



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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### Ten Thousand Things Celebrates End of 2023-2024 Season with Heartfelt Musical **THE SPITFIRE GRILL**

*Show tours April 25–June 9*

(Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN — April 5, 2024) — Ten Thousand Things Theater Company ends its 2023-2024 season with **THE SPITFIRE GRILL**, a heartfelt musical co-directed by **Marcela Lorca** and **Michelle O’Neill**, with music direction by **Peter Vitale**.

The show’s music and book are by James Valcz and lyrics and book by Fred Alley. It is based on the film by Lee David Zlotoff. The show tours April 25-June 9 to numerous community locations in the Twin Cities and correctional facilities in Greater Minnesota.

THE SPITFIRE GRILL tells the story of Percy Talbott who has just been released from prison. In search of a new life, she travels to the small town of Gilead, Wisconsin, where she finds a job at Hannah’s Spitfire Grill. Her journey of renewal mirrors that of the town’s own reawakening in this celebration of fresh starts and the hope one person can offer an entire community.

The cast features **Michelle Barber, Katie Bradley, Tyson Forbes, Katherine Fried, George Keller, Tom Reed, and Dominic Schiro**. Costumes are by **Samantha Fromm Haddow**, sets and props are by **Sarah Agnew** and **Nick Golfis**, and movement by **Jim Lichtscheidl**.

“With TTT’s work in correctional facilities, we often cross paths with people who are about to leave or have recently left prison,” says Lorca. “This show speaks about the challenges a returning citizen faces as she tries to begin a new life in a new town. It also is an inspiring testimony to the transformative power that arises when a community is brought together by new visions and ideas.”

Tickets for THE SPITFIRE GRILL are available at [www.tenthousandthings.org](http://www.tenthousandthings.org); suggested price is \$35, with pay-what-you-can starting at \$15. (Performance schedule on page 2)

#### **ABOUT TEN THOUSAND THINGS**

Ten Thousand Things awakens the creative spirit of audiences and artists by bringing essential and exceptional theater to people from all backgrounds and life experiences. Theater-goers experience the immediacy and vibrancy of theater through a performance in which there is no stage and actors perform in the middle of the audience. With minimal sets and costumes, talented actors fully engage the audience by distilling the story to its essence.

Approximately half of the company's award-winning shows are performed for paying public audiences and the other half are performed for free in locations where people may not have ample opportunities to see live, professional theater, including correctional facilities, shelters, English Language Learner centers, centers for individuals with disabilities, and low-income senior and youth centers.

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**PAID PERFORMANCES** (Thursday & Friday shows begin at 7:30 pm. Saturday & Sunday shows begin at 4 pm except June 9 at 2 pm.) Tickets are \$35 suggested and Pay What You Can starting at \$15)

Thu, May 2 (preview, all tickets \$15)  
Fri, May 3 (post-show toast)  
Sat, May 4 (post-show talk)  
Sun, May 5

*Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church*  
511 Groveland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Thu, May 9  
Fri, May 10  
Sat, May 11  
Sun, May 12

*Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church*  
511 Groveland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Thu, May 16  
Sat, May 18  
Sun, May 19

*Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church*  
511 Groveland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Fri, May 17

*Westminster Presbyterian Church*  
1200 Marquette Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Thu, May 23 (post-show talk)  
Fri, May 24  
Sat, May 25 (post-show talk)  
Sun, May 26

*The Jungle Theater*  
2951 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Thu, May 30 (audio described)  
Fri, May 31  
Sat, June 1  
Sun, June 2 (ASL interpreted)

*The Jungle Theater*  
2951 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Sun, June 9 (2 pm show)

*Everwood Farmstead*  
E580 County Rd X, Glenwood City, WI 54013

**FREE PUBLIC PERFORMANCES (Reservations Required)**

Fri, Apr 26, 9:30 am at St Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists (175 W Kellogg Blvd, St Paul)  
Sun, Apr 28, 1 pm at Dellwood Gardens (753 E 7<sup>th</sup> St, St Paul)  
Tue, Apr 30, noon at Interact Center (1860 W Minnehaha Ave, St Paul)  
Wed, May 1, 10 am at MSS (900 Ocean St, St Paul)  
Wed, May 29, 2 pm at Episcopal Homes – The Gardens (1860 University Ave W, St Paul)

**CLOSED PERFORMANCES (Not open to public)**

St Paul Central High School, Ramsey County Correctional Facility, Northeast Contemporary Services, Minnesota Correctional Facility - Shakopee, St Peter Regional Treatment Center, Federal Correctional Institutes – Waseca, Sandstone & Moose Lake

## WHY DO THEATER?

MICHELLE BARBER (Hannah Ferguson) She/Her – “I do theatre because it’s the best way I have to communicate other people’s ideas and stories that should be heard in our world. Our beautiful, mixed-up, violent, hopeful, brave world. We need a voice, an assurance that we’re not alone in our fears and loves and adventures of survival and living our lives to the fullest. That voice can be found in theatre. And that’s why theatre should be done. And that’s why I do theatre.” Michelle has appeared in over 65 shows at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres as well as the stages of the Guthrie, Mixed Blood, Jungle Theater Latte Da and Syracuse Stage. Michelle is the proud grandma of Henry Brindisi Darrow.

KATIE BRADLEY (Shelby Thorpe) She/Her – “I do theater because I love making people laugh, cry, think, escape -- anything they need at the moment. It's also important to me to continue to represent marginalized and misrepresented voices in our community, for the more we get those stories out, the less they become "othered" in society.” Katie’s previous TTT credits are TWELFTH NIGHT, MLIMA’S TALE, A COMEDY OF ERRORS and THE SEVEN. She has also appeared onstage at the Guthrie Theater, Children’s Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Indiana Repertory Theatre, and Pacific Conservatory Theatre. In addition, she is a long-time artist with Theater Mu.

TYSON FORBES (Visitor/Musician) He/Him– “Because it offers us a space to see and be seen. To experience presence and join in the collective imagining of storytelling. Great theater asks its audience to dive off their seat and explore the sheer abundance of the imagination which resides in us all.” Tyson is an actor, creator and producer. He is the Co-Artistic Artistic Director of TigerLion Arts which has created and produced national tours of The Buddha Prince and Nature. Tyson has helped create numerous new works including Super Monkey, The Dragons are Singing Tonight, and Nice Fish. He has performed multiple roles at the Guthrie, Jungle and Ordway. He teaches physical theater at Circus Juventas and is the proud parent of two young lads along with his wife and artistic partner, Markell Kiefer. When he’s not performing, he is designing and building homes with Whole Builders.

KATHERINE FRIED (Percy Talbott) She/Her – “We are all meaning-makers. Narrative and story help us make sense of the groundless spaces in life and offer us a safe place for investigation. Through theatre, we, as artists and audience members, are invited to question our values and beliefs, encounter truths, discover our belonging and interconnectedness with the world, and learn the listening language of compassion.” Katherine’s credits include: **Regional:** *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Ten Thousand Voices* (Ten Thousand Things), *Assassins*, *Into the Woods*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Snow Queen*, *Once* (Arden Theatre Company); *Wait Until Dark*, *Once* (The Fulton Theatre); *The Parchman Hour*, *A Christmas Carol*, *King Lear* (Guthrie Theater); *Shakespeare in Love*, *Henry V* (Illinois Shakespeare Festival); Montana Shakespeare in the Parks; Kansas Repertory Theatre; Bozeman Actors Theatre; WLDRNSS.

GEORGE KELLER (Effy Krayneck) She/Her– “I do theater because it is my profession. In many ways, it's therapeutic to study different personality types from the inside out. I like to play characters that are multi-dimensional and complicated. It's a way of seeing a story through the lens of someone else and a lot of preparation goes into each sentence to give the audience a full view of a complete person. And... it was the only thing I was drawn to when thinking about what I was gonna do with my life.” George is so grateful to return to TTT. Her last show with TTT was *Sins of Sor Juana* directed by Marcela Lorca. George Keller was born and raised in Minneapolis and has been a professional actor for over 30 years. She was last seen in *Misery* at Yellow Tree Theater as Annie Wilkes. Other theaters include: Penumbra Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Children's Theater Company, Mixed Blood Theater, The Jungle, Huge, Pillsbury Playhouse, and Park Square Theater.

TOM REED (Caleb Thorpe) He/Him – “Live performance is a rare chance to share air in a spacetime that's devoted to connection, joy, and reflection. Sometimes it even rhymes. Regardless, theater is magical and powerful and an essential force for good. Thanks for being here.” Tom mostly grew up on a gravel road near Kent, MN (pop. 150) and his past credits other than hoeing corn include: *Stones in His Pockets* (Theater Latte Da); *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Artistry); *Georgiana & Kitty: Christmas at Pemberley* (Jungle Theater); *Interstate*, *Autonomy*, *Hooded; or Being Black for Dummies*, *Gloria*, *Curious Incident*, *Next to Normal*, *Avenue Q* (Mixed Blood Theater); *Loch Ness!*, *Hairball!*, *Log Jam!* (Open Eye Theater); *Christmas of Swing* (History Theatre); 18 mainstage sketch comedy productions at Brave New Workshop; and much improv at HUGE Improv Theater. TV/FILM: *Lady Dynamite* (Netflix), *America Unearthed* (History Channel) *The Public Domain*, *Locally Grown Comedy*. [tombreed.com](http://tombreed.com)

DOMINIC SCHIRO (Joe Sutter) He/Him – “Storytelling is the thing that brings me the most joy, and being able to share that feeling is such a blessing and a gift.” Dominic is a passionate theatermaker and is very excited to make their TTT and professional debut. His most recent credits are *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Stupid Fucking Bird* both at the UMN Guthrie Actor training program. Dominic would like to thank his family, friends, and company for supporting him throughout the years. Love y'all bunches.

MARCELA LORCA (Co-Director) She/Her – “We do theater to connect with and understand each other through stories that inspire, move, delight and make us wonder. Nowadays, I can't think of anything better than coming together, however we can, to explore and celebrate the diverse stories that ignite our imaginations.” Marcela's directing credits for TTT include *Twelfth Night*, *Emilia*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Thunder Knocking on the Door*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Into the Woods* and *The Sins of Sor Juana*. She has directed and choreographed work for the Minnesota Orchestra, TheaterWorks in CA, the Guthrie Theater, McCarter Theater, Children's Theater, Milwaukee Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Syracuse Stage, Mixed Blood, Goodman Theater, Shakespeare Theater in DC, Latte Da and Juilliard Drama School and others. Previously, she was Director of Company Development and Movement Director for the Guthrie. Marcela is the recipient of the prestigious 2019 Zelda Fichandler Award.

MICHELLE O'NEILL (Co-Director) She/Her – “I like people. I like story. I am interested in what makes us human, how we connect, love and hurt. All the complexities that makes us who we are... Theater allows us to come together and share these experience, so we know we are not alone...so we feel connected.” Michelle first performed with TTT in *The Fisherman's Wife*. She worked on Broadway and in New York theater after graduating from the Juilliard School of Drama and has performed in more than 25 productions with the Guthrie. She is passionate about working with young actors and enjoys teaching and directing with the U of M Guthrie BFA Theater Program.

PETER VITALE (Music Director) He/Him – “I do theater because it reminds me how important it is to listen. And, cast parties.” Over the past 25+ years Peter has worked on more than 50 TTT productions. He has appeared on other local stages including the Guthrie, Jungle Theater, Frank Theater, Park Square Theater, Minnesota Jewish Theater Company and the Ordway.

SARAH AGNEW (Sets & Props Designer) She/Her – “I like to make something new in collaboration with others and see what happens with an audience.” Sarah is a theater director, actor, educator and creator. Now she is a producer of kid's television at Children's MN. Sarah was last seen with TTT in the title role in *SCAPIN*.

NICK GOLFIS (Sets & Props Designer) He/Him – “The collaboration process with artists of different backgrounds helps create work that no one person could make themselves. The challenge of designing and creating inventive objects and solving tricky transitions helps to define a world. Ultimately, my hope is that the piece transports the audience somewhere outside of their day to day, somewhere unexpected.” Nick is a multidisciplinary artist/designer based in Minneapolis, MN. He builds props, designs sets, produces exhibitions and performances in both galleries and arenas. His fine art has been shown in Minnesota, New York, Missouri, and Montana. THEATER: Producer/Scenic Designer: *Relics* 2014, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, MN. Scenic Designer: Guthrie Experience, Minneapolis, MN 2015, 2017. *Into the Woods* (2018), *Winter's Tale* (2019), *Ten Thousand Things*. Nick last worked with TTT on *Milma's Tale* 2023.

SAMANTHA FROMM HADDOW (Costume Designer) She/Her – “Theatre allows me to be completely immersed in another's story and experience their journey through a lens different from my own. Theatre builds empathy. As a costume designer, I love exploring how the clothing a character wears can shape how the audience perceives them. Clothes tell a story all their own.” Samantha is costume designer, milliner, and textile artist whose work has been seen on various stages throughout the Twin Cities. Previous costume designs include *Raisin in the Sun* (Guthrie Theater), *Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Artistry), *Toil and Trouble*, *Misery*, *In the Next Room*, and *Skeleton Crew* (Yellow Tree Theatre), *Korean Drama Addict's Guide*, *TOT*, and *You for Me for You* (Theater Mu), *Into the Woods* (Theater Latte Da), *Don Giovanni* and *The Tragedy of Carmen* (Skylark Opera), *The Gondoliers* and *Odyssey* (MN Opera's Project Opera), and multiple productions with Stages Theater Company and Lyric Arts of Anoka.

JIM LICHTSCHEIDL (Movement) He/Him/His – “I do theater for that moment of complete unity during the performance; when the play and the audience become one—whether it be a laugh or a gasp or a few seconds of pin-drop quiet. No matter what our own personal story is, this moment is humbling. It is the genesis of common ground between strangers.” Jim has worked with TTT in several different ways: as a performer in

eleven productions including *Little Shop Of Horrors* and *Stones In His Pockets*, as a choreographer for seven productions including *The Music Man* and *My Fair Lady*, as an artist core member, and as director/collaborator for the production *Huh?* which toured to non-English speaking audiences. Jim's other credits include the Jungle Theater, Pillsbury House Theater, Harold Pinter Theater in London's West End, St. Ann's Warehouse, and several other local and regional theaters. Jim is a 2019 McKnight Theater Artist Fellow at the Playwright's Center.

MAYA VAGLE (Stage Manager) She/Her – “Theater fosters crucial communities where people can celebrate and find joy. It is a profound blessing.” Maya is thrilled to be working on *Spitfire Grill* this Spring. She would like to thank the production crew, artistic staff, and cast for their work throughout this process. She hopes you enjoy the show!

RYAN VOLNA-RICH (Production Manager) He/Him – “Theatre is more than just a story, it's an experience. You experience the sorrow, the laughter, the joy all together with your fellow audience members, you empathize as a group. I think our world could use more empathy, more group stories.” Throughout his career, Ryan has made an effort to highlight and support the work of others. He is excited to bring this passion and his skills to work at Ten Thousand Things, helping to support the world-class story tellers as they captivate audiences.