CANTERBURY REPERTORY THEATRE



RIPCORD 2026

By **David Lindsay-Abaire**

Directed by **Ian Harding**

18–28 November

SYNOPSIS

For four years, irritable and sarcastic Abby Binder has kept a sunny room to herself at the Bristol Place Senior Living Facility: prime real estate. When the unbearably cheerful Marilyn Dunne is placed in her room, Abby resorts to her usual tricks but fails to scare her annoying new roommate away. Abby gets no sympathy from Scotty, the resident aide, who refuses to use any clout he may or may not have with management to remove Marilyn.

Marilyn loves the challenge of Abby's bad attitude and refuses to budge. Exercising her taste for competition and her love of pranks, Marilyn makes a bet: if Abby can break Marilyn's endless patience and make her angry, she will move out. But if Marilyn can successfully frighten Abby, who claims never to get scared, she will claim the bed by the window.

As this odd pair embarks upon increasingly emotionally and physically dangerous tricks in order to break each other, secrets are revealed, lives are jeopardized, and peach cobbler is enjoyed.

Originally commissioned by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) with funds provided by US Trust and received its world premiere there on October 1, 2015.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE
1969–

David Lindsay-Abaire was awarded the 2008 Ed Kleban Award as America's most promising musical theatre lyricist. Prior to that, he received the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his play *Rabbit Hole*, which premiered on Broadway at MTC's Biltmore Theatre. *Rabbit Hole* also received five Tony Award nominations, including Best Play, and the Spirit of America Award. His show *Shrek the Musical* (book and lyrics) premiered at Seattle's 5th Avenue Theater and opened on Broadway. His other works include *Fuddy Meers*, *Kimberly Akimbo*, *Wonder of the World*, *High Fidelity*, and *A Devil Inside*, among others.

In addition to his work in theatre, Mr. Lindsay-Abaire wrote the screenplay for the Newline feature *Inkheart* and Sony Picture's *Spider-Man 4*. He also worked on screen adaptations of his plays *Rabbit Hole* for 20th Century Fox, starring Nicole Kidman, and *Kimberly Akimbo* for Killer Films and DreamWorks.

He is a proud New Dramatists alum, a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and the Juilliard School, and a member of the WGA and the Dramatists Guild Council.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Everyone loves a challenge. What more can be said for Abby and Marilyn, the odd couple forced to share a room on the top floor of their aged care facility? And what better challenge than a bet over who must leave the room - or claim the bed by the window? Abby wants Marilyn out; Marilyn wants the bed on the sunny side. Their bet is simple: Abby says she never gets scared, while Marilyn insists she never gets angry. Whoever succumbs first loses.

Take two women with completely opposite personalities and thrust them into a space where winner takes all, and you end up with a delightful story which follows their journey through triumphs and frustrations, conflicts and discoveries, all laced with shenanigans, sharp words, and unbelievable challenges.

Crafted with humour and absurd situations, Lindsay-Abaire's *Ripcord* delivers a heart-warming dramedy that sees these two feisty women discover more about themselves, and each other, than they ever expected.



IAN HARDING
Director

What better way to create a challenge for oneself than stepping forward to direct a production, leveraging an outstanding collective of talented performers and creatives. Having stepped away from the boards some years back, Ian is usually found illuminating the personalities of those in front of the lights. But this time, lets flip the script... challenge accepted!

Ian's previous directorial escapades include *Abigail's Party* (Repertory) as Assistant Director; and *Clever Mr Fox* (2022) and *Pirate Dave* (2021), both self-authored. Recent design engagements include *Animal Farm* and *Hound of the Baskervilles* (Repertory); *Addams Family* and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (*Centrestage Rolleston); and *The Merry Widow* (Toi Toi Opera).

CAST



PENE MADDOCK
Abby

Pene is a late comer to theatre, auditioning for her first role when she was 40-ish. Since then she has appeared with Riccarton Players, Cas'n'ova Productions and Repertory Theatre. Pene has also stage managed and directed. She says that "theatre is now a big part of who I am".



MARILYN OLLETT
Marilyn

Marilyn has been involved in community theatre in and around Christchurch for over 30 years, laterally focusing on directing due to the scarcity of good parts for mature females. She was delighted when this role actually had her name on it.



EMMETT ROBINSON
Scotty

Emmett graduated from Unitec with a Bachelor in Performance and Screen Arts: Majoring in Scriptwriting in 2014. Since then, he's been very active in both writing, directing and now moving into acting. This is his first performance since high school and he is looking forward to bringing "Scotty" to life.



SALLY GRAHAM
Colleen

Sally's interest in theatre began in 2022 after being wowed by the energetic and captivating performance of Michael Hurst in his one man show *Golden Ass* at the Matamata theatre. It ignited her desire to be on the stage. Sally's last role was as Queenie in *Blackadder* at the Te Aroha theatre.



STEVE MILLAR
Derek

Since first taking the stage in the Mill Theatre in 2004, Steve has done front of house, stage management, writing, directing, tea making, and pretty much everything involved with getting productions to stage, including one nauseating turn up the fly floor, despite his crippling fear of heights.



GWILYM WOGAN
Benjamin

Gwilym has not acted in five years. Supposedly, this play is just an elaborate experiment to see if he remembers how. That feels unlikely, but someone said it, so it's true. His last appearance was in *Wyrd Sisters*. He's mostly a musician, but you don't need to know that.



LOUISA CLARKSON
Louise

Louisa doesn't write bios. As a seasoned actor on stage and film, she expects her agent to complete these mundane tasks. Being tall and blonde, she has a penchant for bouffant hairstyles and can execute them to perfection. By day she climbs tall buildings. By night she trains kittens to hunt gorillas.

WITH ENSEMBLE AS
Zombie Butler, Clown, Mute Executioner, Woman in White, and Masked Man

CREATIVES

IAN HARDING
Director & set concept

BRENDA HAYES
Production manager

GRAY KIM
Stage manager

BERNADETTE RICHARDSON
Co-stage manager

LISA FORSHAW
Properties

NELLEKE PASSCHIER
Wardrobe

SUE MATHER
Wardrobe

GERALDINE CLARKE
Wardrobe

VIVIANNE WATSON
Casting reader

PIM VAN DUIN
Graphic designer & photographer

JORDON JONES
Admin

AMELIA HILL
Music

JONATHAN HILL
Sound design

NIC PURCELL
Set design & construction

STEPHEN BRINKHURST
Lighting, set construction & Mechanist

NIKOLAI ZHIGALOV
Set construction

PHILLIP WATSON
Lighting Rigger

PHILIP DEAN
Lighting Rigger

MARY MCKEOWN
Front-of-House manager

GILL EDWARDS
Front-of-House manager

GEOFF YARDLEY
Stage crew

SPECIAL THANKS

AMON BROWN

DARREN SUNDBORN

ROSS GUMBLEY

ELMWOOD PLAYERS

BRIDIE MCKENNA

BRYAN AITKEN

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