



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: February 8, 2010

Media Contact

Adrienne Sweeney
507-467-2905 x208 or
adrienne@commonwealththeatre.org

Box Office

800-657-7025 or
www.commonwealththeatre.org

STAFF CHANGES AT COMMONWEAL THEATRE

LANESBORO, MN. — The Commonweal Theatre Co. announces new administrative staff members and duties as it begins its twenty-second season producing live, professional theatre in historic downtown Lanesboro. Commonweal operates under a rare artist/administrator model where all company members share responsibility for both the business and performance aspects of the organization, which has been the foundation for the theatre's sustainability since its founding in 1989.

Stef Dickens, formerly Commonweal's Director of Administration, has now taken on the newly created position of Director of Development. A Luther College graduate, Dickens has been a part of Commonweal's company for the past seven years and has appeared onstage recently in *Man of La Mancha*, *Peer Gynt*, and *Steel Magnolias*. As head of Commonweal's Development Team, she will be responsible for grant monies, individual and business donations for the theatre, and will be closely involved with Commonweal's primary donors, The Million Dollar Club.

A Commonweal artist since 2000, Stela Burdt has joined the theatre's Executive Team as the new Director of Administration, in charge of human resources, scheduling, and account management. Burdt, who performed last year in *The Odd Couple*, *A Midnight Dreary*, and *The 1940's Radio Hour*, will also

~ more ~

Commonweal Theatre Company
Staff Changes at Commonweal, page 2

continue to serve as the volunteer coordinator and artistic director for “Over The Back Fence”, Commonweal’s summertime variety radio show.

Irene ErkenBrack first worked with the Commonweal in 2005 as a semester-in-residence student from Luther College. After receiving her MA from the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, ErkenBrack returned to Lanesboro to appear in *Peer Gynt*, *The Odd Couple*, and *The 1940’s Radio Hour* and last year took on the role as the theatre’s Ibsen Festival Associate Coordinator. For 2010, she will add the title of Box Office Manager, responsible for all front-of-house operations, group sales, and scheduling of special matinees.

Two of Lanesboro’s newest residents, Stan Peal and Laura Depta, are brand new additions to Commonweal’s staff. A husband-and-wife team, Peal and Depta were co-founders of Epic Arts Theatre in Charlotte, NC, but have returned to their native upper MidWest. Depta has years of experience in non-profit fundraising and will be a part of Commonweal’s Development Team in addition to upcoming onstage work in *John Gabriel Borkman*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and *Little Women*. Peal first appeared at Commonweal in 2008 acting in the world premiere of his own play, *Ice Maidens*. Last year, he was the sound designer for all of Commonweal’s mainstage shows and played the role of Griswold in *A Midnight Dreary*. In 2010, he joins the Production Team, working on set and sound design and stage managing as well as acting.

In 2008, Commonweal launched its Apprenticeship Program, designed to immerse new and recent graduates of theatre programs in the artistic and administrative workings of a professional company, and two alumni of that program are joining the staff for the 2010 season. Sarah Hawkins (*Ice Maidens*, *Private Eyes*) will be Commonweal’s new Events Coordinator, managing rentals of the theatre and events hall and other special programs throughout the year. Tim Sailer (*The Rainmaker*, *The 1940’s Radio Hour*) is a Marketing Assistant, working with the Marketing Team on projects ranging from ticket sales to electronic marketing to media relations.

~ more ~

**Commonweal Theatre Company
Staff Changes at Commonweal, page 3**

The Commonweal Theatre Company is a non-profit professional theatre with year-round main stage and educational programming located at 208 Parkway Avenue North in historic downtown Lanesboro. For more information, visit www.commonwealththeatre.org or call 800-657-7025.

###