

# spotlight

November/December 2021 \$5.00

american association of community theatre



**AACT  
NewPlayFest  
World Premiere**

**Educational  
Conferences  
2022**

**aactWORLDVEST  
2022**

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A theatre that produces a new play is embarking on an artistic adventure that will energize both the company and its patrons. AACT is now accepting applications for Producing Theatres for the 2024 NewPlayFest, with a deadline of February 1, 2022

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### The Theatre Community of Community Theatre

As theatres begin the process of returning to regular performances, there's an opportunity to reinvent community theatre that is open and welcoming, that has learned from the past and is more exciting and vibrant because of it

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Now's the time to register for the Community Theatre Management Conferences in March; they'll be virtual, with a limit of 50 attendees per conference. And save the date for TEAMS Conference, live at Hale Centre Theatre in Utah, July 2022

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### aactWORLDFFEST 2022

Mark your calendars for June 20-26, 2022, and delight in performances from top-quality theatre troupes from around the globe. Register now for the best early bird prices

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### A Dynamic Duo Retires

After over 20 years of volunteer and contractor service, Festival and Education Coordinator Ron Ziegler and Education Coordinator Kathy Pingel retired from their positions with AACT at the end of August

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A Mime (Jill Lightfoot) and a physical therapy specialist's skeleton perform a stylized waltz in the prologue of the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone, at Rover Dramawerks in Plano, Texas

Photo: Stacy Winsett

## Contacting AACT

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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at david@aact.org to submit content. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org for advertising rates and specs. David and Darlene are also available at the phone number above.



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# AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere: *Proprioception* Opens at Rover Dramawerks

Plano, Texas, celebrated the latest AACT NewPlayFest 2020 world premiere when *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone, opened on September 10 at Rover Dramawerks. The production was originally scheduled for April, 2020, but was postponed and rescheduled due to the pandemic. The play received an outstanding production and was well received, running through September 18.



Jason Rice

*Opening Night of the world premiere of Proprioception, by Marilyn Millstone, at Rover Dramawerks in Plano, Texas.*

*Front row (seated, left to right): Marilyn Millstone, Proprioception playwright; Carol M. Rice, Rover Dramawerks Executive Artistic Director and Director of Proprioception*

*Second row (left to right): Linda M. Lee of the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation; Sue Doty-Goodner, cast/Esther Abramson; Stacy Winsett, Costume Designer; Jill Lightfoot, cast/Kylie Jasper; Jason R. Davis, cast/Mike Sheffield; Susan Austin, AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator; Linda Habjan, Dramatic Publishing Company Vice President of Acquisitions; Kathy Pingel, AACT NewPlayFest Dramaturge*

*Back row (left to right): Jason Rice, Rover Dramawerks Board Secretary; David Cockerell, AACT Marketing/Communications Director; Kenneth Hall, Lighting Designer/Board Operator; Bennett Frohock, cast/Randy Ayers; Sara Jones, Stage Manager and Rover Dramawerks Board Member; Glynda Welch, Rover Dramawerks Board President; Rick Tuman, Rover Dramawerks Board Vice President; Kristin M Burgess, Props Designer; Sakura Brunette, Artist Angel Sponsor*

Playwright Marilyn Millstone attended the opening, sharing her delight and gratitude for the Rover Dramawerks production.

Marilyn explained, "It is said that good things come to those who wait. But after waiting—wading—through 18 endless months of pandemic-related delays for my play, *Proprioception*, to premiere, the September 2021 opening didn't just feel good. Or great. It felt miraculous." She continues:

"In fact, as I write this—just a week after Rover Dramawerks's marvelous production officially

opened—I still can't believe we pulled it off. But pull it off, we did.

In August, I packed my suitcase to fly out to Plano for a three-day workshop with the cast, Director Carol M. Rice, and AACT interim dramaturge David Cockerell. As I packed, I felt rather overwhelmed by anxiety: I hadn't flown since the pandemic began, and even though I was fully vaccinated, the thought of spending hours in the air in close proximity to strangers frightened me. Added to that was the discomfiting news that the brilliant AACT dramaturge



with whom I had originally worked—Kathy Pingel—would miss the workshop. She was at her home in Florida, recovering from Covid.

Yet once I was in the rehearsal room with Carol, David, and the cast, and felt their electric energy, the pandemic completely receded from my mind. We focused instead on what we all love: live theatre. Carol generously permitted me to conduct a 30-minute question-and-answer session with the cast, during which we clarified some misunderstandings about relationships between the characters and discussed character motivation. The discussion eventually became quite lively, and when it was over, I felt we'd developed a strong sense of camaraderie.

At the end of each workshop rehearsal, Carol also invited both David and me to deliver notes. Often directors prefer playwrights to be seen but not heard, so I was thrilled to be included in this part of the production process. I also learned a lot from the notes delivered by David and Carol. I left Plano feeling that our production would be a hit, and judging by the reviews that came out after opening weekend, I was right!

In sum, the bouquet of opportunities I received for winning NewPlayFest 2020 was everything I'd ever dreamed of and hoped for: working with a brilliant dramaturg; spending several days in workshop with the director and cast; experiencing a glorious production; and now, finalizing my script for publication by Dramatic Publishing. As far as I know, AACT is the only organization that offers such a comprehensive array of opportunities to emerging playwrights; for that, I am deeply grateful."

Stacy Winslett

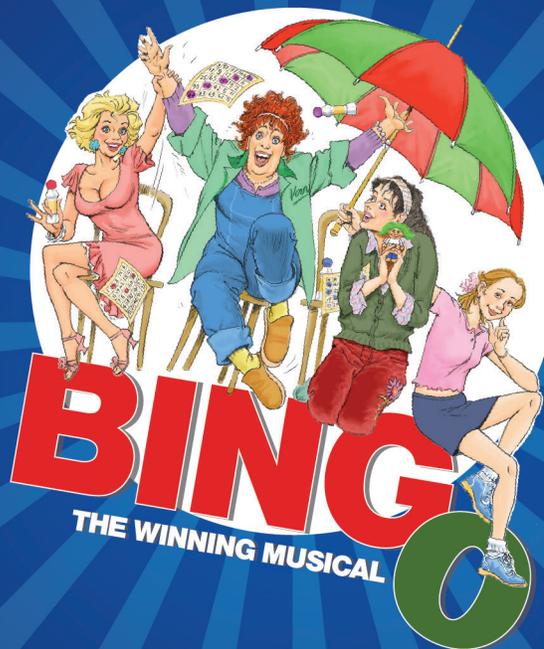


Dr. Mike Sheffield (Jason R. Davis) examines the injuries of principal dancer Kylie Jasper (Jill Lightfoot) in the Rover Dramawerks production of *Proprioception*

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Stacy Winslett

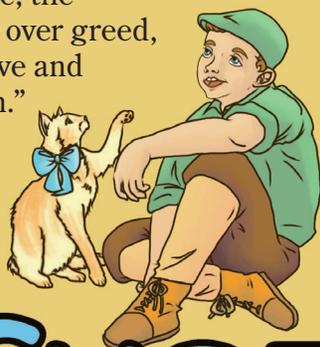


Dr. Mike Sheffield (Jason R. Davis) and his patient, principal dancer Kylie Jasper (Jill Lightfoot), explore their relationship outside their physical therapy sessions in the Rover Dramawerks production of Proprioception

### “I loved *The Big Shoe*...

The clever spin on the Mother Goose tales, the range of musical numbers from lively show tunes to expressive ballads for a nice mix of voice types...the subtle lessons contained in the piece, the affirmation of caring over greed, and the concept of love and protection of children.”

Curt Dale Clark  
Artistic Director,  
Maine State Music Theatre



# THE BIG SHOE

a one-act musical suggested by the characters of Mother Goose

Contact [Dielistageworks@yahoo.com](mailto:Dielistageworks@yahoo.com)  
or Call 510-387-9533

The play's author, Marilyn Millstone, lives in Kensington, Maryland. Her award-winning writing is rooted in her background as a news and feature journalist and essayist. She also holds an M.F.A. in playwriting from Spalding University. Her full-length dramas, one-acts, ten-minute plays, and monologues have been produced by theatres around the country and abroad.

Millstone's first full-length play, *The Sculptress*, won two prizes at the 2011 Baltimore Playwrights Festival. Her short play, *Compos Mentis*, has been produced eight times (six times in America and twice abroad) and won numerous awards. Two of Millstone's monologues were selected for *Best Women's Monologues of 2019*, published by Smith and Kraus.

Learn more about Millstone's work at [marilynmillstone.com](http://marilynmillstone.com).

In *Proprioception* (a term referring to the perception or awareness of the position and movement of the body), two patients meet in a physical therapy office: a young prima ballerina with a torn ACL and a chip on her shoulder; and an elderly, widowed Holocaust survivor, estranged from her only child. When their physical therapist decides that the two women should share appointments, attachments form, conflicts erupt, secrets surface, and lives unravel. *Proprioception* is a play about how we heal - and how we don't.

Carol M. Rice directed Rover Dramawerks's world premiere production of *Proprioception*. The cast featured Jason R. Davis, Sue Doty-Goodner, Bennett Frohock, and Jill Lightfoot. The production crew included stage management by Sara

*Esther Abramson (Sue Doty-Goodner) shares details of escaping the Holocaust and the loss of contact with her family to Kylie Jasper (Jill Lightfoot) and Randy Ayers (Bennett Frobock) in the Rover Dramawerks production of Proprioception*

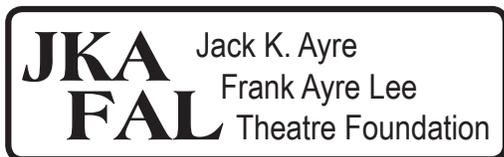


Jones, scenic design by Erica Rémi Lorca, costume design by Stacy Winsett, lighting design by Kenneth Hall, sound design by Robbi D. Holman, properties design by Kristin M. Burgess, and dramaturgy by AACT's Kathy Pingel and David Cockerell.

Rover Dramawerks' experience with the AACT NewPlayFest was very positive, said Rice:

"Everyone was so supportive, even through all of the COVID delays, and the play itself has received rave reviews from critics and patrons alike. My personal favorite part was the workshop—and I totally didn't expect it to be. I honestly didn't understand why the workshop component was needed until my cast and I experienced it, and I think it made a huge difference in the quality of the show, overall. Also, having a single point of contact in the dramaturge/AECT rep/go-between for the director and playwright was extremely helpful.

I will also say that having AACT and Dramatic Publishing reps here for opening night alongside Marilyn Millstone, the playwright, was very special, and I think the presentation of a check by Linda Lee of the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation, opened our patrons' eyes as to what a big deal it was to work with AACT on this project. The AACT NewPlayFest will definitely go down as an amazing experience for Rover Dramawerks, and will always be a fond memory for me."



**The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation** provides a grant that helps make AACT NewPlayFest possible. The Foundation was created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of his cousin and friend, Jack. The family is pleased to honor both men through AACT NewPlayFest, in presenting

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Proprioception Premiere continued from page 11

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DramaticPublishing.com

**Dramatic Publishing Company** publishes AACT NewPlayFest's winning plays in anthologies, and also licenses production rights for the winning plays. Visit [aact.org/dpc](http://aact.org/dpc) for direct links to Dramatic Publishing Company's NewPlayFest anthologies and plays, plus information about discounts and special offers for AACT members.

The 2020 AACT NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere production of *Casserole*, by Pamela Harbaugh, at **Boise Little Theater** in Boise, Idaho, October 18 – November 2, 2019; continued with the world premiere productions of *Shattering*, by Pat Montley, at **Tacoma Little Theatre** in Tacoma, Washington, January 24 – February 9, 2020; *Goat Song Revel*, by Dan Borengasser, at **Manatee Performing Arts Center** in Bradenton, Florida, February 6 – 23, 2020; *On Pine Knoll Street*, by Mark Cornell at **The Sauk** in Jonesville, Michigan, February 6



Jason Rice

Linda M. Lee of the Jack K Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation presents Rover Dramawerks Executive Artistic Director a check on opening night in support of the Rover Dramawerks NewPlayFest production of *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone

– 16, 2020. The final two production for the 2020 cycle were delayed due to the pandemic. The 2020 AACT NewPlayFest cycle continued with *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone at **Rover Dramawerks** in Plano, Texas September 10 – 18, 2021, and *The Cayuga Canal Girls*, by Laura King at **Phoenix Stage Company** in Oakville, Connecticut, October 2 – 16, 2021. The January/February 2022 issue of *Spotlight* will include a production report from Phoenix Stage Company. ♦

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