:
Kathy Wittman

MABEL LOOMIS TODD (1856-1932)

*"She writes the strangest poems,
and very remarkable ones.
She is in many respects a genius."*

Mabel Loomis Todd speaking of Emily Dickinson

A descendant of the Plymouth Colony, Mabel was the only child of nationally esteemed astronomer, poet, and naturalist Eben Jenks Loomis; he was a close friend of Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman. She was educated at private schools



in Cambridge and Georgetown and studied at the New England Conservatory of Music. She later married another astronomer, David Todd. When he accepted a post at Amherst College in 1881, they moved to Massachusetts, where she became the paramour of Austin Dickinson and a friend to Emily Dickinson.

She was deeply entranced by Emily Dickinson's poetry. Because Emily was a recluse, the two women never met in person, but they spent much time on opposite sides of a door at the Dickinson home and corresponded until the

poet's death in 1886. A short time later, Emily's sister, Lavinia, discovered more than 1,800 poems and asked Mabel to organize them. After two years of painstaking work, Mabel enlisted the help of publisher Thomas Higginson, who was also a longtime correspondent of Emily. He and Todd "polished" and "corrected" several of the poems for publication. The first volume of *Poems by Emily Dickinson* appeared in 1890 to great acclaim. They published two more volumes of poetry, and Mabel published two volumes of *Letters of Emily Dickinson*.

Upon retirement in 1917, Mabel and David moved to Florida, where she fostered the movement to establish the Everglades National Park. They summered on Hog Island

Photos of Mabel Loomis Todd courtesy of Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

in Maine, where she fought to conserve the land, which was later donated to the National Audubon Society by her only child, Millicent Todd Bingham.

Millicent said of her indomitable mother that Mabel “fused every experience, however spectacular, however obscure, into vitality . . . an abounding joie de vivre, which no slings or arrows of outrageous fortune could quench or dim. She had as much fresh enthusiasm for chaperoning each promenade, each cotillion, as for a new expedition to an unknown country. She loved to use her powers and to see results, of course. But she had besides a tireless zest for just living.”



Mabel Loomis Todd died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1932 on Hog Island. She and David are buried in Wildwood Cemetery in Amherst near the grave of Austin Dickinson.

Sources: Britannica, New England Historical Society, and Amherst Historical Society and Museum.



Hog Island, Maine, today.



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COURTNEY SALE
NANCY L. DONAHUE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



BONNIE J. BUTKAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

A WOMAN OF THE WORLD

BY

REBECCA GILMAN

FEATURING

DENISE CORMIER*

SCENIC DESIGNER

BILL CLARKE[^]

COSTUME DESIGNER

A. LEE VILIESIS

LIGHTING DESIGNER

CAROLINA ORTIZ HERRERA[^]

ORIGINAL MUSIC/SOUND DESIGNER

DAVID REMEDIOS[^]

FILMMAKER

KATHY WITTMAN

STAGE MANAGER

BECCA FREIFELD*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

SUSAN L HUDSPETH*

DIRECTED BY

COURTNEY SALE⁺

MAY 15-30, 2021

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*Actors and Stage Managers appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

+Member of Stage Director and Choreographers Society

^Member of United Scenic Artists

This play was first performed by The Acting Company in association with The Miranda Theatre Company.

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

A lifelong resident of Amherst, Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson is considered one of the two premier voices in American poetry. While she was extremely prolific as a poet and regularly shared writings with friends, Dickinson was not publicly recognized during her lifetime. The first volume of her work was published posthumously in 1890 and the last in 1955.

A recluse for most of her life, Emily Dickinson did not meet in-person with anyone outside of her family — even Mabel Loomis Todd, who would later introduce Emily’s poems to the world. She would talk to Mabel through a cracked door, and she even enjoyed listening – from a different room

- as the younger woman played the piano. Emily lived her entire life in her family’s home with her father, Edward Dickinson, a state and national politician, who served one term in the U.S. Congress; her brother, attorney Austin and his wife, Susan Gilbert; and her younger sister and closest confidante, Lavinia.



According to the New England Historical Society, Dickinson’s poetry was "heavily influenced by the Metaphysical poets of seventeenth-century England, as well as her reading of the Book of Revelation and her upbringing in a Puritan New England town, which encouraged a Calvinist, orthodox, and conservative approach to Christianity."

Emily never read the poetry of the other great American voice in poetry, Walt Whitman, because she believed he had a reputation for being amoral, it’s reported. However, she was an admirer of the poetry of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning and John Keats.

After Emily’s death in 1886, Lavinia discovered 40 hand-bound volumes of nearly 1,800 poems. These volumes, or “fascicles,” were booklets assembled by hand by the poet. Lavinia invited Mabel to edit some of the poems for publication. Emily’s unusual style was controversial to traditional scholars but immediately loved by the public.

Sources: Emily Dickinson Museum and the New England Historical Society

CAST

Denise Cormier Mabel Loomis Todd

TIME AND PLACE

The Parlor at the Point Breeze Inn, Hog Island Maine, 1931.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION CREDITS

Wigs Rachel Padula-Shufelt
Wardrobe Supervisor Hannah Davis
Streaming Platform Overture+
Photographer Kathy Wittman
Custom Knitwear CostumeKnitter (@CostumeKnitter on Instagram)

THANK YOU

Emily Dickinson Museum
New England Historical Society
Julie Dobrow

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



The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.



The Scenic, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in this production are represented by United Scenic Artists (USA) Local USA-829, IATSE.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), a consortium of regional theatres throughout the nation, and AEA (Actors' Equity Association), SDC (Stage Directors and Choreographers Society), and USA (United Scenic Artists).

EMILY DICKINSON POEMS

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!
How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

(in the play)

APOTHEOSIS.

Come slowly, Eden!
Lips unused to thee,
Bashful, sip thy jasmynes,
As the fainting bee,
Reaching late his flower,
Round her chamber hums,
Counts his nectars — enters,
And is lost in balms!

This is my letter to the world,

That never wrote to me, –
The simple news that Nature told,
With tender majesty.
Her message is committed
To hands I cannot see;
For love of her, sweet countrymen,
Judge tenderly of me!

(in the play)

Success is counted sweetest

By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the Purple Host
Who took the Flag today
Can tell the definition
So clear of Victory

As he defeated – dying –
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Burst agonized and clear.

WHO'S WHO



DENISE CORMIER

(Mabel Loomis Todd)
A Massachusetts native, Denise is delighted to return to MRT, after a long absence, for her seventh show here. Her credits

include, Broadway: *The Minutes*, *Linda Vista*, *The Graduate* (National Tour). Regional Theatre: Asolo Repertory Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Pioneer Theatre Company, Palm Beach Dramaworks, Cleveland Play House, Virginia Stage Company, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. TV/Film: "The Affair," "Law & Order: CI," "Six Degrees." She is a 2017 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

REBECCA GILMAN (Playwright) plays include *Luna Gale*; *Spinning Into Butter*; *Boy Gets Girl*; *The Crowd You're in With*; *Dollhouse*; *Twilight Bowl*; *Blue Surge*; *Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976* and *The Glory of Living*. Her plays have been produced by (among others) the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, the Royal Court Theatre, Lincoln Center Theater, the Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Theatre Workshop and MCC Theater. Gilman is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the George Devine Award, the Harper Lee Award and the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award. She is an inductee in the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame, and she was named a finalist for the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for her play *The Glory of Living*. Gilman is an artistic associate at the Goodman Theatre. She is also the director of the MFA playwriting

program at Texas Tech University.

COURTNEY SALE (Director, Nancy L. Donahue Artistic Director) joined MRT as the Nancy L. Donahue Artistic Director in March of 2020. At MRT she has directed readings of *Gaslight* by Steven Dietz and *The Pill* by Tom Horan, in collaboration with UMass Lowell, as well as *A Woman of the World* by Rebecca Gilman. MRT commissions under her leadership include Vichet Chum and Trista Baldwin. Prior to MRT, she served as the Artistic Director of Seattle Children's Theatre (SCT), the nation's leading generator of new work for young audiences. At SCT, she directed *Black Beauty*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, and *The Little Prince*. Commissioned writers under her tenure include Idris Goodwin, Cheryl L. West, Allison Gregory, Karen Hartman, Trista Baldwin, Ramon Esquivel, and James Still. Recent directing projects: *Tiny Beautiful Things* at Seattle Rep, the world premiere of Steven Dietz's *The Ghost of Splinter Cove* at Children's Theatre of Charlotte, and Ellen Fairey's *Support Group for Men* at Contemporary American Theatre Festival (CATF). Other credits include *The Cake*; *Wild Horses*; *Not Medea* (CATF); *Mr. Burns*, *A Post Electric Play*; *On Clover Road* (The Phoenix Theater); *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest* (Indy Shakes); and *Zen Prayers & Songs* (Fusebox), written and performed by Kirk Lynn. She spent three years as Associate Artistic Director at Indiana Repertory Theatre, where directing credits include the world premiere of *April 4, 1968: Before We Forgot How to Dream*, *The Mountaintop*, *The Mousetrap*, *Jackie & Me*, *And Then They Came for Me*, *The Giver*; and two

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iterations of *A Christmas Carol*. With the Duplicates, she co-created *The Fictional Life of Historical Oddities*, *September Play*, *The Man with the Dancing Eyes*, and *The Poison Squad* (Austin Critics Award). She has developed new work at Denver Center Theatre Company's Summit New Play Festival, The New Harmony Project, Write Now, Dorset Theatre Festival, TheatreWorks (Palo Alto), New Plays for Young Audiences at NYU/Provincetown Playhouse, and The Orchard Project. Other distinctions included Indianapolis Business Journal's Forty Under Forty designation, Cornish College of the Arts Distinguished Alumni Award, and the keynote speaker at the 2017 International Council of Fine Arts Deans. She has taught at Summer at Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle Children's Museum, Temple College, and The University of Texas at Austin. Ms. Sale is a proud member of the National Theatre Conference and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. She is represented by A3 Artists Agency in NYC. BFA, Cornish College of the Arts. MFA, The University of Texas at Austin.

BILL CLARKE (Scenic Designer) is pleased to return to Merrimack Rep where he designed *Until the Flood* and 26 productions with Charles Towers, favorites being *The Price*, *Secret Order*, *A Delicate Balance*, *The Seafarer*, and *Stella and Lou*. He designed *A Walk in the Woods* on Broadway. Off-Broadway credits include *Lemon Sky* (Keen Co.), *So Help Me God!* (Lortel), *The Daughter-in-Law* (Mint Theater; NY Times 10 Best List), *June Moon* (Drama Department), Ann Magnuson's *You Could Be Home Now* (NYSF). Regional credits include

Seattle Rep, Old Globe, Milwaukee Rep, Alley, Denver Center, Asolo, A.R.T., Huntington, McCarter, Coconut Grove, Cleveland Playhouse, Cincinnati Playhouse, and Indiana Rep. MFA: Yale School of Drama. Awards: Merrimack Rep Artistic Achievement Award, IRNE (New England) Award, New Hampshire Theatre Award, Hollywood Drama-Logue Award, and San Diego Theater Critics' Circle Award.

A. LEE VILIESIS (Costume Designer/Production Manager) Credits include the 2016 National Tour of *Fame!*; *Fannie Lou Hamer*, *Speak On it!*, *45 Plays for 45 Presidents*, *Tinker to Evers to Chance*, *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *This Verse Business* (starring Gordon Clapp), and *Stella and Lou* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre); *Silent Sky* (Merrimack College); *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Dorset Theatre Festival); *Godly Creatures* (The Hub Theatre Company of Boston); *Our Town* (Riverside Theatre Works); *Forbidden Broadway*, *Shout! The Mod Musical*, *Annie*, *The Producers*, and *Nunset Boulevard* (The Arundel Barn Playhouse); *Hansel and Gretel's Grim Tale* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Virginia Stage Company Educational Tour). Education, BFA Theater Design, Rutgers University, Mason Grass School of the Arts. Lee is the Production Manager and Costume Shop Manager for Merrimack Repertory Theater and has worked in other costume shops including: Dorset Theatre Festival, Theatre by The Sea, Virginia Stage Company, and Opera Theater of St. Louis. www.aleeviliesis.com

CAROLINA ORTIZ HERRERA (Lighting Designer) is a New York-based

WHO'S WHO

Lighting Designer for theater, opera, and dance. Selected credits include: *Until the Flood* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre); *All's Well That Ends Well* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *American Mariachi* (Arizona Theater Company); *Seven Guitars* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *Yellowman*, nominated for Best Lighting Design at the AUDELCO Awards (Billie Holiday Theatre); *She Persisted* (Atlantic Theatre Company); *Sweeney Todd* (Yale Drama); *Titus Andronicus*, *Women Beware Women*, *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Yale School of Drama); *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Shubert Theatre); *The Silent Lyre* (Lighten Theatre); and *Trouble in Tahiti* (New Jersey University). Carolina is the lighting director for Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, and she was featured on the 2nd Annual "Women to Watch List" from the Broadway Women's Fund. Education: MFA, Yale School of Drama. Member of USA Local 829. www.carolinaeortiz.com

DAVID REMEDIOS (Original Music and Sound Design) MRT: *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*; *The Haunted Life*; *Slow Food*; *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*; *Murder for Two*; *The Villains' Supper Club*; *KNYUM*; *The Royale*; *Women in Jeopardy!* (Onstage Theatre Award); *The Making of a Great Moment*; *Abigail/1702*; *Home of the Brave*; *I and You*; *Out of the City*; *Oceanside*; *The Best Brothers*; *Year Zero* (original music and sound); *Two Jews Walk into a War*; *The Blonde, the Brunette, and the Vengeful Redhead*. Recent: *Berta, Berta* (Everyman Theatre); *The Children* (SpeakEasy Stage); *We All Fall Down* (Huntington Theatre Company); *The Clean House*

(Portland Stage); *A Welcome Guest, Wrecked* (Contemporary American Theater Festival); *Barefoot in the Park* (Gloucester Stage); *The Burdens* (City Theatre Company); *Quack* (Alley Theatre). Regional: American Repertory Theatre (50 productions); Trinity Rep; Geva Theatre Center; The Studio Theatre; 59E59; Theatre for a New Audience; La Jolla Playhouse; Berkeley Rep; CENTERSTAGE Baltimore; Cincinnati Playhouse. International: Prominent arts festivals in Bogotá, Paris, Hong Kong and Edinburgh. Awards: IRNE, Connecticut Critics Circle, Elliot Norton. David is Program Head of Sound Design at Boston University's School of Theatre. remediiosound.com.

KATHY WITTMAN (Filmmaker) is a Boston-based photographer, video designer and documentary filmmaker. She is the principal artist at Ball Square Films, a video production company specializing in documentary photo and video for the performing arts. Recent projects include the video design for *Our Time*, a theatrical time capsule at Suffolk University, and director of photography for *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at New England Conservatory. She also produces virtual performances and maintains video archives for many Boston organizations, including Blue Heron, Boston Baroque, The Huntington Theatre Company, and the Boston Early Music Festival.

BECCA FREIFELD (Production Stage Manager) MRT: *Fannie Lou Hamer: Speak On It!*; *Maytag Virgin*; *Cambodian Rock Band*; *Slow Food*. Regional credits include *Cloud 9* (Central Square Theater); *Cardboard*

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Piano (regional premiere), *Straight White Men* (regional premiere), *Two Jews Walk into a War*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Oleanna*, *Thurgood* (original run & on tour), *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Good* (New Repertory Theatre); *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Gloucester Stage Company); *Every Brilliant Thing* (SpeakEasy Stage Company); *Barbecue* (Lyric Stage Company of Boston); *Shoes On, Shoes Off* (Brandeis Department of Theater Arts); and *Romeo & Juliet* and *Evil Dead: the Musical* (Arts After Hours), among others. Ms. Freifeld is beyond thrilled to return to MRT for this production and cannot wait to see all our stages light up once more.

SUSAN L HUDSPETH (Assistant Stage Manager) has been a proud member of Actors' Equity Association since 1998. Susan is so pleased to be working with Courtney Sale and Denise Cormier, as well as the fantastic staff here at MRT. She has worked in amazing institutions like New York City Opera, NYC; Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY; and The Joseph Papp Public Theatre, NYC; working with legends like Liza Minelli and The Radio City Rockettes, Anna Deavere Smith, Blue Man Group, musical powerhouses Elvis Costello, Roy Nathanson and Debbie Harry, as well as former U.S. Presidents. She is grateful to have had the privilege of working with Directors Lloyd Richards, Reggie Life, and Lee Brewer. She attended the SUNY Purchase Conservatory Program for Theatre, Concentration in Stage Management, Class of 1998. And as always, this is for you Mom.

BONNIE J. BUTKAS (Executive Director) has served as the Senior Director of

Foundation Relations at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Director of Development at Geva Theatre Center, Director of External Relations at the York Theatre Company, Director of Development and Communications at TADA! Youth Theatre, a Directing Assistant on *The Lion King* on Broadway, and the co-founder of Lexington Dance Collective. Achievements include: a \$10 million capital campaign at Geva; pivotal funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for RIT; and significant growth in contributed revenue at the York, TADA!, and Bristol Valley Theatre. At MRT, she oversaw the company's 40th Anniversary Gala breaking previous fundraising records; led MRT through a yearlong artistic director search and transition; posted three of the top 10 best-selling shows for the company; secured a prestigious Barr Klarman Massachusetts Arts Initiative grant; and led sustained growth in contributed income. She teaches at Middlesex Community College and serves on the Board of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT). Previously she volunteered with Girl Scouts of Western New York, YWCA of Monroe County, and co-founded Action Together, a progressive coalition of volunteers. She lives in Westford with her family and extends gratitude to the Trustees, staff, artists, patrons, and volunteers of MRT.

MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE www.mrt.org

Merrimack Repertory Theatre (MRT) celebrates 42 years this season as the Merrimack Valley's professional theatre. With a steadfast commitment to new plays, MRT normally produces seven

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works, including several premieres, in the 279-seat Nancy L. Donahue Theatre at Liberty Hall.

Under the leadership of the **Nancy L. Donahue Artistic Director Courtney Sale** and **Executive Director Bonnie J. Butkas**, MRT strives to fulfill its mission to “create remarkable new and contemporary plays that bring joy to our art form while engaging, entertaining and enriching our community.” The non-profit company guarantees that shows are accessible to audiences of all incomes; partners with businesses and other non-profits to fully engage the community; and contributes to the economic vitality of Lowell by attracting diverse audiences from throughout the region.

Recent acclaimed productions include *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* and *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, the two bestselling productions in MRT’s history; *The White Chip* (Off-Broadway transfer); *I and You* (Off-Broadway transfer) and *Silent Sky* by Lauren Gunderson; *Women in Jeopardy!* and the world premiere of *Slow Food* by Wendy MacLeod; *KNYUM* by Cambodian-American playwright and actor Vichet Chum; and *The Lion*, singer-songwriter Benjamin Scheuer’s award-winning musical memoir, which launched its national tour from MRT in August 2015, following critically acclaimed runs in New York and London.

CLICK to see photos.



SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

MRT Annual Meeting

The five plays for the remainder of the 2021-22 Season will be announced:

June 21, 2021

STAY IN TOUCH

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