

Come Back

by Neil Haven
Sept 3 - Nov 14



THE COMMONWEAL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

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WELCOME BACK!

Welcome to our 33rd season. I can't begin to describe the anticipation, the joy, the relief we are all feeling, being able to bring live theater back to you all after what has been the most trying season in the company's history. That you are choosing to spend the next few hours with us, sharing stories of unique, courageous, warm, funny people in our quest to further understand what it means to be human, is a gift for which we say thank you from the bottoms of our hearts.

Please relax and enjoy the fruits of our labor and please stay safe and healthy as we begin to return to a world where sitting together in darkened theaters and sharing our mutual stories is once again a meaningful event in each of our lives.

Warmly,



Hal Cropp
Producing Artistic Director

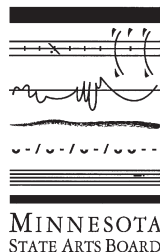


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The Commonweal Theatre Company is a member of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts and a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group. Funding is provided in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature and by private funders.

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THE COMPANY



LIZZY ANDRETTA is in her fifth season at the Commonweal. Favorite roles include *Peter & the Starcatcher*, *Boeing Boeing*, *The Elephant Man*, *Dracula: Prince of Blood*, and *Sanders Family Christmas* as well as choreographing for *Peter & the Starcatcher* and *Stones in His Pockets*. Other Commonweal credits include *The Root River Anthology*, *Headspace Theatre*, and *A Driftless Christmas*. Lizzy holds an M.F.A. in acting from the East 15 Acting School in England and a B.S. in Theatre from Skidmore College. Lizzy is originally from New Jersey and is proud to call Lanesboro her home.



STELA BURDT is grateful to celebrate her 22nd season with our Commonweal family. Past onstage work includes roles in *Souvenir*, *Woody Guthrie's American Song*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *Zombies from the Beyond*, *A Midnight Dreary*, *Harvey* and *Man of La Mancha*. In addition to performing, Stela is a music director, sound designer, freelance vocalist and the Commonweal's Patron Relations Manager. Currently, Stela is in the role of a lifetime as mom to Kieran. Love and Light, #TeamScottyForever.



HAL CROPP is in his 30th season, where favorite roles have been in *Ghost-Writer*, *Dracula: Prince of Blood*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*, *The Drawer Boy*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Groucho and Talley's Folly*. Selected directing credits include *Headspace Theatre*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Brand*, *Heartland Portrait*, *The Wild Duck*, *Measure For Measure*, *Peer Gynt*, *Hedda Gabler*, *A Midnight Dreary*, *Enchanted April*, *Ghosts* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Hal holds his B.A. from Brown University, M.B.A. from Santa Clara University and an M.F.A. from National Theater Conservatory. He was the Sally Irvine Award winner for Initiative, 2006.



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ELIZABETH DUNN is in her seventh season with the Commonweal. Favorite credits include *Boeing Boeing*, *On the Verge*, *Scotland Road*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *Dracula: Prince of Blood*. She has traveled in multiple tours with Prairie Fire Children's Theatre, and lived in Chicago for a stint, where she studied improvisation at iO (formerly ImprovOlympic). Originally hailing from Georgia, Elizabeth is a 2010 graduate of Valdosta State University where she earned her B.F.A. in Theatre Arts.

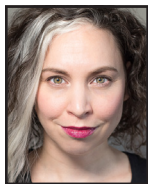


BEN GORMAN joined the Commonweal ensemble in 2016, previously performing as a seasonal actor next door at the St. Mane in '01, '02 and '05. Favorite roles and productions here include *The Elephant Man*, *Scrooge* (twice), *Pride's Crossing*, Black Stache in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the Poet in *An Iliad* (Wealhouse); elsewhere: Hamlet, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Hannay in *The 39 Steps* and Torvald Helmer in *A Doll's House*. Ben loves Shakespeare and has toured with the American Shakespeare Center. He also eagerly promotes sustainable living and renewable energy.

KELSEY HEATHCOTE serves on the Commonweal's production team as the Technical Director and Assistant Production Manager. Since completing her apprenticeship in 2018, her work here has been seen onstage in several shows, including *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Bakersfield Mist*. In 2020, Kelsey designed the set, sound, and lighting for *Fully Committed* and was one of two audio engineers for *A Driftless Christmas*. She looks forward to many new and exciting challenges as we reopen our doors this year!



DAVID HENNESSEY serves on the development team and has played in over 50 shows over 22 years, including *The Root River Anthology*, *Headspace Theatre* and *A Driftless Christmas* last year. Other favorites: *Holmes and Watson*, *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *Around the World in 80 Days* and *The Drawer Boy*. He designed costumes for *Ice Maidens* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, provides audio descriptions for the visually impaired, and has worked at In Heart Theatre, Park Square Theatre, Jungle Theatre and American Players Theatre. He lives in Preston with Linda, his favorite scene partner for 48 years.



JACLYN JUNE JOHNSON joined the Commonweal at the start of 2020. An arts administrator, actor, director, playwright, costume designer and teaching artist, Jaclyn has credits across the country, performing and designing with companies such as St. Croix Festival Theatre, Children's Theatre Madison, Creede Repertory, Riverside Shakespeare Festival, Chicago's UTG Improv Theatre. Jaclyn received her B.A. from Cornell College. She wishes to thank: her family, friends, spouse and their cats for their encouragement and love; and you for your support of the arts and specifically to the uniquely healing community of theatre.

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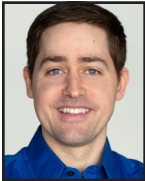
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RIVKA KELLY joined the Commonweal family in 2020 as the Production Stage Manager. Rivka hails from California but has spent the last decade as a traveling stage manager, mostly around the Midwest. Selected stage management experience includes shows with American Players Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Skylight Theatre and Two Crows Theatre. Rivka received her B.A. from the University of Vermont. She's grateful for this welcoming community and her family's unflinching support.



RACHEL KUHNLE returned to the Commonweal in 2018, seven years after completing her acting apprenticeship in which she performed in *Metamorphoses* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Seen most recently in *Boeing Boeing*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* and as June in *Sanders Family Christmas*, Rachel also proudly contributed to the *The Root River Anthology* and directed *A Driftless Christmas*. She completed her M.F.A. in acting at the U. of S. Carolina in 2017. She loves her cats and is grateful to her husband, Josiah, for being awesome. Every day, Rachel is inspired by the resiliency of her Commonweal family—here's to the future!



JOSIAH LAUBENSTEIN joined the Commonweal late in 2018. He is the resident videographer and most recently took the virtual stage in *Fully Committed*. Other Commonweal favorites include *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Boeing Boeing*. Previously, Josiah worked at Festival Theatre in St. Croix Falls, WI, as Marketing Director and acting in nine productions over two years. Prior to that he lived in Columbia, SC, earning his M.F.A. in Acting from the University of South Carolina. Josiah is a proud member of Glassbox Theatre Group, a co-founder of Highway Walkers Media Company and is happily married to Rachel Kuhnle.



PHILIP MUEHE proudly rejoins the Commonweal for his sixth season! Favorite acting credits include Rev. Mervin Oglethorpe in *Sanders Family Christmas* and Leaf in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Favorite directing credits include *A Bright New Boise*, *Constellations*, *I Am My Own Wife* and *Tigers Be Still*. He holds a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from the University of North Dakota and is also the producing artistic director of In Heart Theatre in Rochester. Hugs and thanks to his loved ones. L'úbim t'a Andrej!



BRANDT ROBERTS is in his eighth season at the Commonweal. Favorite roles include Robert in *Boeing Boeing*, John Merrick in *The Elephant Man*, Mr. Coffee in *On the Verge*, Ragnar Brovik in *The Master Builder* and Fancourt Babberley in *Charley's Aunt*. Cherished regional credits include *Measure for Measure* and *Henry IV Part I* at the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Brandt's original one-person show, *The Art of the Entertainer*, has been performed in several states and was adapted into an online presentation last year. Roberts holds a M.F.A. in Performing Arts from Savannah College of Art and Design.



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JODI RUSHING is in her third season at the Commonweal. Her favorite credits include *Headspace Theatre*, *An Iliad* (Wealhouse), and *On The Verge*. Before her tech apprenticeship with the Commonweal in 2019-2020, she stage managed for Doniphan Dance Project in Tupelo, MS, and served as the conference manager for the 2019 ACDA South Conference. Originally from Mississippi, Jodi is a 2019 graduate from the University of Mississippi with a B.A. in Theatre and Film.



ADRIENNE SWEENEY is grateful to be in her 21st season with the Commonweal, serving as the Assoc. Art. Dir. and Dir. of External Relations in addition to artistic roles. From Philadelphia, she holds an M.F.A. in Acting from the U/AZ. A commercial voice talent, she can be heard regionally on radio and TV. Favorite shows here include *Silent Sky* (director), *Boeing Boeing*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Outside Mullingar*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Sylvia*. Adrienne believes that the act of sitting together in the dark, sharing stories, can help bring light to the world, something we all crave now more than ever. She looks forward to sharing time and space with you.



JEREMY VAN METER is enjoying a milestone tenth season in residence at the Commonweal. Favorite credits here include C.K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*, Anthony Reilly in *Outside Mullingar* and the title role in *Dracula: Prince of Blood* by Scott Dixon. His professional career began at The Barter Theatre in Virginia and he has appeared regionally at Riverside Theatre, Lexington Children's Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival and Great River Shakespeare Festival. Jeremy holds an M.F.A. in Acting from the U. of Iowa and makes his home in Lanesboro with his lovely and extremely talented wife, Catherine Glynn.

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ALSO FEATURING

Annie Cady (Costume Designer) is pleased to be back at Commonweal and working on live theatre again! Favorite past Commonweal costume designs include: *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Arcadia* and *The Memory of Water*. Annie is a faculty member and costume designer at Normandale Community College and has also designed costumes for numerous Twin Cities theatre and dance companies. She earned her M.F.A. from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities.

Paul Epton (Lighting Designer) returns to Commonweal for a 6th time, having most recently lit *Sanders Family Christmas* and *Silent Sky*. He started designing lights at Carleton College, spent 11 years in Detroit, Michigan, and returned to Minnesota in 1992. Paul has designed for the Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, Mixed Blood Theatre, Jon Hassler Theater, and Paul Bunyan Playhouse. A year-round bicyclist, one of his early designs was for *Spokesong*. Awards: Lighting Designer, Ivey Award Honoree, *Ruined*. Lighting Designer, Ivey Award Honoree, **Psst!**, *Detroit Free Press* Theatre Excellence Award in Design. *Detroit News* Drama Critics Award in Theatre Craft.



Ashley Graham (Mel, *et al.*) is an actor from Spartanburg, South Carolina. She obtained a B.A. in Theatre from the University of South Carolina in 2017. She has acted and instructed across the country, including theatres in South Carolina (Theatre South Carolina), Oklahoma (Lawton Community Theatre), California (Ocean Beach Playhouse, Trinity Theatre Company, Roustabouts Theatre Company), and Wisconsin (St. Croix Festival Theatre). This is her first time working with Commonweal and she is very ecstatic to play and grow alongside the members of this year's company.

Lisa Imbryk (Props Designer) is delighted to be working with Commonweal for the first time. She holds a B.A. from Hamline University and an M.F.A. from the University of Georgia. Imbryk works as the Membership Coordinator at the Dakota County Historical Society and is a costume and props designer with a variety of companies around town. Previous props credits include *Natasha and the Coat* at Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, *Skin Deep Sea* with Workhouse Collective, and *Complicated Fun* at History Theatre.

Matt Vichlach (Sound Designer) is delighted to be back at Commonweal! He previously designed sound for *Outside Mullingar*, *When We Dead Awaken* and *Pride's Crossing*. Matthew graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a B.A. in Theatre: Design & Production. He also runs Optimistic Nihilist Productions, which produces podcasts, videos and more. Matthew serves as the resident Stage Manager and Technical Director for Brave New Workshop, the oldest satirical comedy theatre in the nation. Matthew freelances as a Sound and Projection Designer around the Twin Cities. Credits include: Theatre in the Round, Theatre Pro Rata and Mu Performing Arts.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Neil Haven is originally from Wisconsin and developed many of his plays in Milwaukee. His work has been seen in cities around the country like Rochester, MN and New York City, NY and Louisville, wherever that is. Some favorites include *Come Back, Stuck*, *Get a Life* and *The Playdaters*. Since debuting in Milwaukee in 2008, *Who Killed Santa?* has been produced, often with puppets, in Los Angeles, Omaha, "Louisville," Denver and somewhere in Florida. Neil worked in the Milwaukee theatre scene for several years before giving up and becoming a dueling piano player, as most writers do. He currently lives in Boston, wherever that is.

SPECIAL THANKS

Norb Kelly, Louanne Hamann, Erika Ellis, Morgan Rainford, Theatre at Normandale.

COME BACK

by Neil Haven

Director	Adrienne Sweeney
Rehearsal/Performance Stage Manager	Kelsey Heathcote
Scenic Designer	Brandt Roberts
Lighting Designer	Paul Epton
Costume Designer	Annie Cady
Sound Designer	Matt Vichlach
Props Designer	Lisa Imbryk

CAST

Sky	Jeremy van Meter
Erin	Jaclyn June Johnson
Val	Hal Cropp
Mel, <i>et al.</i>	Ashley Graham

and featuring Bruce

Setting

Various locations in the United States; present day.

The performance will include one 15-minute intermission. Runtime is approximately 100 minutes.

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

At its heart, *Come Back* is not just a celebration of life—though it is that. It is a beautiful and poignant reminder of what, exactly, “life” means. For some, life equates with adventure and exploration; for others, faith, family and tradition. And that’s the tricky part, right? As humans we want the things that are important to us to be important to others, especially to those we love. We want to share our passions, beliefs, hopes and dreams. When it comes down to it, I think we all really want to agree. So what happens when we don’t?

Come Back examines these conflicts through a hilarious lens of endearing and wacky people. Real people. Sweet people. Funny people. GOOD people. I bet—I hope—that when all is said and done, even if you wouldn’t make the same decisions as Erin, Sky, Val or Mel, that you at least understand them. And I hope you take that out of the theatre with you and share that understanding with others.

—Adrienne Sweeney



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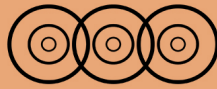
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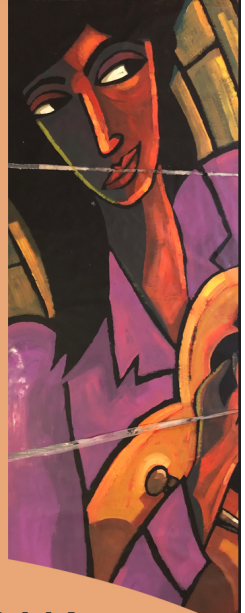
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—Michaeleen Bonner, Houston, MN

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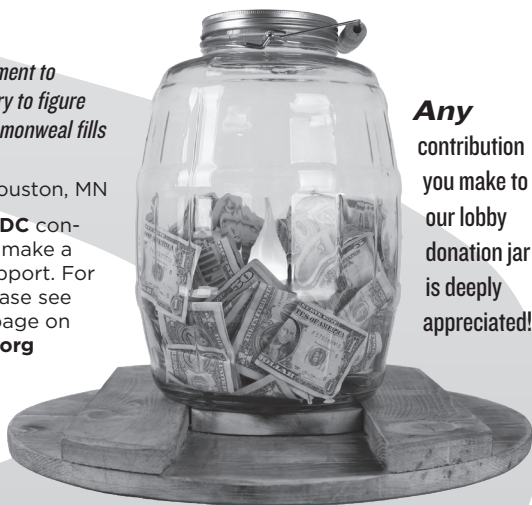
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—Ken & Sally Mogren,
Winona, MN

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