



SOUTHBANK  
THEATRE COMPANY

PRESENTS

THE  
**PROFESSION**  
A NEW PLAY



By Marcia Eppich-Harris

**MAKE HISTORY**

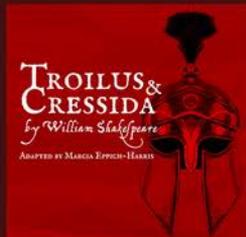
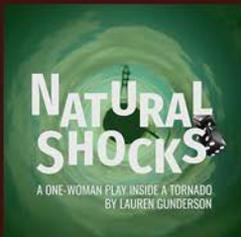


SOUTHBANK  
THEATRE COMPANY

# MAKE POLITICAL HISTORY



## 2022-2023 SEASON



This season, we take on politics. Every day there is another mass shooting in America. Every day women's health is controversial. Every day there is a person being abused by a spouse.

We're putting a spotlight on these and other issues.

This is our protest — art is our fight song.



# Make Political History!

BY MARCIA EPPICH-HARRIS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to Southbank Theatre Company's second season! When the nation threatens the rights of those with uteruses, it's time to get political. Southbank's second season will face America's modern challenges with works that speak to our moment in history.

## *The Profession* by Marcia Eppich-Harris (September 2022)

Valerie's world is turned upside down when the administration at St. Sebastian University unjustly fires her. As she attempts to save her career from free fall, the costs to Valerie and her star student, Marina, become too high. How much should be sacrificed for a job?

*(Content warnings: abortion, violence, oppression)*

## *Natural Shocks* by Lauren Gunderson (November 2022)

Angela is trapped in her basement, waiting out an approaching tornado. Though a self-proclaimed unreliable narrator, she begins to reflect on a lifetime of trauma, illuminating the truth behind her endangerment. Based on Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy, *Natural Shocks* is a damning condemnation of violence, abuse, and firearms in America.

*(Content warnings: domestic violence, guns)*



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## Make Political History (Continued)

### *Didn't See That Coming (An Evening of Plays)*

by Mark Harvey Levine

(March/April 2023)

Hey, we all need laugh now and then, right? We'll be producing several of Levine's short plays — none of which have ever been produced in Indianapolis. Equal parts funny and touching, these plays will give you a night to remember!

(**Content warnings:** None. Family Friendly)

### *Troilus and Cressida* by William Shakespeare

(Adapted by Marcia Eppich-Harris; Summer 2023)

Seven years into the Trojan War, there appears to be no end in sight. What started out as a fight to return Helen of Troy to her husband, Menelaus, has become a hypocrite's battle for soldiers on both sides. While the men indulge their deepest desires, the women become the pawns. Who controls women's bodies and their destinies? And is there hope in a world where politics overrule the needs and desires of women?

(**Content warnings:** Violence, oppression)

MUSIC FEATURED IN THE PROFESSION WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

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Music from the band  
Karate, Guns & Tanning  
used in this production

FEATURING VALERIE GREEN, JOY MILLS, & ERIK FOX

# Elisabeth Speckman

## From the Director

*“Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light.” - Milton*

In *The Profession* we meet two women at pivotal points in their lives: Marina, an intelligent and charismatic undergrad, is ready to take the academic world by storm, if only she could pay her tuition; and Valerie, a scholar who finds herself at the seeming end of her academic career despite a lifetime of service and devotion. Both women must decide if they are willing to play the patriarchal “game” that could save them—and if that “salvation” is truly all it seems. A text rich with Biblical themes and Shakespearean interludes, *The Profession* takes us on a journey that exposes—sometimes literally—the ways we as humans create and destroy our own paradises. It is my honor to have directed this premier production of Marcia Eppich-Harris’s *The Profession*, and my hope that you come to love (and perhaps detest) these characters—played brilliantly by this cast—as much as I have. Like educational speaker George Couros, I believe that “Learning is creation,” and it has been my pleasure to learn and create with Southbank. For me, the experience was a type of “paradise found.”

With Much Gratitude,  
Elisabeth Speckman





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# The Key to *Paradise Lost* in *The Profession*

*The Profession* uses John Milton's *Paradise Lost* as its metaphorical foundation. For those who have never read *Paradise Lost*, it is an epic poem from the 17th century that details the war in Heaven between Satan and God, Satan's banishment from Heaven, and his seduction of Eve to eat an apple from the Tree of Knowledge. In Milton's version of events, Adam decides to eat from the Tree after Eve because he loves her and is willing to die to stay by her side. Additionally, God is wrathful and menacing, and Jesus shows compassion to Adam and Eve, promising to save them with his own sacrifice. Each character in *The Profession* has a symbolic cognate in *Paradise Lost*.

**Valerie – Jesus** – the representative of justice, mercy, and compassion

**Marina – Eve** – the woman who is tempted into sin and disobedience, but whose actions inspire Jesus's salvation

**Mark – God** – all-powerful punisher and slayer

**Paul – Adam** – a man who loves God but chooses to follow his own desires over his faith

**Jill – Belial** – a slothful devil who argues not to rebel against God since it is a fight that cannot be won

**Lucy – Satan** (previously known as Lucifer in other traditions) – the tempter whose rational persuasion undermines the threat of punishment

**Flint – Beelzebub** – a friend of Satan who suggests the temptation of Eve



## Marcia Eppich-Harris

### From the Playwright

*The Profession* is the first full-length play I'd ever written. I'd started writing it in June of 2019 and finished a draft just in time to have a table read with the Indiana Playwrights Circle (IPC) in September 2019. It was accepted for the Indianapolis New Play Festival that Fat Turtle Theatre Company was putting on in May 2020. When Covid hit in March that year, and everything shut down, I was unsure if *The Profession* would ever see the stage.

It wasn't just Covid that shut down this play, though. I was uneasy with it from the beginning. Much of the plot is based on my own experience, or experiences I witnessed, as an academic. However, I tried to distance myself from the show by making the main character, Valerie, older – nearing retirement – and single. But the motivations were all wrong, and I knew it.

“We know what we are, but  
know not what we may be.”

After fifty or so drafts and nearly three years of ruminating, I revised Valerie's plot, making it still fictional but more honest. What you're seeing in this production is the result of three years of major development. A thousand thanks to Becky Schломann, Trick Blanchfield, Kate Duffy, Andrew Kramer, Eric Bryant, Doug Powers, Elisabeth Speckman, IPC, and many others who helped develop this show. I couldn't have done it without you.

I've learned in the process of writing and rewriting *The Profession* that the play isn't about me. It's about the dramatic questions raised in the first monologue: Who controls women's bodies and who controls their destinies? Do women have agency in this world or are we simply at the mercy of powerful men? Recent developments in politics have made our society ask these same questions. But the past is not our destiny, as Valerie says at the end of the play. I believe we can move on from our traumas and not let them be the only things that define who we are. Our choices may at times make us stumble and fall, but in recovering from those mistakes, we recreate ourselves and find resilience through the struggle.

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# THE PROFESSION

BY MARCIA EPPICH-HARRIS

## Cast

Dr. Valerie Hardy	Becky Schlomann
Marina Dekker	Trick Blanchfield
Dr. Paul Stockton	Brian Stuart Boyd
Dr. Mark Townsend	Brad Staggs
Lucy	Lola Lavacious
Dr. Jill Carter	Jeri Jackson
Flint	Thomas Smith

## Creative Team

Director	Elisabeth Speckman
Producer, Playwright & Stage Manager	Marcia Eppich-Harris
Set and Audio Design	Aric C. Harris
Lighting Design	Eric Matters
Intimacy Director	Claire Wilcher
Costume Designer	Kristin Renee Boyd
Tech & Board Operator	William Harris
Set Painters and Decorators	Betty Bruther, Marcia Eppich-Harris, Kai Harris, William Harris, Aric C. Harris, and Casey Ross
Stained Glass Artwork	Trick Blanchfield

## Music Featured by Karates, Guns, and Tanning

*Artifacts*

*Graffiti Children*

*Hot Bots*

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Content warnings: violence, partial nudity, and sexual situations.

Run Time: 2 hours and 10 minutes

There will be one 15-minute intermission with concessions available in the lobby



# Actor Bios

## BECKY SCHLOMANN

(DR. VALERIE HARDY)

Becky Schломann (she/her) is an Indianapolis director, actor, and playwright who's delighted to make her Southbank debut. BA in theatre: Knox College; MFA in drama and theatre for youth: University of Texas at Austin. Becky spent a decade teaching and directing at the K-12 and college levels, specializing in arts integration, curriculum development, and teacher training. Now, she's happy to simply be a hobbyist. Recent credits: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Garfield Shakespeare), *aMUSEd* (DivaFest and IndyFringe), *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Twelve Angry Jurors* (both Ricks-Weil), *Steel Magnolias* (Wayne Township), *Follow the Drinkin' Gourd* (Westfield/Main Street), *Much Ado About Nothing* (First Folio). Thank you, Marcia and Elisabeth, for entrusting me with this role at this moment in history, and thank you, the audience, for joining us.



## TRICK BLANCHFIELD

(MARINA DEKKER)

Trick Blanchfield (she/they) is the author of both *V.i.t.r.i.i.o.l.* – a collection of poetry and flash fiction exploring recovery as a solitary science, and *Permafrost* – a novella written in prose depicting Psyche's trials being in love with Love as she navigates each emotional season on the path to reclaiming her own self. An Indianapolis artist, actor, poet, and model, Trick's artwork, photography, and books can be found in various galleries or art markets around Indianapolis. This is their second opportunity to bring an original Marcia Eppich-Harris play to life, and their third chance to work with Southbank Theatre on a provocative and challenging piece –not that playing an aspiring writer hopelessly obsessed with Milton consistently questioning convention versus integrity is that far off from the truth.



## BRIAN STUART BOYD

(DR. PAUL STOCKTON)

Brian feels blessed to be making his return to the Indianapolis stage as a part of this world premier for Southbank Theatre after leaving in 2011 for NYC and Butte, MT, where he mainly focused on film acting as well as co-founding the Covellite International Film Festival. Brian found his love for acting at a young age, starring as Winthrop in *The Music Man* at age 9 and traveling with the national *Sound of Music* tour when he was 13. He has acted in over 28 Plays, 4 Feature Films and 21 short films. He is very excited to be back in theatre in his hometown of Indianapolis, contributing to the development of new work. This will be his 14th world premiere.



# Actor Bios

## BRAD STAGGS

(DR. MARK STOCKTON)

Brad Staggs (he/him) is a part-time actor, full-time writer, and full-time Indiana Guard Soldier. In between all that, he's a full-time happy husband to Angela. Being involved in original theater content makes him happy, and he couldn't be happier than to be in this incredible production.



## LOLA LAVACIOUS

(LUCY / COSTUME, MUSIC, & CHOREOGRAPHY CONSULTANT)

Lola LaVacious (she/her) is a multifaceted fixture in the Indianapolis community. She is a performer, singer, director, producer, emcee, and creative gal Friday. She's been a director for "Girl Pride" at The Vogue, hosted RAW: Natural Born Artists at the Egyptian Room, and directed and produced full-length burlesque shows with Angel Burlesque, her own burlesque show, and currently produces a new benefit series, Righteous Rager. Last summer Lola was the artistic director for the Fringe premier of "Small Gods, Big Problems," assisted this last season with makeup for Westfield's *Dracula*, *Of Mice and Men*, and this summer for *Frozen Jr* in Noblesville. She's excited to stretch her performance chops in *The Profession*. When not busy she enjoys co-working with her fellow creatives at local coffeeshops, writing dumb jokes, and making elite music playlists.



## JERI JACKSON

(DR. JILL CARTER)

An Ohio native, Jeri (she/her) is thrilled to be a part of *The Profession*! Her most recent credits include playing inmate Ruth in *The Department of Corrections – Women's Division*, a film by DP Demarco Plays & Films. She has appeared as a mother character in various local films including *Split Decisions*, *Dear Diary*, and *Love of a Lifetime*. Jeri's stage presence includes roles of Ruby Moore in the OnyxFest play *Forever Moore*, and Savannah's Mother in *Waiting to Exhale* – the stage play.



## TOM SMITH

(FLINT)

Tom Smith (he/him) first stepped foot on stage at the age of (old) and has found paradise in retirement. He has been kept very busy since then in shows for various theaters; some of his favorite roles have been Judge Taylor in *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Booth Tarkington Civic Theater, Simon Stimson in *Our Town* at The Belfry, the narrator in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* at the Basile Westfield Playhouse, and Saunders in *Lend Me a Tenor* at Carmel Community Players. But for his role in *The Profession*, he has had to work hard under the guidance of director Elisabeth Speckman to find dark places like never before. Tom is thrilled with this cast and thanks you, the audience, for making community theater possible with your devotion to it. Tom is retired from the FBI and resides in Westfield.



# Creative Team

## ELISABETH SPECKMAN

(DIRECTOR)

Elisabeth Speckman (she/her) is a playwright, actor, and director. She has written, taught, and directed theatre for over 10 years. Her acting training includes the Yale Summer Conservatory for Actors, Second City Training Center Chicago, and the Michael Chekhov School. She has appeared in numerous productions in the Indianapolis area with Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre, IndyFringe, Bard Fest, CCP, and others, and won the 2015 Best Major Supporting Actress Award from the Encore Association. As a playwright, her work has been produced throughout the United States and internationally. She was a finalist for the 2021 and 2022 Henley Rose Award for Women Playwrights; other honors include attending the Kennedy Center Summer Playwriting Intensive and serving as a reader on the national committee for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Her proudest accomplishment, however, is being a mother to her two sons alongside her husband, Chris. Visit [egspeckman.com](http://egspeckman.com) for more info.



## MARCIA EPPICH-HARRIS

(PLAYWRIGHT, STAGE MANAGER, PRODUCER)

Marcia Eppich-Harris (she/her) is a playwright and a founding member of the Indiana Playwrights Circle (IPC), where she is the Scene Nights Coordinator and serves on the steering committee. Marcia's writing includes plays, fiction, poetry, scholarship, and reviews. Her creative writing is influenced by the literature and history of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the British Medieval and Renaissance periods, as well as current events. She focuses thematically on politics, philosophy, the arts, gender, family, and culture. Marcia is also the artistic director of Southbank Theatre Company. Marcia's full-length plays include: *The Profession*, *Seneca and the Soul of Nero*, and *Seeking Nietzsche*. This is her first time stage managing a production, and it's quite a lot of fun.



## KRISTIN RENEE BOYD

(COSTUME DESIGNER/PROPS MASTER)

Kristin is excited to be designing her first show for Southbank Theatre Company. A graduate of the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, Kristin has almost 20 years of experience in the world of design as a Filmmaker, Fashion Designer, Costume Designer & Visual Artist. Kristin is going into her second season as the on-staff Costumes & Properties Artisan at the Phoenix Theatre after moving to Indy with her husband from Montana where they met working on a film together. Recent film credits include *Somewhere in Montana* (Production Designer - Props Master - Set Designer) and *Treasure State* (Production Designer - Props Master - Set Designer).



## ERIC MATTERS

(LIGHTING DESIGN)

Eric is glad to be at Fonseca Theater working on *The Profession* with Southbank Theater Company. Eric can be found working various technical parts of the theater arts at any number of community and professional theaters around Indiana. He would like to thank Marcia and Elisabeth for the opportunity to work on this production. He would also like to thank his family for bringing him into this adventure and supporting him throughout this chaotic journey.



# Creative Team

## CLAIRE WILCHER

(INTIMACY DIRECTOR)

Claire (she/her) is happy to be back home in Indianapolis after earning her Master of Fine Arts in Theatre from Michigan State University in 2021, where she specialized in acting, pedagogy, and intimacy direction. Claire is a trained professional intimacy director/choreographer with IDC Professionals (Intimacy Directors and Coordinators), where she also works as a teaching artist, advocating for consent-based theatre spaces, bodily autonomy for actors, and safe-yet-creative storytelling. Her intimacy choreography has been seen on the stages of Indiana Repertory Theatre, Phoenix Cultural Center, Summit Performance, Marian University, Williamston Theatre in Michigan, Three Brothers Theatre in Waukegan, and Redtwist Theatre in Chicago, among others. More at [clairewilcher.com](http://clairewilcher.com).



## ARIC C. HARRIS

(SET & AUDIO DESIGN)

A web developer and graphic designer by trade, Aric is proud to make *The Profession* his third endeavor with Southbank Theatre. He has worked for acts such as Peter, Paul, and Mary and Manhattan Transfer, and Peter Sagal as well as done lighting design for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Aric is currently pursuing his dreams of being a Polynesian-Pop and Lowbrow artist while still running his small digital design agency. Aric's work can be seen at [tikikitchen.com](http://tikikitchen.com) and [4621creative.com](http://4621creative.com)



## WILLIAM HARRIS

(TECH & BOARD OPERATOR)

Will Harris is a junior at Herron High School and has been an actor for nine years. His theatre journey began with React, formerly Young Actors Theatre, and took off from there. Most recently he appeared as Jesse in *Love Overdose* for the first two weekends of the IndyFringe Festival. Will is also a musician who plays guitar and oboe, and is currently playing in Herron's Jazz ensemble. This is his first time on the tech side of theatre, and he's learning a lot!





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