

THE COMMONWEAL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

DEATHtrap

BY IRA LEVIN



A DEVILISHLY CLEVER THRILLER

MAY 6—AUG 19

PROFESSIONAL LIVE THEATRE

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, at the **Commonweal 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.

As artists in our community we have a responsibility to create a welcoming, inclusive, and nurturing environment where visitors and community members can gather and explore big ideas through live theatre. Fostering such an environment begins with education and reflection. Our Land Acknowledgement is just one way the Commonweal exercises our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Thank you to the Minnesota Historical Society, Lanesboro Historical Society, Prairie Island Indian Community, Mississippi Valley Archeology Center, and Mower County Historical Society for assisting in the research that led to the formation of our Land Acknowledgement.



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Whether you've been with us from the beginning, or this is your first time, we are thrilled you could join us as we celebrate over three decades of producing award-winning, professional, live theatre in Lanesboro. The journey we will take together this year is full of romance, mystery, laughs, and thrills.

Next up: Ira Levin's *Deathtrap*. Sidney Bruhl was a successful Broadway playwright—emphasis on “was.” Struggling to find his next hit, he takes on a talented apprentice, Clifford. Who may be *too* talented. What's a playwright to do? Seek advice from his wealthy wife? His steadfast retainer? The psychic who's moved in next door? This stylish thriller by the author of *Rosemary's Baby* is sure to keep you guessing from the edge of your seat!

Buckle up for a wild night in the theater at stop 2 on our journey through 2023.

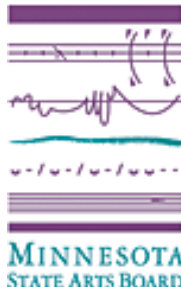


HAL CROPP
Producing Artistic Director



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

THE ARTIST/ADMINISTRATOR

The Commonweal Theatre operates under a unique model in which all resident company members have specific, non-artistic responsibilities in addition to their artistic projects. This innovative approach has a great many benefits, most recently illustrated by the fact that we were able to keep our team fully employed throughout the pandemic, allowing us to reopen our doors and once again bring you professional live theater at the earliest possible opportunity—one of the first theaters in the nation to do so.



LIZZY ANDRETTA (she/her) is in her seventh season at the Commonweal, having first appeared in *The Elephant Man* (2017). Since then, she has appeared in *Dancing Lessons*, *Dracula: Prince of Blood*, *Boeing Boeing*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and last season's *Leading Ladies* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. She also served as the choreographer for *Peter & the Starcatcher*, *Stones in His Pockets*, and *A Christmas Carol* (2021). Lizzy holds a B.S. in theatre from Skidmore College and an M.F.A. from the East 15 Acting School in London.



CODY BEYER (he/him) is starting his first full season with the Commonweal after joining last summer. Last season, he co-designed props for *Good People* and appeared onstage in *Alice in Winter Wonderland*. Cody is an actor, designer, and builder who worked in Chicago for 7 years before joining this community with his partner and fellow company member, Laurie Roberts. In Chicago, he worked mostly with Theatre-Y and Hell in a Handbag Productions. Favorite credits include *Macbeth* and *Stories of the Body*. He received his B.A. in Theatre Honors from the University of Tennessee.



STELA BURDT (she/her) is grateful to celebrate her 24th season with our Commonweal family. Past onstage work includes roles in *Good People*, *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, and freelance vocalist. Currently, Stela is in the role of a lifetime as mom to Kieran. Love and Light, #TeamScottyForever.



HAL CROPP (he/him) is in his 32nd season where favorite roles have been in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Come Back*, *Ghostwriter*, *Dracula*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *The Drawer Boy*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *Christmas Carol*, *Groucho*, and *Talley's Folly*. Selected directing credits: *I Love to Eat*, *Headspace Theatre*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Brand*, *Heartland Portrait*, *Wild Duck*, *Measure for Measure*, *Peer Gynt*, *A Midnight Dreary*, *Enchanted April*, *Ghosts*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Hal holds a B.A. (Brown University), an M.B.A. (Santa Clara University), and an M.F.A. (the National Theater Conservatory). He was the Sally Irvine Award winner for Initiative (2006).



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THE COMPANY



DAVID HENNESSEY (he/him) serves on the Commonweal development team and has appeared in more than 60 shows over 25 years, including Doc in *Leading Ladies*. Other favorites: *Headspace Theatre*, *Holmes and Watson*, *The Drawer Boy*, and *The Rainmaker*. He designed costumes for *Ice Maidens* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, oversees audio descriptions for the visually impaired, and leads COVID mitigation protocols. Other acting credits include In Heart Theatre, Park Square Theatre, Jungle Theatre, and American Players Theatre. He lives in Preston with Linda, his favorite scene partner for 50 years.



SARA HUESER (she/her) started as an apprentice at the Commonweal in 2022 and is joining the Resident Company. Favorite Commonweal credits: *Leading Ladies*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Good People*, and *Alice in Winter Wonderland*. Before Lanesboro, she worked for Centre Stage South Carolina. Originally from Newberrytown, PA, Sara holds a bachelor's in Computer Engineering and a B.F.A from Savannah College of Art and Design. Sara is grateful for the Commonweal and her parents for the outpouring of support.



JACLYN JUNE JOHNSON (she/they) joined the Commonweal in 2020. An arts administrator, actor, director, playwright, costume designer, and teaching artist, Jaclyn has credits across the country. Companies include St. Croix Festival Theatre, Children's Theatre Madison, Creede Repertory, Riverside Shakespeare Festival, Riverside Theatre, Chicago's UTG Improv Theatre. Jaclyn has a B.A. from Cornell College. She wishes to thank: her family, friends, spouse and their pets for their encouragement and love; and you for your support of the arts and the uniquely healing community of theatre.



JOSIAH LAUBENSTEIN (he/him) is in his fifth season at the Commonweal, serving as Literary Manager and Videographer. Commonweal credits include: *Leading Ladies*, *Dancing Lessons*, and *Boeing Boeing*. At Festival Theatre in St. Croix Falls, WI, he served as the Marketing Director and acted in nine productions over two years. Josiah earned his M.F.A. from the University of South Carolina. Josiah is a proud member of Glassbox Theatre Group and a co-founder of Highway Walkers Media Company. He is happily married to Rachel and besotted with their first child, Franny.



ISABELLA ANASTASIA LEIGH (she/her) is elated to be joining Commonweal for her first season. Isa is a director, stage manager, and wardrobe artist from Madison, Wisconsin, most recently residing in Austin, Texas. Previously, she has worked with Austin Shakespeare, Broom Street Theater, Children's Theatre of Madison, Forward Theater, Jarrott Productions, Music Theatre of Madison, ScriptWorks, and StageQ, among others. Isa received her BA in Gender & Women's Studies from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Much love to her kitties, Rosalind and Beatrice.



JOHN B. NICOL (he/him) is excited to be returning to the Commonweal as a resident ensemble member! Born and raised in community theatres around Northeastern Iowa, he went on to receive his B.S. in Theatre Arts from Minnesota State University, Mankato. There, he played Matt Friedman in *Talley's Folly* and Smee in *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Other regional credits: Willard Hewitt in *Footloose* at the Paul Bunyan Playhouse and Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Free to the People Theatre.



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DURING THE PERFORMANCE.

THE COMPANY



LAURIE ROBERTS (she/her) recently appeared in *Alice in Winter Wonderland* and choreographed *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Chicago credits include A Red Orchid Theatre, Hell in a Handbag, Facility Theatre, Theatre Y, and Red Tape Theatre. She also performed in Cincinnati at Know Theater and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. Some of her favorite work has been devised and performed 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, Merry, and her wonderful partner, Cody.



JODI T. RUSHING (they/them) is in their fifth season at the Commonweal. Their favorite credits include *An Iliad* (Wealthouse), *On The Verge*, *I Love to Eat*, *Leading Ladies*, and *Good People*. Before their tech apprenticeship with the Commonweal in 2019, they stage managed for Doniphan Dance Project in Tupelo, MS. Jodi holds a B.A. in Theatre and Film from the University of Mississippi.



TIM SAILER (he/him) is in his sixth season at the company, serving as an actor and the Assistant Director of Marketing. Recent Commonweal credits include *Leading Ladies*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Other regional work includes appearances at American Shakespeare Center, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Texas Shakespeare Festival, Park Square Theatre, and Theatre L'Homme Dieu. Tim holds an M.F.A. from the University of Houston. He lives in Lanesboro with his scruffy puppy Rufus.

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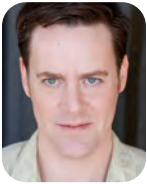
THE COMPANY



ALEX SCHLESINGER (they/them) is excited to join the Resident Ensemble after their apprenticeship in 2022. Alex graduated from Luther College in 2021 with a B.A. in Theatre. You may have seen them last year as Durdles in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Stevie in *Good People*, and the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Winter Wonderland*. Their favorite role outside of the Commonweal was Riff Raff in the *Rocky Horror Show*. Alex thanks 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.



ADRIENNE SWEENEY (she/her) is grateful to be in her 23rd season, serving as Assoc. Artistic 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. Commonweal favorites include Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* ('21), *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/him) is enjoying his 12th season at the Commonweal. Favorite credits: Herb Tucker in *I Ought to Be in Pictures*, 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 career began at The Barter Theatre (VA), 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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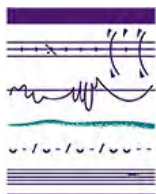
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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

A play that delights in referencing the very terror it aims to evoke, *Deathtrap* is a celebrated comedic thriller. Written by Ira Levin in 1978, it was nominated for four Tony Awards, and won Levin his second Edgar Award for Best Play.

Why, after 45 years, does the script still exhilarate?

It has to do with Levin's mastery of the horror and thriller genres. He seamlessly pairs the two, nimbly layering and subverting the crucial elements of each. There's seemingly innocuous dialogue, brooding subtext, murderous glances between sheepish grins, unexpected plot twists—it's woven together with great skill. And he does it playfully! A play about a play so good it's worth murdering over? What unfolds is both charmingly quirky in its self-referential humor and thick with intrigue.

It also offers the chance to explore a darker side of the human psyche. What drives a person to murder, and what thought goes into getting away with it? Can one get away with it? At what cost? Stories of deception have long drawn our interest. I think Sir Walter Scott nailed the observation; "what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive." With morbid curiosity, we enjoy watching seemingly normal people step outside our expectations of humanity, and we love to witness them receive their comeuppance as their plots fall apart.

Deathtrap captures all the classic tropes of the genre: devious conspiracies, manipulation, betrayal, accursed actions, and a tense theatrical thrill ride. We also add an homage to playcrafting itself. The result is a lasting roller coaster which celebrates the power of live theatre.

—Jaclyn June Johnson

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

IRA MARVIN LEVIN (1929–2007) was an American novelist, playwright, and songwriter. Levin's iconic, culturally indelible novels continue to resonate—their landmark plots suspending disbelief through an eerily palpable sense of reality achieved through the crafting of fully dimensional characters (*Rosemary's Baby*), ever-ratcheting tension (*The Stepford Wives*), iron-clad plotting (*The Boys from Brazil*), and uncanny prescience (*This Perfect Day*).

His plays include the daring psychological thriller *Veronica's Room*, the theatrical revenge comedy *Break a Leg*, a musical *Drat! The Cat!* (which yielded the Streisand standard "He Touched Me"), and of course *Deathtrap*—the fifth longest-running play (non-musical) in Broadway history, and its longest-running thriller.

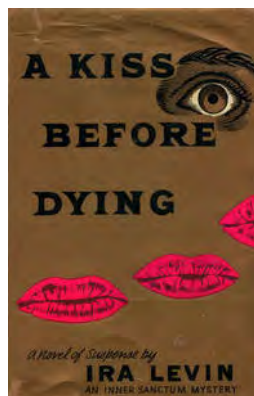
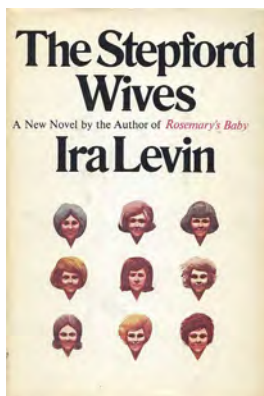
A native New Yorker, Levin was a Tony Award nominee, and recipient of lifetime achievement awards from the Mystery Writers of America and the Horror Writers Association. He served on the council of the Dramatists Guild until his death in 2007.



The Novels of Ira Levin

"Every novel he has ever written has been a marvel of plotting. He is the Swiss watchmaker of the suspense novel; he makes what the rest of us do look like those five-dollar watches you can buy in the discount drug stores."

—Stephen King



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ALSO FEATURING



PAUL EPTON (lighting design, he/him) is back at the Commonweal to design for three productions this season. Past favorites include *Come Back, Sanders Family Christmas*, and *Silent Sky*. He started designing lights at Carleton College, spent 11 years in Detroit, and returned to MN in '92, where he has designed for Off-Leash Area, Six Points Theater, Mixed Blood Theatre, and others. A year-round bicyclist, one of his early designs was for *Spokesong*. Awards: Lighting Designer, Ivey Award Honoree for *Ruined*; Lighting Designer, Ivey Award Honoree for *Psst!*; Detroit Free Press Theatre Excellence Award (Design); and Detroit News Drama Critics Award (Theatre Craft).



KELSEY HEATHCOTE (scenic design, 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 the two audio engineers for *A Driftless Christmas*.



RACHEL KUHNLE (dialect coach, 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 *A Driftless Christmas* and *Dancing Lessons*. Rachel completed her MFA in Acting from the University of South Carolina in 2017 and lives in Lanesboro with her husband, cat, and (soon to be) two kiddos. Thanks for supporting the Commonweal!



KIMBERLY K. MURPHY (costume design, she/her) is excited to be joining Commonweal again for *Bernhardt /Hamlet* and *Deathtrap*. Since 2000 Kim has been a costume designer at St. Croix Festival Theatre. Kim and her husband James Shoop live an artistic life in St. Croix Falls, WI and have raised two beautiful souls, Gabriel and Sienna. Additionally, Kim is found at their Gallery at The Northrup King Building in N. Minneapolis. Kim received a B.S. in Apparel Design from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and A.A.S. in Fashion Design From the Fashion Institute of Technology-NYC. With G & S in college, opportunities are ahead, and she sends love to all who have supported her.



TINNE ROSENMEIER (Helga Ten Dorp, she/her) is delighted to rejoin Commonweal Theater for Season 35! Last year's performance as Dottie in *Good People* was a career highlight, made possible by, with, and for the good people of Lanesboro and this remarkable theater. Other Minnesota performance highlights include Park Square Theater, Wildwood Theater, Freshwater Theater, Classical Actors Ensemble, Cromulent Shakespeare, Savage Umbrella; in NYC, TheaterworksUSA, The Basic Theater, The Performance Salon; and on the rocky coast of Maine, several seasons for Cold Comfort Summer Theater. Tinne studied at the National Shakespeare Conservatory, holds a MA in Educational Theater, NYU; and BA, English Literature, Carleton College.



THE FAKE FIGHTING COMPANY creates and instructs in dynamic, safe, and believable stage combat for the theatre and film community. We endeavor to create an environment in which all are welcome in order for creativity, talent, and collaboration to flourish.

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DEATHtrap

BY IRA LEVIN

DESIGNERS & SPECIALISTS

Director	Jaclyn June Johnson
Scenic Design	Kelsey Heathcote
Costume Design	Kimberly K. Murphy
Lighting Design	Paul Epton
Sound Design	Josiah Laubenstein
Props Design	Cody Beyer
Fight Choreography	The Fake Fighting Company
Dialects	Rachel Kuhnle
Costume Assistant	Jodi T. Rushing
Stage Manager	Isabella Anastasia Leigh
Assistant Stage Managers	Sara Hueser, John B. Nicol

CAST

Sidney Bruhl	Jeremy van Meter
Myra Bruhl	Laurie Roberts
Clifford Anderson	Alex Schlesinger
Helga Ten Dorp	Tinne Rosenmeier
Porter Milgrim	Hal Cropp
Understudies	Lizzy Andretta, Adrienne Sweeney, John B. Nicol, and Tim Sailer

SETTING

October, 1978; Sidney Bruhl's study in the Bruhl home in Westport, Connecticut
DEATHTRAP is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC,
servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection. (www.dramatists.com)

*There will be one 15-minute intermission.
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The Commonwealth is also grateful for a generous anonymous
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A DEATHTRAP GLOSSARY

ANGEL STREET: a 1941 play by Patrick Hamilton, known most popularly by the name of its American film adaptation *Gaslight*. In the play, a husband tries to convince his wife that she's insane. We get the modern term "gaslighting" from the American movie title.



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Liv Ullmann

DIAL 'M' FOR MURDER: a murder mystery play by Frederick Knott about a wife framed for murder, and most well known by the movie adaptation by Alfred Hitchcock.

GEORGE C. SCOTT, TRISH VANDEVERE, LIV ULLMANN: famous 1970s movie actors.

THE MAGIC SHOW: a Broadway musical starring magician Dough Henning which ran for four years in the 1970s.



George C. Scott

THE MERV GRIFFIN SHOW: a popular talk show which ran from 1962 until 1986.

SLEUTH: a popular comedy thriller play by Anthony Shaffer about a famous mystery writer luring his wife's lover into a complicated web of games and puzzles. This play served as the inspiration for *Deathtrap*.

TIN PAN ALLEY: a group of NYC songwriters and music publishers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who had major influence on the dominant popular music in the United States at that time.

PETER HURKOS: a famous Dutch psychic who claimed he solved crimes using his psychic powers.

QWERTYUIOP: the letters at the top of a typewriter.

REVEREND SUN MYUNG MOON: the religious leader of the Unification Church, which was often regarded as a cult, with its members being referred to as "moonies." The cult was most famous for conducting huge group weddings of arranged marriages.



SMITH-CORONA: the most popular brand of American typewriters.

XEROX MACHINE: a name for a copy machine, Xerox was the first company to create a commercially successful version of the copy machine in 1959, although they didn't become standard and widely available until the 1980s.



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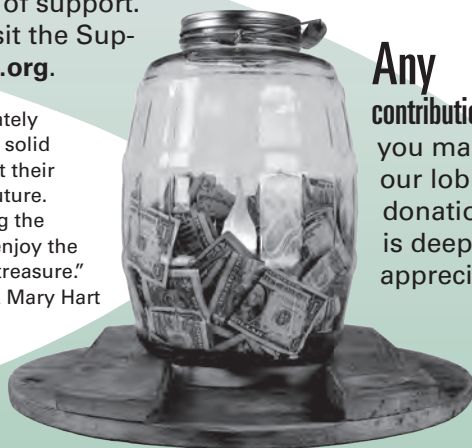
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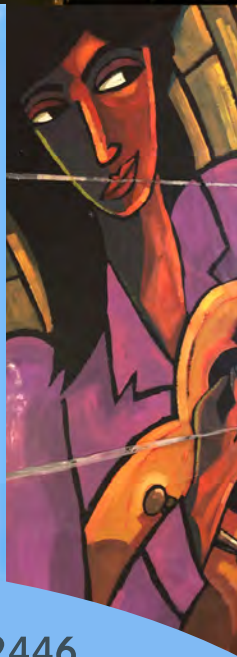
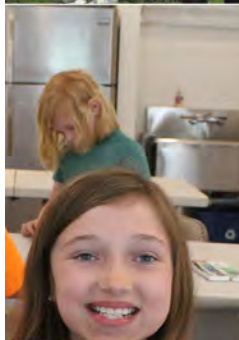
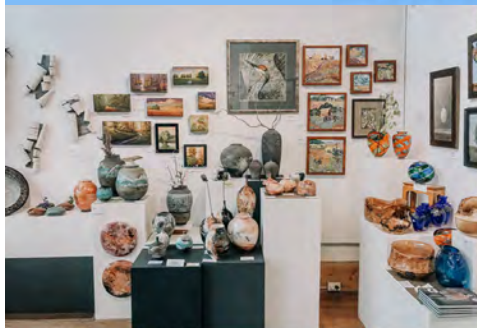
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LANESBORO ARTS



Galleries

year-round exhibitions

Rhythms on the Root

outdoor summer music

Art in the Park

Saturday, June 17, 2023

Arts Campus

public art & education

St. Mane Theatre

music, theater, dance, and more

lanesboroarts.org // 507-467-2446

PROFESSIONAL LIVE THEATRE
COMMONWEAL
2023 SEASON



BERNHARDT/HAMLET
BY THERESA REBECK

HIGH COMEDY +
HUMAN DRAMA
MAR 25 – JUN 24

DEATHtrap
BY IRA LEVIN

A DEVILISHLY CLEVER
THRILLER
MAY 6 – AUG 19

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!
BY WENDY MACLEOD

A FLIRTY COMIC
CAPER
JUL 1 – OCT 21

DR. JEKYLL & Mr. Hyde
ADAPTED BY JEFFREY HATCHER

A HORROR CLASSIC
REIMAGINED
AUG 26 – OCT 29

she LOVES me
BY JOE MASTEROFF,
SHELDON HARNICK, & JERRY BOCK

AN EFFERVESCENT
MUSICAL COMEDY
NOV 4 – DEC 23



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