

Frankly Speaking

NEWS OF FRANK THEATRE • MARCH — 2019



30th Anniversary
1989-2019

THE CRADLE WILL ROCK



Scenic designer Sara Herman's sketch of the set for CRADLE, and photos of the cast in rehearsal in Frank's space in the Ivy Building.

Book, Lyrics, and Music by Marc Blitzstein

March 15-April 7
at Gremlin Theatre

550 Vandalia, St. Paul, MN 55114

(located in the Annex building, near Lake Monster Brewing)

Directed by **Wendy Knox**

Musical Direction by **Sonja Thompson**

Costumes by **Kathy Kohl**

Set Design by **Sara Herman**

Lighting Design by **Tony Stoeri**

Sound Design by **Dan Dukich**

Stage Managed by **Jared Zeigler**

PERFORMANCE AND TICKET INFORMATION

- Performances are Thurs-Sat at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 pm.
- Pay-what-you-can performance on **Saturday, March 16** at 8:00 pm.
- Ticket prices are \$30 for general admission, \$25 for students with valid ID and seniors 62+.
- Tickets available at www.franktheatre.org or by phone through [brownpapertickets](http://brownpapertickets.com) at 1-800-838-3006. For more information, visit www.franktheatre.org.



Featuring: Sasha Andreev, Maria Asp, Kate Beahan, Bob Beverage, Hector Chavarria, Gillian Constable, JC Cutler, JP Fitzgibbons, Thalia Kostman, Molly Sue McDonald, Chelsie Newhard, Cameron Reeves, Scotty Reynolds, Carl Schoenborn, Joe Nathan Thomas, David Wasserman, and Allison Witham
Musical accompaniment by Sonja Thompson



**PARKING and DIRECTIONS
to Gremlin Theatre
550 Vandalia Street
(in the Annex)
St Paul, MN 55114**

PLEASE CHECK THESE DIRECTIONS WITH GOOGLE MAPS OR SOME OTHER APP TO CONFIRM THEM!

From the NORTH: Take 35W South to exit 23A to MN-280 South. Take the exit toward Territorial Rd/University Ave. Turn left onto University Ave W. Turn right onto Vandalia St. Turn left onto Wabash Ave. Parking for 550 Vandalia is on your right.

Gremlin Theatre is located in the building with Lake Monster Brewery. Enter via the double doors next to the brewery.

From the SOUTH: Head North on I-35W to exit 16B to merge onto I-94 East toward St Paul. Take exit 237 toward Vandalia St/Cretin Ave. Turn left off the ramp toward Vandalia Street. Turn right onto Wabash Ave. *See above.*

From the EAST: Take I-94 W to exit 237 for Cretin Ave/Vandalia St. Use the right 2 lanes to turn right onto Cretin Ave N. toward Vandalia St. Turn right onto Wabash Ave. *See above.*

From the WEST: Take I-94 East toward St Paul. Take exit 237 toward Vandalia St/Cretin Ave. Turn left off the ramp toward Vandalia Street. Turn right onto Wabash Ave. *See above.*

VIA PUBLIC TRANSIT:

Train: Take the Metro Green Line to the Raymond Ave Station. Walk East on University Ave to Vanadalia St. Turn Right onto Vandalia St. Turn left onto Wabash Ave. 550 Vandalia St. is to your right. Gremlin Theatre is located in the building with Lake Monster Brewery. Enter via the double doors next to the brewery.

Bus: Take the 16,67 or 87 bus to the University Ave & Vandalia St stop. (Please check bus schedules and routes) Walk South on Vandalia St. Turn left onto Wabash Ave. 550 Vandalia St. is to your right. Gremlin Theatre is located in the building with Lake Monster Brewery. Enter via the double doors next to the brewery.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Alternately labeled a “satire,” a “political cartoon, and a “labor operetta,” **THE CRADLE WILL ROCK** is a landmark of the American musical theatre. Dedicated to Bertolt Brecht (whom Blitzstein had met), **CRADLE** was produced in 1937 during a time of backlash against Labor’s gains in the New Deal, making the first production both novel and controversial. **CRADLE** portrayed an American system that had become corrupt, with the centralization of power placed in the hands of a few industrialists represented by Mr. Mister, the play’s antagonist. The first production was staged against the backdrop of industrial turmoil and violent strikes, specifically the 1933 strike against Republic Steel in Aliquippa. The Federal Theatre Project, headed by Hallie Flanagan, had produced a stream of plays targeted as “leftist.” Funded by the WPA, it became the target of conservatives in Congress. When budget cuts were imposed, just before **CRADLE** was to open, all federally funded productions were put on hold. Producer John Houseman, author Blitzstein, and director Orson Welles, were convinced that **CRADLE** was the target of censorship, and they were determined that the show would go on. After they were locked out of the intended theatre, they rented a piano, and arranged for a guerilla performance at a rented theatre 20 blocks away. The actors and musicians, forbidden by their unions to set foot on the stage, were in the audience, as Blitzstein, the composer, sat at the piano for a “concert version” of the play. As he struck the chords of the first song, he was joined by the voice of an actor in the house, then another and another. The show became a hit and an icon of American theatre. (The fascinating story of that production is portrayed in the Tim Robbins’ 1999 film, **THE CRADLE WILL ROCK**. Produced by the WPA’s Federal Theatre Project and Hallie Flanagan, the show was shut down on opening night due to anti-union sentiment. 600 audience members followed the cast and crew to a vacant theatre 20 blocks away in an amazing story of “the show must go on,” which it did.)

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

MARC BLITZSTEIN was born in Philadelphia in 1935. He showed musical promise at an early age, and went on to study at the Curtis Institute, then briefly with Nadia Boulanger in Europe. In the early 30s, he became interested in a new aesthetic, a more socially conscious form of music. He wrote **THE CRADLE WILL ROCK** at the suggestion of Bertolt Brecht in 1937 and achieved overnight notoriety with the first production of **CRADLE**, directed by Orson Welles. Blitzstein’s greatest commercial success was his adaptation of Brecht’s **THE THREEPENNY OPERA** (produced by Frank Theatre in 2014 and in 1999). Blitzstein died in 1964, leaving much of his work unfinished.

From the Pioneer Press, 2003: “There wasn't a more perfect convergence of scri pt, venue and current events thi s year than the one that occurred i n Wendy Knox's stagi ng of thi s staunchl y pro-uni on musi cal from the 1930s. ...The pl ace and the ti mes hel ped gi ve the pi ece a jol t of contemporary el ectri ci ty and represented the fi nal bi t of jui ce i n Knox's megawatt producti on...”

TALK BACK TO FRANK!

Join us after our Sunday matinee performances on March 17, 24 and 31 for post-show discussions featuring panelists from the community. Engage with other audience members and Frank fans as we chew on some of the themes of **THE CRADLE WILL ROCK** and how it resonates with our world today.



From *City Pages*, 2003: "There was joy in this Wendy Knox-directed production—I love-being-an-actor joy—that gave Marc Blitzstein's influential work more life than one might expect from such a seemingly dated work. Performed by a great big cast, *The Cradle Will Rock* was theater punctuated with comic-book onomatopoeia, satirical without cynicism, and Marx with an ear for melody and snazzy chord changes."



GIVE BACK TO FRANK!

Love what we do? Want to help us do it? Here is your opportunity. Volunteers are needed for board membership, ushering, box office, concession sales, administrative duties, fundraising, marketing and more. Please send an email to info@franktheatre.org if you can give some of your time to help us continue being Frank!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

What a thrill to have this most excellent group of folks working on **CRADLE WILL ROCK!** Returning from our 2003 production are **Maria Asp** (Ella Hammer), **Molly Sue McDonald** (Mrs. Mister) and **Kathy Kohl** (Resident Costume Designer of over two decades). Previous Frank performers include **Kate Beahan** (Moll) who previously appeared in **GOOD PERSON OF SETZUAN**, **Carl Schoenborn** (Larry Foreman) who joined us for **THE VISIT** and **LOVE AND INFORMATION**, **Chelsie Newhard** (Sister Mister), **Allison Witham** (Trixie), and **Cameron Reeves** (Gus, Clerk) all are returning after **THE VISIT**, and **Joe Nathan Thomas** (Reverend Salvation) who was in **CITIZEN**. We have a whole crop of faces who are new to Frank but very familiar from many other stages in town: **JC Cutler** (as Mr. Mister), **Sasha Andreev** (as Junior Mister and Dr. Specialist), **David Wasserman** (Stevie), **Bob Beverage** (Editor Daily), **Hector Chavarria** (Dauber), **Scotty Reynolds** (Yasha), **Gillian Constable** (President Prexy), **Thalia Kostman** (Sadie, Mamie), and **JP Fitzgibbons** (Harry, the Druggist). **Jared Zeigler** (Stage Manager) who previously wrangled **CITIZEN** and last year's **GROUNDLED** tour, **Dan Dukich** (Sound Designer) who has an impressive rap sheet with Frank, most recently designing **THE VISIT**, and **Sonja Thompson** (Musical Director) who was the musical director for our 2014 production of **THREEPENNY**, join newcomers **Sara Herman** (Set Designer) and **Tony Stoeri** (Lighting Designer). **Wendy Knox** caps 30 years of Frank, directing this production.

ABOUT THE STORY

Moll, a streetwalker new to "Steeltown USA," is arrested and finds herself in Night Court along with the "Liberty Committee," a handful of distinguished citizens (brought together by Mr. Mister, an industrial magnate) who are opposed to organizing activities by the Steelworkers Union. As they gathered in a public space, they were mistakenly arrested for congregating. A drunken vagrant, who was once a prospering pharmacist, explains to Moll how these "pillars of society" are as guilty of selling themselves to Mr. Mister as she is of selling her wares on the street. The wealth and power of Mr. Mister has corrupted the entire city, portrayed through flashback and song. In the end, Larry Foreman, the union organizer, is brought into court and shows how one person can make a difference. When Mr. Mister arrives to bail out his lackeys, he attempts to buy out Larry Foreman. His offer is rebuked, just as word arrives that other unions have joined the steelworkers in the finale.

FEATURED RECIPE

Clementine Cake

A few years ago, one of my fellow mermaids at the Y raved about this cake. She sent the recipe, but it took me a couple of years to get around to trying it. Since then, I've made the cake about 5-6 times. It's easy, it's delicious, and people love it! Even my foster dog—who ate nearly the whole cake that was baked for the cast on the first day of rehearsal—endorses it.

INGREDIENTS:

4 to 5 clementines (slightly less than 1 lb) 2 1/3 cups ground almonds (or almond flour)
6 eggs 1 heaping teaspoon baking powder
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar

Optional: Powdered sugar for dusting, or for making a glaze, or you can drizzle with chocolate

Put the clementines in a pot, cover with water, bring to a boil, and simmer for 2 hours. Drain and, when cool, cut each clementine in half, remove the seeds, and put in food processor. Chop til fine. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Butter and line an 8 or 9-inch springform pan with parchment paper. In mixing bowl, beat the eggs, add sugar, almonds, and baking powder. Mix well, adding the chopped clementines. Pour the cake mixture into the prepared pan and bake for 30 to 50 minutes; keep an eye on the cake, when a toothpick comes out clean, it's done, but the top may begin getting dark, at which point, you should cover with foil. Remove from the oven and let cool in the pan on a rack.

FRANK T H E A T R E

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
3156 23rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407-1907
www.franktheatre.org



Non-Profit
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Twin Cities, MN

MARCH 15 - APRIL 7, 2019!

Frank Theatre receives the generous support of The McKnight Foundation, the Albrecht Foundation, The Minneapolis Foundation (Albrecht Family Fund, the Rebecca Rand and E. Thomas Binger Family Fund, and the John L. Sullivan Fund), the Nancy M. and Victor S. Johnson Foundation and many, many generous individual contributors. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through the Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support fund and through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Frank Theatre is a professional theatre company committed to producing unique work that stretches the skills of the artists who create the work while simultaneously challenging the everyday perceptions of the audience through the exploration of ideas and issues of social, political and/or cultural concern.

Frank Theatre was founded with the desire to produce work that provides opportunities for artists to grow, to stretch, to work outside of and beyond the typical opportunities provided by theatres with a greater commercial interest. The theatre has successfully pursued this goal through the consistent staging of works that require the actors, designers, and director to challenge themselves and each other.

The theatre is a Twin Cities'-based company, founded in 1989 by Artistic Director Wendy Knox. Now in its 30th season, the theatre has staged nearly 70 productions.

The theatre is committed to producing work that reflects the world in which we live.

Call Brown
Paper Tickets
at 1-800-838-3006
for tickets.



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WHY THIS PLAY?

In planning our 30th season, I was looking for work that reflected the spirit of Frank over the past three decades. Frank's stock-in-trade, seemed to be a likely contender, but **THE VISIT** proved to be a reasonable alternative and an excellent kick-off to our third season. I kept chasing my tail over the second title, but after a particularly active news day, I just decided that a good ole shot of 1930s agit-prop theatre might be good for us all. **CRADLE** is a near-perfect way for Frank to cap its 30 years of adventure.

Audience members have asked over and over "When are you going to bring **CRADLE** back?" The nostalgia for the production is as much about the audience experience of climbing those stairs into the vacant Sears building *to see a play* as it is about the impact of the production itself. But even if that vacant building were still available to us 15 years later, it wouldn't be the same. So this time, we're in a *bonafide* theatre space, ready to provide an equally exciting experience for you.

In 2003, when we first performed **CRADLE**, a number of local strikes were taking place, giving an extra jolt to our production. Today, there are pivotal teachers' strikes happening across the country. However, this time another aspect of the show—Mr. Mister's ability to buy out whatever he needs—reflects the Citizens United decision of 2010, which was not in place during our previous production. The infusion of unlimited money to influence our political system, giving corporations as much of a right to free speech as individuals have, has changed our political system completely. In **CRADLE**, Mr. Mister is able to buy out the church, the academy, the press, the medical establishment, the artists, to get them to bend to his will—the same dynamic we see every day in the news: the mines in northern Minnesota, cabinet appointments, the pricing of pharmaceuticals, the buyout of arts venues, etc. The Almighty Dollar is enjoying a heyday in our real world, as much as it is in this musical from 1937. As Mrs. Mister sings, "Make the world safe for Democracy! Make the world safe for Liberty! Make the world safe for Steel and the Mister family!," it becomes clear that the distance we've traveled from 1937 is not all that far, yet the distance from 2003 to 2019 is significant.

While **CRADLE** packs its punch, it is also so much fun to work on! A sense of joy and invention infuses everything, from Kathy Kohl's delightful costumes, to Sonja Thompson's tickling of those ivories, to the actors' delight in performing the piece. **CRADLE** is a difficult piece—the music is tricky and demanding—but there is an unmistakable sense of joy in putting it on stage. Many thanks to all of the artists, the audiences, the donors, funders, board members, and volunteers who have helped us get to this 30 year mark. Without all of the smarts, generosity, blood, sweat and tears, and humor from the many, many folks who have made Frank "Frank," we wouldn't be here. Thank you so much! We're looking forward to sharing our 30th birthday present with you.

Wendy Knox, Artistic Director



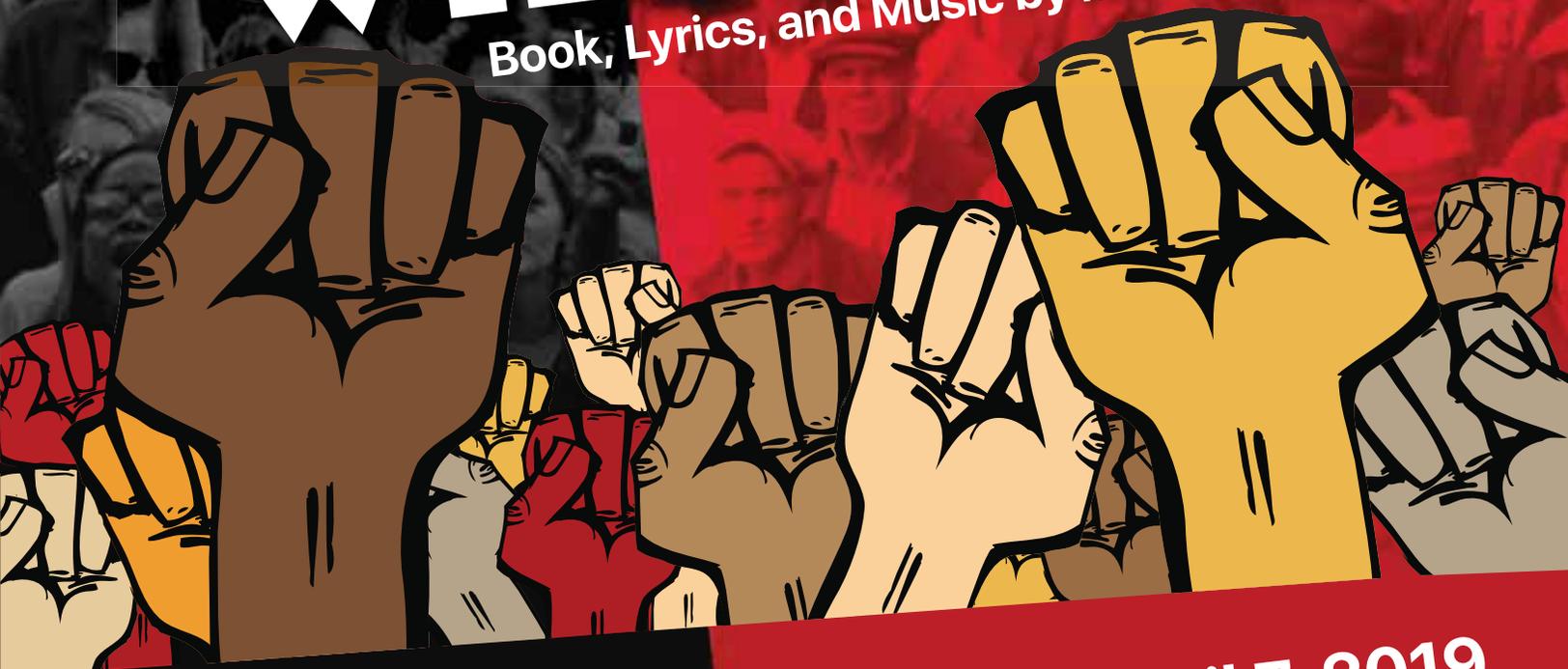
PHOTO BY ANN MARSDEN

FRANK
T H E A T R E

celebrates its 30th anniversary with

THE CRADLE WILL ROCK

Book, Lyrics, and Music by Marc Blitzstein



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Musical Direction by **Sonja Thompson**

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