

**DETAILS:** The Midnight Company will present the World Premiere of ST. LOUIS WOMAN, a play with music starring LAKA, written and directed by Midnight's Artistic Director, Joe Hanrahan. ST. LOUIS WOMAN will run October 6 - 22 at the ZACK theatre, with performances Thursdays/Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm, and Sunday matinees October 9 and 16 at 2pm. Tickets are \$30 for Fridays/Saturdays and Sundays, and \$20 for Thursdays, and tickets are on sale now at MetroTix.com.

**THE STORY:** ST. LOUIS WOMAN will honor the enduring legacy of some of the amazing women in St. Louis who brought this city to the world with their timeless music, dance and poetry. LAKA will portray such legendary artists as Josephine Baker, Tina Turner and Katherine Dunham (and present the poetry of Maya Angelou, the song stylings of chart-toppers Fontella Bass and Ann Peebles, and the Gospel classics of the legendary Willie Mae Ford Smith.) These women were born in St. Louis, or came here when young (typically to join Gospel choirs), or, in Dunham's case, moved here during the height of their careers to continue their momentous work.

**THE PERFORMER:** LAKA is a singer-songwriter who prides herself in performing a multitude of genres. She recently released her third single, a country-folk song titled "Keep it to Myself", written by Mike Lipel. LAKA debuted her first cabaret show at the Blue Strawberry in October of 2020 titled "The Music in Me", her life story through music and went on to perform the show earlier this year in New York City at the venue, Don't Tell Mama. She noticed that the life stories she told in between songs connected her audience more to the songs. Laka continued to branch out this year with appearances in Las Vegas, Naples, FLA, and Nashville.

**THE COMPANY:** The Midnight Company is celebrating its 25th Anniversary producing theatre in St. Louis, presenting a full season of plays in 2022 after receiving 14 nominations from the recent St. Louis Theatre Critics Circle Awards, winning four. This year, Midnight presented ANOMALOUS EXPERIENCE in May, and RODNEY'S WIFE in July, with ST. LOUIS WOMAN rounding out this season. But this Fall, Midnight's work can also be seen at...

**ST. LOUIS THEATRE SHOWCASE** Friday/Saturday September 16 & 17 at the Public Media Commons, 3653 Olive St. Each night, beginning at 7pm, five different St. Louis theatre companies will present a short play or piece of theatre. Midnight will be in the Saturday night lineup, presenting a new play by Joe Hanrahan - LAST CALL, directed by Sarah Holt, performed by Tom Kopp and Joe Hanrahan. The event is FREE, and you can register to attend at KWMU.org. Local craft beverages will be available.

And...TRUE Community Theatre's SHORTS FESTIVAL, new plays by local playwrights about Truth, Lies, and Confessions. Friday/Saturday November 4 and 5, it will be presented at Union Avenue Christian Church, 733 Union Avenue at 7pm Tickets can be purchased with a donation, and can be reserved at EventBrite.com. Midnight will be offering another Hanrahan script, PATIENT #47, directed by David Wassilak (David is appearing in Albion Theatre's HEROES, opening September 23), featuring Alia Arif and Hanrahan.

**THE COLLABORATORS:**

**THE BAND** Backing up LAKA will be two of her favorite musicians. Corey Patterson on keyboards (Corey is the Music Director for the show) and Gabe Bonfii on percussion. Bruce Bramoweth is our Music Consultant. Bruce has a show every Sunday night on KDHX - "Chicken Shack," a mix of blues and jazz and r&b and much more.

CHOREOGRAPHY by Ashley Tate. Ashley has been the Artistic Director for the Ashleyliane Dance Company, which is celebrating its 15th year of Dance. She recently accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Dance at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, but not before working with LAKA for ST. LOUIS WOMAN, and working with Joan Lipkin on DANCE THE VOTE, September 24, 12:30pm at Missouri History Museum. Ashley promises to be back in St. Louis as often as she can.

COSTUME DESIGN/STAGE MANAGEMENT by Liz Henning. Liz has worked with Midnight on numerous shows, and last year was nominated for Outstanding Costume Design from the St. Louis Theatre Critics Circle for TINSEL TOWN.

VIDEO DESIGN by Michael Musgrave-Perkins. Michael has provided video design for several Midnight shows, including TINSEL TOWN, A MODEL FOR MATISSE, JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG and LITTLE THING BIG THING.

LIGHTING DESIGN by Tony Anselmo and PRODUCTION DESIGN from Kevin Bowman, both who have provided outstanding work for previous Midnight shows.

THE PLAYWRIGHT/DIRECTOR: Joe Hanrahan is Midnight's Artistic Director, and for them, he's written LIFE AFTER DEATH, THE BALLAD OF JESSIE JAMES, DRACULA (adaptation), THE EVEREST GAME, MY VIOLIN MY VOICE, NOW PLAYING THIRD BASE FOR THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS...BOND, JAMES BOND (nominated Outstanding New Play St. Louis Theatre Critic Circle 2021), TINSEL TOWN (Winner Outstanding New Play by the Circle, 2021), and several shorter plays for The Crawl. His scripts have also been performed in Kansas, Brooklyn, NY, and in St. Louis. As a director, he's directed several Midnight shows, and filled the same role for The Black Rep (THE BROWNSVILLE RAID and NO CHILD), SATE (CUDDLES), R-S Theatrics (THE FLICK), Clayton Community Theatre (A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE, Winner Outstanding Director, Arts for Life), and Webster Groves Theatre Guild (BUS STOP and THE UNDERPANTS.) He most recently directed RODNEY'S WIFE for Midnight.

THE BACKSTORY: Hanrahan said "When I first heard LAKA sing, I was amazed. One of the best voices I'd ever heard, she could sing literally anything, and anything she sang moved me. When we met, she was interested in expanding the range of her talents, maybe doing something more theatrical. So the concept for ST. LOUIS WOMAN was born. And as I've gotten to know her, her intelligence, determination and work ethic has helped carve the path for this show. This is a unique opportunity to present some of the great art and tremendous people who carved out their exceptional careers in St. Louis."

And LAKA said, "After seeing one of Joe Hanrahan's one-man plays, I thought how neat it is for one person to be able to captivate an audience with acting alone. Because of my cabaret shows, I thought I could learn from him to be better at what I do. When Joe introduced the idea behind St. Louis Woman I was immediately drawn to it. St. Louis has a rich music history, being an epicenter during the height of jazz, blues, and rock'n roll. I think we sometimes forget the prominence that our beautiful city once held and how many greats called this area home. During the preparation for this play, I've become ever more connected to these artists and this city that I call home. Their stories are inspiring, motivating, and courageous. I'm honored and humbled to pay tribute and increase awareness of these women's role in St. Louis history. The current arts scene in the city is continuing to resurge and remembering the past will certainly help forge our future."

OUR FRIENDS: Midnight is cross-promoting with several like-minded organizations, and hopes to spread the word about their upcoming events:

MISSOURI GOSPEL HALL OF FAME Go to [mogospel.com](http://mogospel.com) to find out more about their work preserving and enlightening a new wave of Gospel Music.

CONSUMING KINETICS DANCE COMPANY Go to [ckdc.org](http://ckdc.org) and learn about their shows and classes. On Oct 22 and 23, at the Marcelle Theatre, they will present "French Connection," original dances celebrating the legacy of Josephine Baker (a principal character in ST. LOUIS WOMAN.)

MISSOURI HISTORY MUSEUM Go to [mohistory.org](http://mohistory.org) for information about their continuing exhibit "ST. LOUIS SOUND," with pictures, film and audio exploring the deep roots of popular music in the city.

JAZZ ST. LOUIS Go to [jazzstl.org](http://jazzstl.org) and learn about the full array of performers they have coming up in the months ahead, including several shows from the incomparable Regina Carter in September.

CINEMA ST. LOUIS Go to [cinemastlouis.org](http://cinemastlouis.org) for their variety of always fascinating programs. Last month they allowed Midnight to promote ST. LOUIS WOMAN during their showing of Josephine Baker's first silent film "Siren Of The Tropics," which was shown as part of their French Film Festival.

And, of course, ASHLEY LIANE DANCE COMPANY. Go to [ashleyliane.com](http://ashleyliane.com), and follow the group's shows and events.

More at [midnightcompany.com](http://midnightcompany.com)  
and [lakasoul.com](http://lakasoul.com)

photos by Todd Davis

video by Keyaira Harris