



theaterworks

# Raging Skillet

The True-Life Adventures Of  
A Punk Rock Caterer

July 20-August 27

# from rossi

## My Two Cents

My very first signing for my very first book was at a book convention with thousands of people. I put out trays of peanut butter and bacon sandwiches to draw a crowd. It worked. Powerful stuff that bacon but Oyl, my mother would not have approved.

I saw a man in line dressed in brown with a scraggly beard. He looked a bit like the Unabomber.

"I want to turn your wonderful book into a play!" he announced.

"Another psycho," I thought, "Do I have a neon sign on my head? 'Welcome crazy people!'"

But we kept talking. One day, before we had even agreed to adapt my book for the stage, he sent me the entire first draft.

Crazy boy was brave! What if I said no?! All that work!

I had no idea how someone might turn my memoir into a three-person play, but once I read Jacque Lamarre's first draft, I was smitten. I was in my hotel room, alone, laughing till I cried, and I wasn't even drunk.

There were many rewrites and tweaks. At every step, he made me feel heard and respected. I think he got more from our conversations than he had from the book.

"Every time I get off the phone with you, the play goes 10 minutes longer!" he'd joke.

The first time I spoke to the rather gorgeous actress playing me, I felt as though I were in an episode of "The Twilight Zone."

But yeah, also kinda fabulous.

My mother had her heart set on leaving me with a guilt complex. As a Jewish mother, that was her job.

Dedicating my memoir to her was my way to honor her, but knowing she will be alive again on stage? It fills my heart with love and matzo balls.

It all feels surreal. How often in life do you go to a play about yourself?!

I keep pinching myself, but if I am asleep, don't wake me. I've had a crazy exhausting life; I need the nap.

Rossi

Cover design by Wondriskarusso Photo by Lanny Nagler

#RagingSkiller



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#FoodIsLove



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#TW31



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# Raging Skillet

by Jacques Lamarre

based on the book by Chef Rossi

directed by John Simpkins†

## THE CAST

Rossi	DANA SMITH-CROLL*
Mom	MARILYN SOKOL*
DJ Skillit	GEORGE SALAZAR*

Time: Now. Rossi's book launch.

Set Design	MICHAEL SCHWEIKARDT
Costume Design	BLAIR GULLEDGE
Lighting Design	JOHN LASITER
Sound Design	JULIAN EVANS
Casting	McCORKLE CASTING, LTD
Production Manager	BRIDGET SULLIVAN
Stage Manager	KATE J. CUDWORTH*

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The World Premiere was produced by  
TheaterWorks, Hartford, CT July 20, 2017.  
Rob Ruggiero, Producing Artistic Director

† Member of SDC, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, Union of Professional Actors  
and Stage Managers in the U.S.

TheaterWorks is celebrating its 31st season as a non-profit,  
professional theater company. Founded in 1985.

RAGING SKILLET is the 5th production of the 2016-2017 Season.

TheaterWorks • 233 Pearl Street • Hartford, CT 06103 • 2017



# who



DANA SMITH-CROLL (Rossi) is making her TheaterWorks debut. New York theatre includes new plays at 59E59; Walker Space; Ohio Theatre; Urban Stages and is a member of The Actors Company Theatre where she has done ten productions. Regional: Yale Rep; Pittsburgh Public; Berkshire Theatre Festival; Portland Stage. Classical work has taken her to many of the nation's

Shakespeare Festivals including New York, New Jersey, Utah and Colorado. Television includes: Law and Order (all of them) many times on Comedy Central including, most recently, Broad City and Difficult People on Hulu. Training: Yale School of Drama.



MARILYN SOKOL (Mom) is making her TheaterWorks debut. She is an Emmy, Obie, Bistro-Award-Winner, and also won Best Actress in a Short Film in the 2015 Madrid International Film Festival (Unplugging Aunt Vera), and Best Actress in the 2016 One Reeler Short Film Competition (A Conversational Place). Her credits include, Broadway: Conversations With My Father,

Grease, Don Juan, The Great God Brown. Film: The Producers, Foul Play, Can't Stop the Music, The Last Married Couple in America. Off Broadway: Old Jews Telling Jokes, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Schlemiel the First, The Rise of David Levinsky, The Beggar's Opera. TV: Broad City, The Slap, Sex and the City, Sneak Peek (Emmy), Emmett Otter's Jugband Xmas (Muppets), Sesame Street. Regional: Gypsy, Candide, Fiddler on The Roof. Web Series: Submissions Only. Cabaret & Concerts: Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher & Town Halls, The Ballroom (Bistro), Rainbow & Stars. Marilyn's Dial-a-Jokes are in The Smithsonian Institution.



GEORGE SALAZAR (DJ Skillit) is making his TheaterWorks debut. Broadway: Godspell (Circle in the Square). Nat'l tour: Spring Awakening (Second National). Off-Broadway: The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical (Drama Desk nom.); tick, tick... BOOM! (Keen Company); Here Lies Love (Public Theater); F#%king Up Everything (Elektra Theatre). Regional:

Broadway Bounty Hunter (Barrington Stage Company); The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Bucks County Playhouse); Be More Chill (Two River Theater). TV: BULL (CBS); Divorce (HBO). Cast recordings: The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical; Be More Chill; Godspell; Brooklyn Crush; Moment by Moment. Love and thanks to this team, his team, and his family! For more info, visit [www.thegeorgesalazar.com](http://www.thegeorgesalazar.com) @georgesalazar



JACQUES LAMARRE (Playwright) premiered I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti at TheaterWorks. It has received nine subsequent productions from Maine to Florida. He contributed "Merry Christmas, Blockhead" to TheaterWorks' holiday tradition, Christmas on the Rocks. His comedy Born Fat was workshopped



at the Philly Fringe, premiered at Seven Angels, and was remounted for the Midtown International Theatre Festival in NYC (Outstanding Solo Show). Other MITF productions include Save the Robots and Gray Matters. His newest comedy My White House Christmas Spashial with Melania was workshopped at HartBeat Ensemble and Seattle's Jewel Box. He was commissioned by the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation to celebrate their 50th anniversary with Ned and Sunny, starring Jill Eikenberry and Michael Tucker. Jacques has co-written thirteen comedy shows for drag superstar Varla Jean Merman, as well as the screenplay for Varla Jean & The Mushroomheads. Jacques works for BuzzEngine in West Hartford. [jacqueslamarreplaywright.com](http://jacqueslamarreplaywright.com)



JOHN SIMPKINS (Director) is making his TheaterWorks debut. John directed the three-time Drama Desk nominated Bloodsong of Love: The Rock and Roll Spaghetti Western (Joe Iconis) at Ars Nova and Iconis' The Black Suits in LA (Kirk Douglas Theatre – starring Annie Golden, Will Roland, Veronica Dunne). Other credits: Off-Broadway's The Bus (59E59 Theatre);

ReWrite (Urban Stages); The Plant That Ate Dirty Socks (Lucille Lortel); Things to Ruin (co-conceived and directed at Ars Nova, Second Stage). International: World Premiere of Legendale at Fredericia Teater in Denmark. Regional: Quartet (starring Elizabeth Franz); The Black Suits (Barrington Stage starring Ben Platt); Damn Yankees (Engeman Theatre starring Andre De Shields, Felicia Finley); Hairspray (NC Theatre); A Wonderful Life (Engeman Theatre); Annie and Cabaret (Sacramento Music Circus); Evita (Lyric Theatre Oklahoma). John is the former Artistic Director at Sharon Playhouse where he directed Georgie (written by/starring Ed Dixon); Judge Jackie (starring Klea Blackhurst); Merrily We Roll Along (starring Jason Tam, A.J. Shively); Big River; Falsettos. John is Head of Musical Theatre at Penn State University. Upcoming projects include the American premiere of the new musical Legendale (Human Race Theatre) and the World Premiere of Love in Hate Nation (Iconis) which he commissioned for Penn State. [www.john-simpkins.com](http://www.john-simpkins.com)



ROSSI (author/aka Chef Rossi) Rossi, yes, she only has one name — has been a writer for many publications, such as The Daily News, The New York Post, Time Out New York and McSweeney's to name a few. She has been the food writer of the "Eat Me" column for Bust magazine since 1998, hosts her own hit radio show on WOMR and WFMR in Cape Cod called "Bite This,"

now in its thirteenth season, has been featured on "The Food Network" and "NPR" and is a popular blogger for "The Huffington Post." As the owner and executive chef of "The Raging Skillet," a cutting-edge catering company known for breaking any and all rules, she has earned a reputation as the one to call when it's time to do something different. The Raging Skillet has been called "a new breed of rebel anti-caterer" by The New York Times, "the wildest thing this side of the Mason Dixon line" by Zagat and has been named among The Knot's Best Of Wedding Caterers for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 2015, 2016 and now 2017. In November of

# who


2015 Rossi's first memoir, *The Raging Skillet / The True Life Story of Chef Rossi* was published from the Feminist Press to rave reviews. In 2017 Rossi launched her new radio show "Mouthing Off" on Transformation Radio. She co-hosts the show with Doctor Pat. "Mouthing Off" tackles humanitarian issues with laughter and love. Rossi has just completed the screenplay for "The Raging Skillet" and her second memoir "Escape from Kingston Avenue" is near completion. Her motto is simple; "molds are a delicious thing to break!"



**ROB RUGGIERO** (Producing Artistic Director) has been the Producing Artistic Director of TheaterWorks since 2012 and part of the theater's artistic leadership for 24 years. He has directed over 50 shows, most recently *Next to Normal*, *Relativity* and the fourth annual production of *Christmas on the Rocks*. Rob has earned national recognition for his work on plays

and musicals. His Broadway credits include *Looped* (starring Valerie Harper in a Tony-nominated performance) and *High* (starring Kathleen Turner). Off-Broadway, he conceived and directed the original musical revue entitled *Make Me a Song: The Music of William Finn* (Nominated for the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle Awards). Rob conceived and directed the world premiere musical portrait of Ella Fitzgerald entitled *Ella*, which has been seen on more than 24 regional theater stages from 2005-2010 before beginning a National Tour. His work has received multiple awards and recognition in Connecticut, as well as in other cities around the United States. In 2015, Rob had the opportunity to direct a Greek production of *Fiddler on the Roof* in Athens. Rob has directed numerous shows at Goodspeed Musicals including 2015's production of *La Cage aux Folles*, and productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* (Connecticut Critic's Circle Award for Best Direction), *The Most Happy Fella* (Connecticut Critic's Circle Award for Best Direction) *Carousel* (Broadway World Award), *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Camelot*, *Big River*, *1776* and a new adaptation of *Show Boat* (Connecticut Critic's Circle Award for Best Direction). This new version is now being licensed by the Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization. [www.robruggiero.com](http://www.robruggiero.com)

**MICHAEL SCHWEIKARDT** (Set Design) 30 productions for TheaterWorks. Selected Off-Broadway productions include: *The Bus* and the American Premier of *Frank McGuinness' Gates Of Gold* (59E59); *Bloodsong of Love* (Ars Nova); *The Black Suits* (The Public Theater); *Things to Ruin* (Second Stage, The Zipper Factory); *The Plant That Ate Dirty Socks* (Theaterworks USA at The Lortel). Selected Regional Credits include productions at Portland Center Stage; Ford's Theatre; The Old Globe; Cleveland Play House; Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park; Asolo Repertory Theatre; Maltz Jupiter Theatre; Saint Louis Rep; Sarasota Opera; The MUNY; Paper Mill Playhouse and multiple productions for Goodspeed Musicals including *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Fiddler On The Roof*, *The Most Happy Fella*, *Carousel*, *Show Boat*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *1776*, *Big River*, *Camelot* and the upcoming *Rags*. Tours: James Taylor's *One Man Band*; *Ella*; *Motherhood the Musical*. Michael recently designed productions of *Marie Antoinette The Musical* and *Phantom* for EMK International in Seoul, South Korea. [www.msportfolio.com](http://www.msportfolio.com)



**BLAIR GULLEDGE** (Costume Design) is making her TheaterWorks debut. *Alley Theatre: November, And Then There Were None, Intelligence Slave, Mrs. Mannerly, The Crucifer of Blood, Underneath The Lintel.* Blair was a resident Costume Design Assistant with The Alley Theatre for 7 seasons, in addition to assisting at The Santa Fe Opera and Goodspeed Musicals. She is currently the Costume Shop Manager for the Hartford Stage.

**JOHN LASITER** (Lighting Design) *RAGING SKILLET* marks John's 42nd show at TheaterWorks and his 24th year of association with the theater. *Broadway: High* starring Kathleen Turner. *Regional: Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Arizona Repertory Theatre, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Cleveland Play House, Dallas Theater Center, Florida Stage, George Street Playhouse, Geva Theatre, Goodspeed Musicals, The Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage Company, Long Wharf Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The MUNY in St. Louis, New Mexico Repertory Theatre, Pioneer Theater Company, Paper Mill Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public Theater, South Coast Repertory, Syracuse Stage, Virginia Stage Company and Repertory Theatre of St. Louis.* *Off-Broadway: Alarm Dog Repertory Company, Blue Light Theater Company.* [www.johnlasiter.com](http://www.johnlasiter.com)

**JULIAN EVANS** (Sound Design) So glad to be back in Hartford with my TheaterWorks fam! *Off-Broadway: Tick, Tick... BOOM! , John & Jen, The Artificial Jungle (Theatre Row); Marry Harry (The York); I Like it Like That! (Pregones Theater); Soulographie (La MaMa); Touch, The Good Girl, In the Summer Pavilion (59E59).* *Off-off-Broadway: Two Intimate (Abingdon Theater); The Golden Year (WorkShop Theater); Hard Times (The Cell); Paradox of the Urban Cliché (Wild Project); Parade, A Man of No Importance (Gallery Players).* *Regional: Sunset Baby (TheaterWorks), The End of War (Virginia Repertory Theatre); Lines in the Dust (Luna Stage).* *BA: Carnegie Mellon.* [www.julianevans.info](http://www.julianevans.info) @SpliceSoundNYC

**MCCORKLE CASTING, LTD** (Casting) Pat McCorkle C.S.A., (Katja Zarolinski) *Broadway: Amazing Grace, End of the Rainbow, The Lieutenant Of Inishmore, The Glass Menagerie, Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, Amadeus, She Loves Me, Blood Brothers, A Few Good Men, etc.* *Off-Broadway: Stalking the Bogeyman, Becoming Dr. Ruth, Lady Day, Tribes, Our Town, Falling, Toxic Avenger, Freud's Last Session, Almost, Maine, Driving Miss Daisy.* *Feature film: Girl in the Lake, Premium Rush, Ghost Town, Secret Window, Basic, Tony and Tina's Wedding, The Thomas Crown Affair, The 13th Warrior, Madeline, Die Hard with a Vengeance, School Ties, etc.* *Television: St. George (George Lopez Show) Twisted (ABC Family), humans for Sesame Street, Californication (Emmy nomination), Hack (CBS), Strangers with Candy, Chappelle's Show (Comedy Central), Barbershop, Remember WENN (AMC).* [mccorklecasting.com](http://mccorklecasting.com)

**BRIDGET SULLIVAN** (Production Manager) is enjoying her second season with TheaterWorks. Her experience includes production and project management, as well as many years in the world of props. Head of production for the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company in Vermont for 7 years,



# Where you

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

## THE WOLVES

pulitzer prize finalist 2017

by Sarah DeLappe

A deceptively simple, but formidable play, **THE WOLVES** follows the ebb and flow of power and affection among the nine members of a girls' indoor soccer team. Together they navigate the game, their lives and a growing understanding of a complicated world. The New York Times said: **"The scary, exhilarating brightness of raw adolescence emanates from every scene** of this uncannily assured first play by Sarah DeLappe." This is an incandescent portrait of a smart and sympathetic female world.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY

## CONSTELLATIONS

an unconventional play about choice and destiny

by Nick Payne

**One relationship. Infinite possibilities.** This spellbinding journey imagines what happens when boy meets girl. And when boy meets girl again. And again. Defying the boundaries of the world we think we know, Nick Payne's Olivier and Drama League nominated hit is a charming and profound exploration of the universal truth in finding and losing love. "Who knew that higher physics could be so sexy, so accessible—and so emotionally devastating?" (New York Times).

MARCH - APRIL

## THE LEGEND OF GEORGIA MCBRIDE

from the writer of *THE WHIPPING MAN*, *REVERBERATION*

by Matthew Lopez

He's young, he's broke, his landlord's knocking at the door, and he's just found out his wife is going to have a baby. How will Casey navigate these hardships? When the former Elvis impersonator unexpectedly becomes a successful drag queen, he begins to find answers in this splashy, **music-filled comedy about finding your true voice.** "Lopez delivers a strong message on tolerance for the entire spectrum of human sexuality, while creating a barrelful of fun in the process." (Variety)



# want to be.

**theaterworks**  
2017-2018 Season

MAY - JUNE

## **THE INVISIBLE HAND**

obte award-winning play

by Ayad Akhtar

**A thrilling new play by one of the most exciting voices in American theater.** Investment banker Nick Bright is being held for ransom in Pakistan. When he is challenged to use his skills as a trader to raise his ransom, we gain insight into the devastating ramifications of our individual actions. This suspenseful drama by Pulitzer Prize-winning Ayad Akhtar (DISGRACED) takes a chilling glimpse at global power, politics and how far we'll go to save ourselves.

JULY - AUGUST

## **HAND TO GOD**

tony award nominee for best new play

by Robert Askins

**In a church basement in a little town in Texas, something evil is a foot. Or, well — at hand.**

The Christian Puppet Ministry seems like the ideal outlet for Jason's anxiety after the death of his father. But his complicated relationships with the town pastor, the school bully, the girl next door, and—most especially—his mother are thrown into upheaval when Jason's puppet, Tyrone, takes on a shocking and dangerously irreverent personality all its own. HAND TO GOD explores the startlingly fragile nature of faith, morality, and the 'puppets' that bind us.

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# who

Bridget's past work also includes managing celebrity concerts at North Shore Music Theatre, and Project Manager for Barbizon Lighting Company for several years. Highlights of her props and management credits also include City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh and the Santa Fe Opera. A proud graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, VA., Bridget has a BA in Theatre Arts, and hails from Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

KATE J. CUDWORTH (Production Stage Manager) has enjoyed four seasons and 23 productions with TheaterWorks including *Fade*, *Next to Normal*, *Sunset Baby*, *Relativity*, *Midsummer*, *Woody Sez* and *Becoming Dr. Ruth*. Off-Broadway: *Freud's Last Session*, [title of show]. NY/Regional: Barrington Stage Company (8 seasons including *Freud's Last Session*; *Dr. Ruth*, *All The Way*; Joe Iconis' *The Black Suits*), Atlantic Stage Company, Hartford Stage, Manhattan School of Music (4 seasons), Yale Opera, York Theatre Company, Bronx Opera Company, Fringe NYC, NYMF.

E B K

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218 Pearl Street, Hartford  
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Current Exhibit: [small works gallery]

Kevin Horan | Photography

*selections from the "Chattel" series*

July 6 -August 26, 2017



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carpentry/electrics/load-in

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Jayne Carlman

Jacklyn Hecker

Alec Montgomery

Melissa Nelson

Jared Wolf

Jessie Zweisler

stage management intern

Scott Butler

original book cover design

Jenifer Walter

scenic charge

Rachel Reynolds

interns

Austin Doughty

Leah Kelly

Nicole Rivera

Imani Thomas

Megan Velasquez

Dominique Waite

projection design

Michael McKiernan

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