

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

by Rupert Holmes



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JUL 9 - OCT 29

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Welcome Back!

We hope that you, like our company, are feeling that we're emerging from what has been a particularly trying time, and you're ready to join in the celebration of our common humanity that this year's stories illuminate. Your presence is a gift for which we say thank you from the bottoms of our hearts.

WHY A DIGITAL PROGRAM?

By offering a digital program, we hope to reduce our carbon footprint and reduce printing costs. By using less paper, we reduce our carbon footprint and give you remote access to the program from anywhere. Also, without the space limitations of print, we look forward to adding more "bonus features"—such as extra articles and photos about each show—during the season.

COVID-19 PROTOCOL UPDATE

As our community relaxes COVID-19 prevention efforts, the risk to our work at the Commonwealth increases. Just one case of COVID-19 among our artists onstage or backstage could put a stop to rehearsals and performances. While public health guidelines relax, we may maintain stricter policies to mitigate risk and help ensure our shows perform as planned. The most up-to-date information is available on our website. Thank you for your flexibility and effort in keeping our community safe.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at the Commonwealth Theatre acknowledge that we work and gather on the ancestral lands of the Dakota Nation and other Indigenous peoples. We recognize these Nations as the original caretakers of this land and acknowledge the injustices committed against them. We strive to promote healing and inclusion through storytelling, which is fundamental to our mission.

We are eager to share these meaningful and entertaining stories with you. Please stay safe and healthy. And thank you for coming to the Commonwealth!



Hal Cropp
Producing Artistic Director

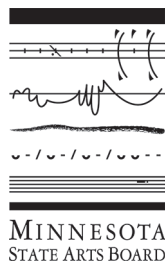


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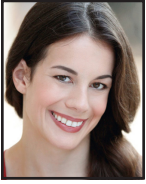


The Commonwealth Theatre Company is a member of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts and a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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THE COMPANY



LIZZY ANDRETTA (she/her) is in her sixth season at the Commonweal. She appeared in *Dancing Lessons* and *A Christmas Carol* last season and previously in *The Elephant Man*, *Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Dracula: Prince of Blood*, *Boeing Boeing*, and *Sanders Family Christmas*, among others. Other Commonweal credits: *Root River Anthology*, *Headspace* and *A Driftless Christmas* as well as choreographing for several shows. Lizzy earned an M.F.A. in Acting from the East 15 Acting School in England and a B.S. from Skidmore College. Originally from New Jersey, she now lives in Lanesboro with her beloved cat, Henry.



CODY BEYER (he/his) is thrilled to be joining this lovely community and extraordinary company for his first season at Commonweal. He received his B.A. in Theatre Honors from the University of Tennessee. Cody is an actor, designer, and builder who has been working in Chicago for the past seven years. He worked mostly with Theatre-Y and Hell in a Handbag Productions, with his favorite credits being *Macbeth* and *Stories of the Body*. As most people have felt, these last few years have proved tremendously trying, but this theatre and community have something truly special that Cody can't wait to add to.



STELA BURDT (she/her) is grateful to celebrate her 23rd 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.



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HAL CROPP (he/his) is in his 31st season, where favorite roles have been in *Come Back*, *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*, *Groucho*, and *Talley's Folly*. Selected directing credits: *I Love To Eat*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Brand*, *Heartland Portrait*, *Measure For Measure*, *Peer Gynt*, *A Midnight Dreary*, *Ghosts*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Hal holds a B.A. from Brown U., M.B.A. from Santa Clara U., and an M.F.A. from National Theater Conservatory. He was the Sally Irvine Award winner for Initiative, 2006.



ELIZABETH DUNN (she/her) is in her eighth 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.

KELSEY HEATHCOTE (she/her) 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 Drifless Christmas*. She looks forward to many new and exciting challenges as we reopen our doors this year!



DAVID HENNESSEY (he/his) serves on the development team and has played in more than 50 shows over 23 years, including *A Christmas Carol* last season. Other favorites: *Headspace Theatre*, *Holmes and Watson*, *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *The Drawer Boy*, and *The Rainmaker*. He designed costumes for *Ice Maidens* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, oversees our audio descriptions for the visually impaired, and has led our COVID mitigation team since 2020. Other acting credits: In Heart Theatre, Park Square Theatre, Jungle Theatre, and American Players Theatre. He lives in Preston with Linda, his favorite scene partner for 49 years.



JACLYN JUNE JOHNSON (she/they) 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, working with companies such as St. Croix Festival Theatre, Children's Theatre Madison, Creede Repertory, Riverside Shakespeare Festival, Riverside Theatre, 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.

RIVKA KELLY (she/her) 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 amazing family's support.



RACHEL KUHNLE (she/her) returned to the Commonweal in 2018, seven years after completing her acting apprenticeship in which she performed in *Metamorphoses* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She was last seen on stage as June in *Sanders Family Christmas*, and directed last year's *Dancing Lessons*. Rachel

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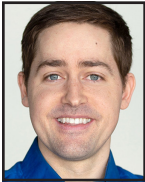
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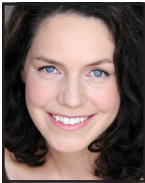
completed her M.F.A. in acting at the University of South Carolina in 2017. She loves her cats, her baby, and is grateful to her husband, Josiah, for being awesome.



JOSIAH LAUBENSTEIN (he/his) joined the Commonweal late in 2018. He is the resident videographer and most recently appeared in *Dancing Lessons*. Before moving here, Josiah worked at Festival Theatre in St. Croix Falls, WI, as Marketing Director, and acted in nine productions over two years. Prior to that, Josiah lived in Columbia, SC, where he earned 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. He is besotted with their first child, Franny.



BRANDT ROBERTS (he/his) is in his ninth 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 in 2020. Roberts holds a M.F.A. in Performing Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design.



Laurie Roberts (she/her) is excited to join the Commonweal this season. Before moving to Lanesboro, Laurie worked with A Red Orchid Theatre, Hell in a Handbag, Facility Theatre, Theatre Y, and Red Tape Theatre in Chicago. Before then, she performed in Cincinnati at Know Theater and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. Some of her favorite work has been devised and performed internationally in Pontlevoy, France, and at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Laurie has also worked as an acting teacher, movement director, and choreographer. She earned her M.F.A. in Acting at the U. of South Carolina. Love to Duke Orsino.

JODI RUSHING (they/their) is in their fourth season at the Commonweal. Their favorite credits include *An Iliad* (Wealhouse), *On The Verge*, *I Love To Eat*, and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abgd.) (Rvsd.)*. Before their tech apprenticeship with the Commonweal in 2019, they stage managed for Doniphan Dance Project in Tupelo, MS, and served as the conference manager for the 2019 ACDA South Conference. Jodi holds a B.A. in Theatre and Film from the U. of Mississippi.



TIM SAILER (he/his) apprenticed at the Commonweal in 2009 and is now in his fifth season with the company. He appeared in *A Christmas Carol*, *The Rainmaker*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and *An Enemy of the People*. Other MN work includes performances at Park Square Theatre, Theatre L'Homme Dieu, and the Orchard Theater Collective. He spent five years with the American Shakespeare Center (Staunton, VA), where he played more than 50 roles in 35 plays. Other regional work: UT Shakespeare Festival, TX Shakespeare Festival, Houston Shakespeare



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Festival, and AR Shakespeare Theatre. Tim holds an M.F.A. from the University of Houston and is also an audiobook narrator.



ADRIENNE SWEENEY (she/her) is grateful to be in her 22nd 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 last season's *A Christmas Carol*, in which she played Scrooge. Other favorites: *Silent Sky* (director), *Boeing Boeing*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Outside Mullingar*, 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 (he/his) is enjoying his eleventh 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, 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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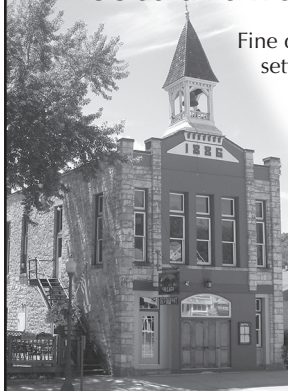
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SPRING 2022 PRODUCTIONS



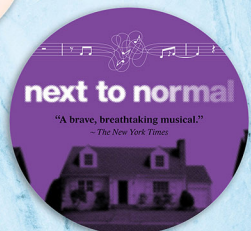
March 20, 2022



April 1-10, 2022



April 16, 2022



April 29-May 15, 2022

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Rupert Holmes's musical creation *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (first produced in 1985) won Broadway's highest honor, the Tony Award for Best Musical, and had a critically-acclaimed Broadway revival in 2012-2013. For *Edwin Drood*, Holmes was the first person in theatrical history to solely win Tony awards for Best Music, Best Lyrics, and Best Book of a Musical. He also orchestrated the original Broadway production and its recent revival. Holmes has written a number of other plays and musicals, including *Say Goodnight, Gracie*, and is a novelist and screenwriter as well.

However, Holmes is perhaps most popularly known for his music. A self-proclaimed "pop tunesmith," his work has been performed by the likes of opera star Renée Fleming, pop star Britney Spears, balladeer Barry Manilow and rapper Wyclef. Holmes is still best known to the public as the singer-songwriter of several Billboard Top Ten hits, including his #1 multi-platinum smash "Escape" aka "The Piña Colada Song"

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Jungle Theatre, Theatre in the Round Players, The Costume Collective, Norcostco, Louanne Hamann.

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THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

A Musical by Rupert Holmes

Director	Craig Johnson
Music Director	Stephen Houtz
Assistant Music Director	Stela Burdt
Rehearsal Stage Manager	Rivka Kelly
Performance Stage Manager	Kelsey Heathcote
Assistant Stage Managers	Sara Hueser, Grace Cummings
Scenic Designer	Justin Hooper
Lighting Designer	Dietrich Poppen
Costume Designer	Kathy Kohl
Costume Assistant	Eleanor Schanilec
Milliner	Mandi Johnson
Sound Designer	Kelsey Heathcote
Props Designer	Adrienne Sweeney
Choreographer	Laurie Roberts
Dance Captain	Lizzy Andretta
Intimacy Coordinator	Rachel Kuhnle
Dialect Coach	Jeremy van Meter

CAST

Mr. William Cartwright, Chairman	Hal Cropp
Mr. Clive Paget as JOHN JASPER	Tim Sailer
Miss Alice Nutting as EDWIN DROOD	Jaclyn June Johnson
Miss Deirdre Peregrine as ROSA BUD	Lizzy Andretta
Miss Janet Conover as HELENA LANDLESS	Maria Cina
Mr. Victor Grinstead as NEVILLE LANDLESS	Brandon Cayetano
Mr. Cedric Moncrieffe as REV. CRISPARKLE	Tanner Sabol
Miss Angela Prysock as THE PRINCESS PUFFER	Betti Battocletti
Mr. Nick Cricker as DURDLES	Alex Schlesinger
Master Nick Cricker as DEPUTY	John B. Nicol
Mr. Phillip Bax as BAZZARD	Adam Lenehan
??? as DICK DATCHERY	<i>To be determined by the audience!</i>

Setting

The Music Hall Royale, London, England, 1882.

Runtime is approximately 2½ hours, with one 15-minute intermission.

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Tams-Witmark LLC.
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Original Broadway production produced by the New York Shakespeare Festival, Joseph Papp, Producer.

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ALSO FEATURING



Betti Battocletti (Miss Angela Prysock) has performed at the Commonweal in roles that include Christmas Present in *A Christmas Carol*, Vera in *Sanders Family Christmas*, Mary in *On the Verge*, Virginia in *The Clean House*, Rona in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and Clairee in *Steel Magnolias*. Other favorite credits include *Always...Patsy Cline*, *The World Goes Round*, and *Urinetown* at The Jungle Theater in Mpls; *42nd Street*, *Prisoner of Second Avenue*, and as Cassie in *A Chorus Line* at Artistry. She is also a lyricist, playwright, choreographer, and owns Bodiology Pilates in Minnetonka, MN.



Brandon Cayetano (Mr. Victor Grinstead) is thrilled to be coming back to the Commonweal after having been a part of the 2018-2019 apprentice class and appearing in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *in a word*. Since his apprenticeship, Brandon has appeared in many productions, including *Newsies*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Legally Blonde the Musical* and *The Secret Garden*. Brandon is also a writer, having won Best Short Screenplay at Emerging: A Virtual Film Festival and Screenwriting Contest for his short script, *Guitar Girl*. Brandon thanks his family and friends for their love and support.

Justin Hooper (Scenic Designer) holds a B.A. in Theatre from Augsburg College. He began his professional career as a stage manager for Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown, NY. He returned to Minneapolis to become a scenic artist for the Guthrie. Later, he took side-gigs as History Theater's technical director, Pioneer Place's production manager, and AV technician for AVEX. He has designed scenery and lighting for myriad Twin Cities companies and has branched into the world of interior design—his portfolio includes two restaurants, a liquor store, and a brew pub. He is currently the technical director for Concordia University's Theatre Department in St. Paul.

Stephen Houtz (Musical Director) is pleased to return to the Commonweal, where he last appeared in *Souvenir*. He was also music director for *The Man of La Mancha* and appeared in *Uncle Vanya*. He has music directed at Park Square, Lakeshore, History, and Ordway Theatres, among others. As a director and actor, he has worked for theatres and schools throughout the Twin Cities. Active as an arts educator, he worked at MacPhail School of Music, SteppingStone Theatre, Children's Theatre, Stages, and Minnesota Opera. He currently teaches voice at his home studio. As a composer, his music has been heard throughout the country.

Craig Johnson (Director) is delighted to be back at Commonweal Theatre Company having directed numerous productions over the past twenty years including last season's *A Christmas Carol*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Dracula: Prince of Blood*, *When We Dead Awaken*, *Blithe Spirit*, and others. Craig is a Minneapolis director and actor, and has worked at many Twin Cities theaters. Closer to Lanesboro, he has directed productions at Rochester Civic Theatre and Cedar Summerstock Theater in Osage, Iowa.

Mandi Johnson (Milliner) Mandi has been working as a freelance costume designer in the Twin Cities since 2005, and is currently employed as Head Costumer at Norcostco. Mandi studied theater at The College of St Catherine in St Paul, and studied Millinery at Arts University Bournemouth in Bournemouth, UK.

Kathy Kohl (Costume Designer) cheerfully returns to Commonweal, where her last gig was the zany *Boeing Boeing*. Over four decades she has designed costumes for most Twin Cities theaters, and is Resident Costumer for Frank Theatre. 2021 credits include *Log Jam!* (Open Eye Theatre), *Norma Jeane Baker of Troy* (Rough Magic), *What to Send Up When it Goes Down* (Pillsbury House), *Christmas of Swing* (History Theatre). Kathy is an editor for Minnesota's *Theatrical Safety Standards*, and is part-owner of The Costume Collective, a shared workspace & costume rental company. B.A. (Education): Beloit College; M.F.A. (Theatre Design): U. of M.



Adam Lenehan (Mr. Phillip Bax) is exultant to be joining Commonweal for his inaugural show, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Some favorite credits elsewhere include *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Crucible*, *Grand Tally*, and *Angels in America*. Adam has a B.A. in Theatre from Barat College and a M.S. in Higher Education, and presently works at Luther College as the Coordinator of Tutor and Academic Services. Residing in the one-and-only Spillville, Iowa, he would like to thank his husband, dogs, family, and friends for lifting him up and encouraging him to be his authentic self and pursuing what nourishes his spirit.

ALSO FEATURING

Dietrich Poppen (Lighting Designer) most recently designed the lights for Commonweal's 2019 production of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Previously, he lit *Clean House*, *A Christmas Carol* (2016), *Charley's Aunt* and *Little Women* (2015). He holds a degree in Communication Studies and Theatre from South Dakota State University. Dietrich spends his days as a scenic artist for the Guthrie Theatre, and his nights as a freelance scenic designer (*Sweeney Todd*, Chameleon Theatre Circle, 2013), lighting designer (*Urinetown*, Ashland Productions, 2014), and sound designer/composer (*Beyond Therapy*, Pioneer Place Theatre, 2013).

Eleanor Schanilec (Costume Assistant) is excited for her debut show with Commonweal! She's designed or assistant-designed costumes for Park Square Theater, Theatre Pro Rata, Open Window Theater, Sidekick Theater, Nautilus Music-Theater, Shakespeare Youth Theatre, and Saint Paul Academy and Summit School. Eleanor has also stitched and crafted costumes for The Children's Theater, Mixed Blood, Mixed Precipitation, Wonderlust, and more. She's a member and a co-founder of The Costume Collective MN. She's especially grateful for her kitty costume assistants, Dani and Zoe.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



In 1870, an exhausted Charles Dickens—having dashed off *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, and so many other doorstep novels over the previous four decades—not to mention innumerable short stories, articles, and constant public readings—sat down and began *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. As with his earlier novels, it was written and published in monthly installments. But halfway through—Dickens died! Leaving no rough drafts, no outline, no notes. Nothing.

Flash forward a hundred years to another talented and industrious workaholic: pop composer and vocalist Rupert Holmes. In 1979, out of nowhere, he scored a monster hit with a song titled “Escape,” but it’s better known as “The Piña Colada Song.” This story-song with a twist caught the attention of legendary Broadway producer Joseph Papp. Holmes relates the conversation along these lines:

Papp: “Hey, Rupert, have you ever thought of writing for the stage?”

Holmes: “Yeah, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* would make a great musical.”

Papp: “But, Rupert, Dickens never finished the novel. The mystery’s unsolved.”

Holmes: “I’ll just write a different ending for each suspect and we’ll let the audience decide—they can vote every night on who they think the murderer is.”

Papp: “Kid, that’s gold! So you’ll do the music and lyrics, right? Who should we get to write the script?”

Holmes: “Oh, I’ll do that.”

Papp: “Can you?”

Holmes: “Sure! I’ve been writing story songs for years. It’ll be a relief to write something longer than three minutes. And doesn’t have to rhyme.”

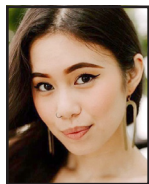
So *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the musical, was born. It swept the 1986 Tony Awards, ran for two years on Broadway, and has been a popular staple of the musical theater ever since. And it’s true: at every show the audience casts their vote to solve the mystery, and a different ending is performed. So come back again and again, vote for different suspects, and solve a new mystery. Fun, huh?

One other thing: for extra fun, Rupert Holmes gave the musical a framing device. It all takes place in a Victorian music hall where the resident theatre troupe is premiering *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*: “a musicale with dramatic interludes.” The British music hall is an old form of theatrical entertainment—much like vaudeville—filled with songs, dances, comedy routines, sing-alongs, cross-dressing, wacky disguises, and all overseen by a Master of Ceremonies called the Chairman. It’s a rowdy, raucous place where everybody’s welcome, everybody’s equal, and nobody’s too full of themselves. Welcome to the party!

—Craig Johnson

APPRENTICE CLASS OF 2023

Happily, Commonweal has resumed our Apprenticeship Program this year. This 10-12-month, fully immersive, live-work program affords unique opportunities for young theatre professionals to study the craft & business of making live theatre. Learn more on our [website](#).



MARIA CINA (she/they) earned her A.A. in Commercial Photography from Madison College (WI) and her Acting Certificate from The Gaiety School of Acting in Dublin, Ireland. Currently on hiatus from studying Theatre Arts and Communication Studies at the U/MN Twin Cities, she plans to resume post-apprenticeship. Credits: Morticia in *The Addams Family Musical*, Kendra in *The Gulf*, Asst. Stage Manager for *Romeo and Juliet*. When not on stage, Maria can be found sipping tea and cuddling her cat, a fantasy novel close by. She sends love, hugs, and pinky promises to all her friends and family. instagram: @mariashe_



GRACE CUMMINGS (she/her) has been acting and performing for almost a decade. She started in Monroe, LA, at Strauss Youth Academy for the Arts. She moved to Natchitoches to join Northwestern State U's Theatre & Dance program, and to participate in the LA Scholars' College. Her one goal onstage is to tell a story that will connect her with her audience, but also with herself. Some roles include Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Prospero in *The Tempest*, and Deb in *Ordinary Days*. She debuted two roles: Julia in *In Memoriam of Lena*, written by Del Shores, and Emilia Bassano in *Emilia*, written by herself.

SARA HUESER (she/her) serves as the technical Apprentice for the 2023 season. Favorite credits include *The Wild Party*, *My Way*, and *The Other Place*. She has spent many seasons in Savannah, GA, and Greenville, SC, working on shows. Originally from Pennsylvania, Sara holds a bachelor's in Computer Engineering and a B.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from Savannah College of Art and Design.



JOHN B. NICOL (he/him) is incredibly excited to be returning to the theatre scene as an acting apprentice with the Commonweal. Born and raised in community theatres around Northeastern IA, he went on to receive his B.S. in Theatre Arts from MN State Mankato. While there he had the opportunity to play some fun roles including Matt Friedman in *Talley's Folly*, and Smee in *Peter and the Starcatcher*. In regional theatres, he had fun playing Willard Hewitt in *Footloose* at the Paul Bunyan Playhouse and Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Free to the People Theatre.



TANNER SABOL (he/him) is thrilled to join the Commonweal Theatre for the first time! Growing up in Sioux Falls, SD, and graduating with a B.F.A. in musical theatre from the U. of North Dakota, he began acting in high school, being a part of the Oral Interpretation team all four years. Since then, he has played roles such as Felix in *The Odd Couple*, Sweeney in *Sweeney Todd*, Richard Hannay in *The 39 Steps*, and was also a performer in the American College Theatre Festival's 2020 Cabaret. He hopes to find another home away from home at the CTC!



ALEX SCHLESINGER (they/them) is ecstatic to be making their professional acting debut on the Commonweal Theatre's stage. Alex graduated from Luther College in 2021 with a B.A. in Theatre, and they are delighted to join the Commonweal's apprentice class this year. Favorite roles include Riff Raff in *The Rocky Horror Show*, Florizell in *The Winter's Tale*, and Amos Hart in *Chicago*. Alex would like to thank their mentor, professor, and good friend Jeff Dintaman for his years of support and sharing of knowledge that got Alex to where they are today.

THE
Music Hall Royale
PRESENTS
THE MYSTERY
OF EDWIN DROOD

★ ★ ★ CAST ★ ★ ★
(in order of appearance)



MR. WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT (Chairman) is marking his 12th season as Actor/Manager at The Music Hall Royale, having first joined the company in 1863 at the request of then Actor/Manager Frederick Robson. Previous engagements at Covent Garden and The Adelphi marked Mr. Cartwright's earliest experiences. The sage advice of Miss Fanny Kemble convinced him to abandon dreams of being the next Edmund Kean and urged Mr. Cartwright to pursue a career within the British Music Hall. Originally from Brighton, Mr. Cartwright is now pleased to call London home.

MR. CLIVE PAGET (John Jasper) is enjoying his fifth year in an exclusive contract with The Music Hall Royale. He began singing Offenbach arias at the Coal Hole near Covent Garden and continued to develop his skills in surrounding taverns and halls across London and beyond. Many believe Paget to be one of the original *lions comiques* (also known as the ever-fashionable "gentlemen swells"). He rose to prominence as one half of the Music Hall duo The Cheerful Charlies, until his other half, Charles Carson, decided to pursue a career in domestic service, currently serving as butler to The Earl of Grantham. Audiences may look forward to his virtuosic stint as both Hamlet and Claudius in *Hamlet, Part II*.



★ ★ ALSO FEATURING ★ ★



MISS ALICE NUTTING (Edwin Drood) Lauded as "London's Leading Male Impersonator," (*The London Figaro*) and as "the boldest lark donning pantaloons in London Town" (*Chatterbox Magazine*), Miss Nutting is known for her unequaled rendition of "Aren't I Half a Toff." Her one-woman show based on the life of George Sand remains in development in Belgium. She's appeared on countless stages including The Eagle Tavern, The Gaiety, and The London Pavilion. Fans of Miss Nutting can see her perform in the upcoming melodrama *One Fan*

Spare at The Britannia, or regularly at the Canterbury Music Hall where she recently debuted the promising new hit, "Madam Restell's Elixir Made Me Chipper." *The Owl: Journal of Politics and Society*, wrote of it: "here's charm and satirical wit at its musical finest. Nutting is a cheeky chanteuse as both bloke and dame alike."

MISS DEIRDRE PEREGRINE (Rosa Bud) Better known as "the most delicate of English roses," Miss Peregrine has been with the Music Hall Royale for five years. She first became known for her rendition of "Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Bow-Wow" which she performed alongside her cat, Henry. Since then, she has been seen on the legitimate stage in such roles as Cathy in *Wuthering Heights* and Lucie in *A Tale of Two Cities* and will soon appear as Ophelia's Ghost in *Hamlet, Part II*. Originally from Essex and currently unattached, Miss Peregrine enjoys long walks on the beach, late nights in her dressing room, and twirling.



MISS JANET CONOVER (Helena Landless) began singing early while working as a barmaid in her father's pubs. She rapidly won a reputation for performing both ballads and comic songs, and billed as "Queen of the Serio-Comic Vocalists." Her breakout performance was her portrayal of Daisy in the musical comedy drama *Kittens* at The Theatre Royal, Brighton. Miss Conover has received accolades for her turns in *The Orange Tree* and *the Bumble Bee*, *The Very Last Days of Pompeii*, and *Romulus and Remus*. Audiences will be thrilled to know she's developing a song cycle with composer Edward Elgar: *A Casaubon Catastrophe!* based on the novel *Middlemarch* by George Eliot.

MR. VICTOR GRINSTEAD (Neville Landless) is thrilled to be making his debut at The Music Hall Royale. He cut his teeth performing in Christmas pageants throughout Wales: Baby Jesus (in Llanwddyn, Eglwys Fach, Morfa Borth, and Pontrhydfendigaid), and A Sheep (in Mold). Audiences can look forward to his Mercutio in *Hamlet, Part II* next week. Of Mr. Grinstead's singing, Sir Arthur Sullivan once remarked, "I'll never forget that!"



MR. CEDRIC MONCRIEFFE (The Reverend Mr. Septimus Crisparkle) A 9-time nominee for the coveted Richard Burbage Best Melodramatic Performance Pennant, Cedric has been a part of many shows far away from this theatrical establishment, including, but most certainly not limited to: *Hamlet* as Hamlet, *Oedipus Rex* as Oedipus, and *Hippolytus* as Hippolytus. In an interesting twist of fate, Cedric settled out of court with Charles Dickens over charges that the celebrated author based the character of The Artful Dodger on Mr. Moncrieffe's own memoir *Consider Myself*.

★ ALSO ALSO FEATURING ★

MISS ANGELA PRYSOCK (The Princess Puffer) was born in a trunk in the Adelphi Theater in central London. Introduced to the pink and amber footlights at a very young age, Angela would naturally follow in her parents' footsteps and become an accomplished and quite popular actress-singer-dancer-comedienne-pantomimist and Burlesque Artist. Her credits are too numerous to list, but dozens of theatergoers remember her renowned renditions of "Tar-ra Boom-de-ay," "Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Bow-Wow," and the holiday classic, "I DO Like a Little Bit of Turkey at Christmastime." She is known for her abrasive but loveable onstage persona as well as her ability to argue down the toughest of hecklers, so watch your step!



MR. JAMES HITCHENS (Mayor Thomas Sapsea) is a mainstay of The Music Hall Royale, known for his rambunctious renditions of "Boiled Beef and Carrots," "I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside," and "I'll Show You Where the Elephant is Hiding." He notably created John Holtum's popular and allegedly-fatal King of Cannon act, where patrons would be awarded 50 pounds if they could survive catching a ball shot from a cannon. Tamburlaine in *Tamburlaine the Great, Part II*; Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; and the title role in *The Man in the Iron Mask* are all roles in which he failed to appear. The Music Hall Royale expects him to play Polonius in *Hamlet, Part II*.

MR. NICK CRICKER (Durdles) The clown prince of The Music Hall Royale, Mr. Cricker is most known for his incredible feat of juggling 16 balls at once with eyes closed. He couldn't be more proud of his own lad Nick Cricker II as he makes his onstage debut at The Music Hall Royale. If you like what you see tonight, Cricker and Son will be back next week as Rosencrantz ("Hello, all!") and Guildenstern ("I'm alive!") in *Hamlet, Part II*. Mr. Cricker is also the spokesperson for Mother's Milk Wine and Spirits and Graveyards Argh Us Tombstones.



MASTER NICK CRICKER II (Deputy) is excited to be stepping onto the stage of The Music Hall Royale on purpose this time. He's known for loitering about the theatre watching his father (of the same name, without the "II") and making unplanned cameo appearances in such productions as *Oedipus: Riddle Me This!* and *Miss Havisham's Honeymoon*. When not in the music hall, you can find Junior selling newspapers and inserting his short stories into them. You'll see the father and son duo in *Hamlet, Part II* as Rosencrantz ("I'm alive!") and Guildenstern ("Hello, all!") .



MR. PHILLIP BAX (Bazzard), of Knutsford ("Go Squirrels!"), has longed to play a real part since first attending The Music Hall Royale as a young lad. First gracing the stage in their adaptation of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in the role of The Doorman, Phillip was enchanted. Other roles include Guard Number 1 in *King Lear: Regan's Revenge*, Lilliputian Citizen 3 in *Gulliver's Travels*, and most recently as A Senator in *Julius Caesar*. He is still waiting to hear if there is a role for him in *Hamlet, Part II*. Phillip is a-tingle to play his first role with lines!

★ ABOUT THE AUTHOR ★ CHARLES DICKENS



The Music Hall Royale would like to recognize the progenitor of the source material for our “to-die-for” production this evening, Charles Dickens. Born on February 7th, 1812, Dickens was the 2nd of a whopping 8 children. His father, John Dickens, was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, who moved around a fair amount.

You're probably asking yourself, why is this information important to the story of the legendary Charles? Well, despite his meager pay as a clerk, John liked to live his life in luxury, leaving in his wake an insurmountable mountain of debt. Eventually this debt caught up with him, and he was imprisoned in a debtor's prison. As I'm sure most of you are aware, only John, his wife Elizabeth, and the youngest children in their family were allowed to stay together in the prison, so Charles had to board with a family friend in the meanwhile.

To pay his way, Charles had to leave school and work in a boot-blackening factory. However, after three years, our hero was fortunate enough to return to school taking particular interest in literature and journalism. His writing rose to great acclaim, stacking up 15 novels, 5 novellas, and many short stories.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. 13 years ago, in the year 1869, Charles suffered his first stroke. Later that year he had a second stroke, this one of genius! He began writing our story, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Then, in 1870, after a long day of working on the greatest mystery novel of our time, he was stricken with the 3rd and final stroke. He died 2 days later. Thus ends the story of Charles Dickens, the man who left behind the beginning of tonight's musicale.

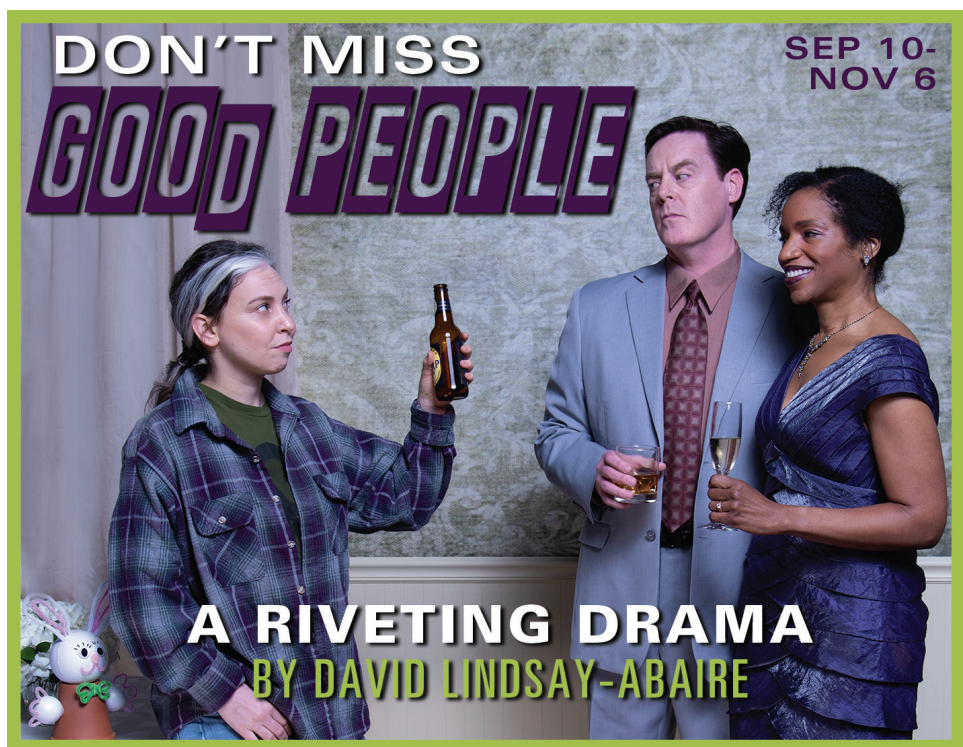
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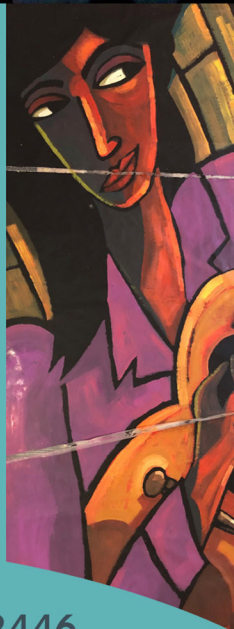
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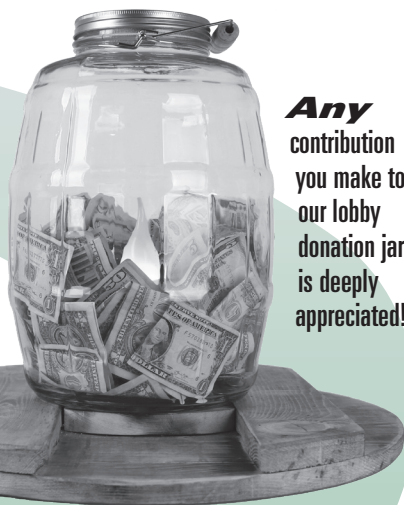
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—Ken & Sally Mogren,
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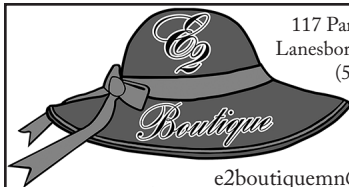
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