

TCP: WOMEN IN THEATRE

A look back at the TCP 2018 Summer Theatre Festival

Thanks to a grant from the Berrien Community Foundation and sponsorships from Abonmarche, TPC Technologies, Inc. and Wightman the 2018 Summer Theatre Festival showcased Women in Theatre. In four weekends of sweltering heat, TCP’s Pop-Up Theatre in the Benton Harbor Arts District, presented 6 unique women telling their stories, which ranged from the existential to explosive.

The plays and the actors were:

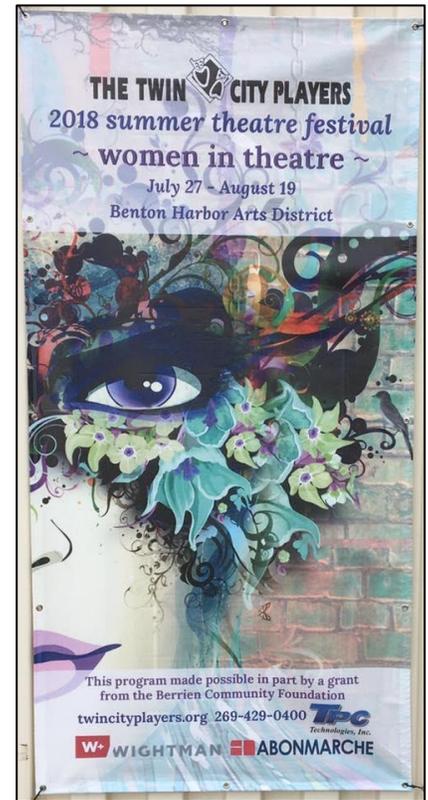
HOSPICE – Kendra Ann and Amber Burton

AND BABY MAKES TWO: AN ADOPTION STORY – Kathy McAlhaney

BIG PANTS AND BOTOX – Christine Sloan

THE BELLE OF AMHERST – Meghan Rae Pelke

THE VELOCITY OF AUTUMN – Carol Sizer and Paul Stortz



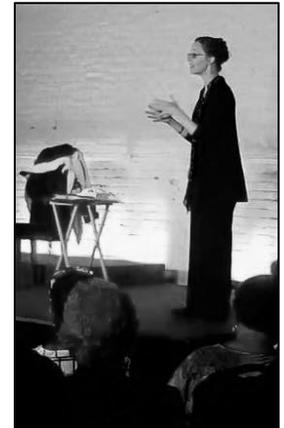
The collection of shows presented an emotional roller coaster from laughter to tears to moments of cheering the 6 women. The theme allowed 6 of TCP’s strong cadre of women actors to showcase their talents. All productions were co-directed.

Sarah Simmons, who co-directed the last two performances with Larry Nielsen indicated each of these women have their own voice: “I think, especially in this time of the #MeToo movement, it’s important for women to have a voice everywhere.”

L-R: Kendra Ann Woods, Amber Burton

Two: An Adoption Tale look at the end and beginning of life, while *Big Pants and Botox* follows a woman through a major transformation. Kirkdorfer recalled each showed how “strength looks different in certain women.”

In *Hospice* a poet dying of cancer and her pregnant daughter, played by Kendra Ann Woods and Amber Burton, struggled to rehabilitate their relationship after 20 years apart. *And Baby Makes Two: An Adoption Tale* also explored the theme of motherhood through the lens of a single woman, played by Kathy McAlhaney, trying to adopt. “She decides she’s tired of waiting for her knight in shining armor,” Kirkdorfer adds.



Kathy McAlhaney

On the other hand, Christine Sloan elicited laughs as the main character, Barbara, in Louise Roche’s *Big Pants and Botox*. When Barbara’s husband goes missing, she embarks on a journey to finding out who she really is. Kirkdorfer said “You got to meet her very interesting family, zany friends, and you saw her starting to put up for herself and not getting walked all over.”



Christine Sloan

Although all five plays in the festival focus on female characters, two of the plays were written by men — *The Belle of Amherst* and *The Velocity of Autumn*, both co-directed by Simmons and Nielsen. Weaving historical truth with fiction, *The*

