

## For Immediate Release

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Press photos available 7.28.17 at [www.theaterworkshartford.org/event/raging-skillet](http://www.theaterworkshartford.org/event/raging-skillet)

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### Final Casting Announced For WORLD PREMIERE **RAGING SKILLET**

By Jacques Lamarre

directed by John Simpkins

at TheaterWorks

July 20 through August 27, 2017

**Press welcome Thursday July 27, 2017**

**HARTFORD, CT** – June 28, 2017

**TheaterWorks** (Rob Ruggiero, Producing Artistic Director) announced final casting today for **RAGING SKILLET** by **Jacques Lamarre** the 5th show of **TheaterWorks 31st Season**.

Directed by **John Simpkins**, **RAGING SKILLET** is an irreverent but loving comedy about rebellion and searching for identity. At its heart it is a compelling story about a mother and a daughter and the commitment to family.

The three actor play is based on the memoir-with-recipes of Chef Rossi. The play is adapted by **Jacques Lamarre** whose food-centric **I LOVED, I LOST, I MADE SPAGHETTI** was a hit for the theater several years ago and has since played at theaters across the country.

#### **STORYLINE:**

Rebel caterer Rossi is celebrating the launch of her new book **THE RAGING SKILLET: The True Life Story of Chef Rossi** with a party — and you're invited! Zany food, rocking music and funny stories are all on the menu. When her Orthodox Jewish mother arrives unannounced, a less-than-kosher Rossi finds herself out of the frying pan and into the fire in this hilarious and heartfelt new comedy.

**TheaterWorks** Producing Artistic Director **Rob Ruggiero** said *"Jacques is part of our **TheaterWorks** family. He's been hard at work cooking up this newest production. Chef Rossi's punk personality provides the perfect set up for a theatrical experience that is altogether fresh and loads of fun. We're thrilled he wrote this piece for us. Its got all the ingredients we love: fun in the kitchen, good laughs, great music and a whole lot of heart."*

**Dana Smith-Croll** makes her **TheaterWorks** debut in the role of the "Jewish lesbian punk-rock caterer" **Chef Rossi**. **Marilyn Sokol** makes her **TheaterWorks** debut as Mom while **George Salazar** joins the cast as DJ Skillit.

The creative team includes **Michael Schweikardt** (Set Design), **Blair Gullede** (Costume Design), **John Lasiter** (Lighting Design), and **Julian Evans** (Sound Design).

**Press for the book *THE RAGING SKILLET / The True Life Story of Chef Rossi***

*"A humorous and witty chronicle of a woman's pulling-herself-up-by-her-bootstraps rise through the culinary ranks."* - Kirkus

*"With an insightful and irreverent voice, Rossi's debut is well suited for foodies, feminists, and creative revolutionaries. Rossi's motto is simple; "molds are a delicious thing to break!"* - Publisher's Weekly

**SIGNED BOOKS WILL BE FOR SALE ON-LINE AND AT THE THEATER**

**RAGING SKILLET**

By Jacques Lamarre

Directed by John Simpkins

Previews: Thursday, July 20 – Wednesday, July 26, 2017

**PRESS: Thursday July 27, 2017**

Run Dates: July 20 – August 27, 2017

**CAST**

**Dana Smith-Croll** as Rossi

**George E. Salazar** as DJ Skillit

**Marilyn Sokol** as Mom

**ARTISTIC & DESIGN**

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Director           | John Simpkins       |
| Set Design         | Michael Schweikardt |
| Costume Design     | Blair Gullede       |
| Lighting Design    | John Lasiter        |
| Sound Design       | Julian Evans        |
| Stage Manager      | Kate J. Cudworth    |
| Production Manager | Bridget Sullivan    |
| Casting            | McCorkle Casting    |

**PERFORMANCES**

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday | 7:30 pm |
| Friday and Saturday             | 8:00 pm |
| Weekend Matinees                | 2:30 pm |

**WHERE**

**TheaterWorks**

City Arts on Pearl – 233 Pearl Street, Hartford, CT 06103

**ADMISSION**

|                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| All seating is assigned      | \$50-\$65                      |
| Student Rush w/ID            | \$15 (subject to availability) |
| Seniors 60+ Saturday Matinee | \$35                           |
| Group Rates                  | Call                           |

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

Press Night  
PWYC  
ALL FREE Student Matinee  
Talk Back Tuesdays

Thursday July 27 at 7:30 pm  
July 20 and 26 at 7:30 pm  
Saturday, August 5 at 2:30 pm  
August 1, 8, 15, 22 at 7:30 pm

For tickets call 860.527.7838

## BIOS

**DANA SMITH-CROLL** (Rossi) is making her **TheaterWorks** debut. New York theatre includes new plays at 59 E 59; Walker Space; Ohio Theatre; and Urban Stages. Regional: Yale Rep; Pittsburgh Public; Berkshire Theatre Festival; and 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) and many times on Comedy Central including, most recently, Broad City. Training: Yale School of Drama.

**GEORGE E. 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: *Godspell*; *Be More Chill*; *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

**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*, *In Bed with Roy Cohn*, *Shlemiel the First*, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, *The Beggar's Opera* (Obie), *The Joys of Being Yiddish* (a reading); 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: Avery Fisher & Town Halls, Carnegie Hall, The Ballroom (Bistro), Rainbow & Stars. Marilyn's *Dial-a-Jokes* are in The Smithsonian Institution.

**JACQUES LAMARRE** (Playwright) is an award-winning playwright living in Manchester, CT. His play *I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti* premiered at **TheaterWorks** in 2012. The comedy went on to have subsequent productions at George Street Playhouse, Asolo Repertory, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Seven Angels, Florida Repertory, Half Moon, Hangar Theatre, Stoneham Theatre and Penobscott Playhouse. He is one of eight playwrights that wrote *Christmas on the Rocks* for TheaterWorks, with subsequent productions at Richmond Triangle Players (VA) and Warehouse Theatre (SC). *Born Fat*, another comedy, was workshopped at the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and premiered at Seven Angels Theatre in Waterbury, CT. It was subsequently remounted for the Midtown International Theatre Festival in New York, garnering an award for Outstanding Solo Show. Other MITF productions include writing the book for *Save the Robots - A Sci-Fi Musical Comedy* and Emerson Theatre Collaborative's production of *Gray Matters* (nominated for Outstanding Playwriting). His newest comedy *My White House Christmas Spashial vith Melania (Live from Trump Tower)* received readings at HartBeat Ensemble and a workshop at Seattle's Jewel Box Theatre. He was commissioned in 2014 by the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation to celebrate their 50th anniversary with *Ned and Sunny*, which starred Jill Eikenberry and Michael Tucker. Other productions and readings include: *Jacques Lamarre Has Gone Too Far* (Hole in the Wall Theatre), *Stool* (New York 15 Minute Play Festival, Top Ten Finalist), *The Rub* (Floating Theatre), *Pierce* (Herstory Theatre Company), *Colonel Sellers: Reanimator* (Mark Twain House & Museum, Little Theatre of Manchester), among others. Jacques has co-written thirteen comedy-cabaret shows for drag superstar Varla Jean Merman (including 2017's *Bad Heroine*), as well as the screenplay for *Varla Jean & The Mushroomheads*. Jacques works for BuzzEngine Marketing & Events with prior stints at The Mark Twain House & Museum, Hartford Stage, American Stage Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, and TheaterWorks Hartford. [www.jacqueslamarreplaywright.com](http://www.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 & 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. On November of 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) **ROB RUGGIERO** 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)

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About **TheaterWorks**: Celebrating its 31st season, TheaterWorks produces high quality, contemporary theater that is relevant to our audiences, engages a diverse community, and provides insight into the human experience.

Founded in 1985 by Steve Campo, **TheaterWorks** has produced over 130 plays and presents approximately 225 performances per season.

**TheaterWorks** also owns and manages the historic 1927-built property at 233 Pearl Street, known as City Arts on Pearl. City Arts also provides an affordable home and services to a diverse family of non-profit arts organizations.