

# Welcome to the Neighborhood

*Detroit* tells the story of what happens when you *really* meet your neighbors.

by Julia Burke

Two couples with adjoining backyards in a midsize American city have a barbecue. One couple is hosting the barbecue to welcome the other to the neighborhood. What seems like a normal gathering quickly turns into an out of control friendship that forever changes the lives of one of the couples.

*Detroit*, written by Lisa D'Amour, takes a look what happens when people dare to open themselves up to something new. Even though the title is *Detroit*, it does not mean the play actually takes place there. It serves more as a representation of what the location could be like: a suburb just outside of a midsize American city with cookie cutter starter houses built in the 1950s.

"Although it's called *Detroit*, it's more of a state of mind, a point in time," says director Joel Sass.

The play, which is considered a "dark comedy," examines not only what happens when we open up to new things, but also what it truly means to be a neighbor nowadays. Many people don't open up to those who live right next door to them, which is far different than the generations of our parents and grandparents.

Sass says, "It addresses the generational notion: 'Are people inclined to be vulnerable with their neighbors?'"

The characters Mary and Ben, a paralegal and an unemployed banker, take this dare to be vulnerable and embark on a fragile friendship with their neighbors, Sharon and Kenny, who were just released from a major substance abuse rehab facility. As the friendship progresses and it is revealed that Mary is a burgeoning alcoholic, expected consequences ensue and break the grip that Ben and Mary have on their lives.

Obie Award-winning *Detroit* first premiered at the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago in 2010, and eventually moved on to Off-Broadway in 2012. After making stops in London, Detroit, Washington, DC, and Ottawa over the past two years, the play will finally make its Minneapolis debut this spring at the Jungle Theater.

With a cast including seasoned Twin Cities actors Angela Timberman, John Middleton, Anna Sundberg, and Tyson Forbes, and under the direction and design of Joel Sass, *Detroit* will be a barbecue that you will never forget.

Opens April 11. 2951 Lyndale Ave. S, Mpls., 612-822-7063, [jungletheater.com](http://jungletheater.com)