

FORWARD THEATER COMPANY

Resident Professional
Theater Company at
Overture Center

Improving the quality of life
for audiences, artists, and
the greater Madison area

*“You do a great job in honoring
the work of everyone you
collaborate with and treating us
like true artists.”*

-Lucy Tan (actor), *4000 Miles*

*“What a great cast. We are lucky
to have such an accomplished
theater company in Madison!”*

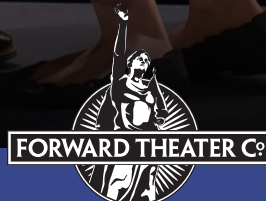
-Kathleen Iattarelli, *Outside Mullingar*

*“This is not just about people
with military experience. This
is a story of paying attention
to life and learning to be.”*

-Marilyn Martin, *Learning to Stay*

A LOOK BACK AT 2016-2017

Jeb Burris and
Kat Wodtke in
Forward Theater's
first commissioned
production,
Learning to Stay;
Photo by Jason Fassl



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ARTIST INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

American Theatre Magazine recently posed an important question about artist compensation, "Love or Money: How About Both?"

With your help, the answer at Forward Theater Company is a resounding "Both!" Our professional theater artists do love what they do. To enable them to do their best work and continue to make a living here, we're committed to providing a nurturing and collaborative work environment **and** increasing wages.

GOAL:

Be a leader in our industry by raising wages to the top of the competitive range for similar-sized professional theater companies.



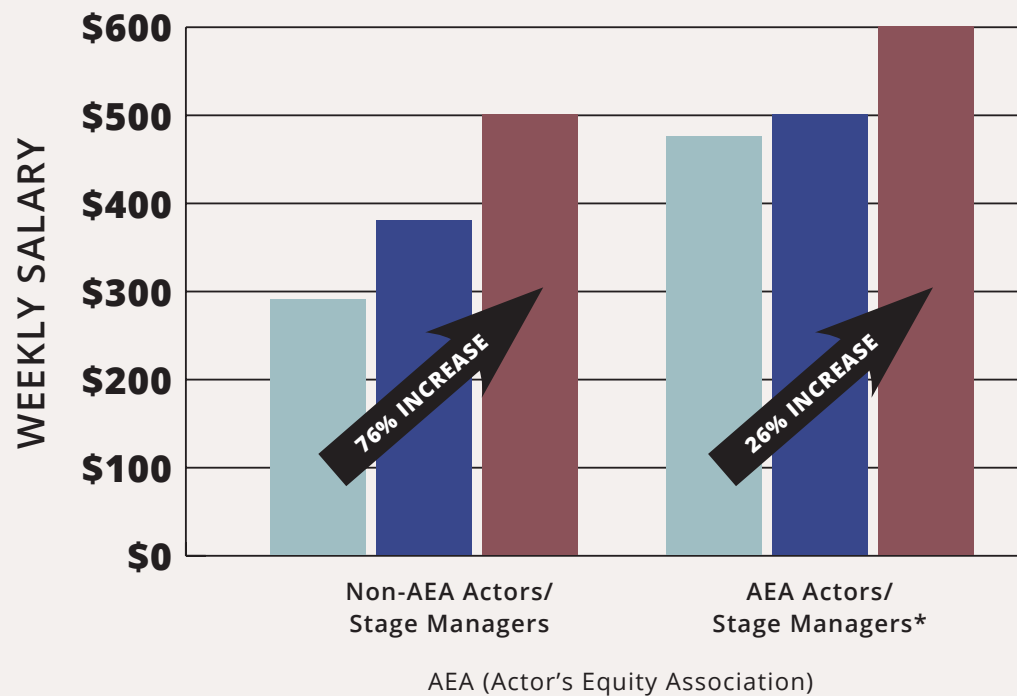
"I have wanted to be an actor since my early grade school days. I would foam at the mouth at the chance to take part in the school productions. Throughout the years my passion continued to grow, so I decided to dedicate my undergraduate years at UW-Milwaukee to getting my BFA in acting.

With my degree in hand, I was off to make a living in the world of theatre! But what I soon found out was that it would be nearly impossible to make a living doing what I love to do. So, I took what I could get; trying to carve out a space for myself in the community. Those were trying times. I still needed food in my belly and a roof over my head. I had to work an additional job while rehearsing and performing, and it became overwhelming. I appreciate Forward's commitment to increasing wages that now allows me to focus solely on the work."

-Marques Causey (actor), *The Flick* (2016) and *Exit Strategy* (2018)

FTC'S ARTIST WAGE INCREASES

In 2016-2017, Forward Theater had 108 artist hires. We're increasing wages across the board. Here are a few examples:



2015-2016
2016-2017
2017-2018

*Plus contributions for health insurance and pension

Our AEA stage manager typically works 7 Equity weeks per production (1 prep week, 3 rehearsal weeks, and 3 performance weeks); AEA actors and Non-AEA professionals are typically contracted for 6 weeks (3 rehearsal weeks and 3 performance weeks).

To qualify for 6 months of health insurance, an Equity member must have 12 weeks of Equity work. For a year's coverage, they must have 19 weeks of Equity work.

In 2016-2017, we were on an SPT 7 agreement (Small Professional Theater) and offered 13 AEA actor contracts. We paid over the minimum for that level, and will move up to an SPT 8 in 2017-2018.

As an Equity Company, we follow all the AEA rules for safety and scheduling, providing a respectful and professional work environment for all of our theater artists.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FORWARD LEADERS!

\$10,000+

Sybil & Maurice Better
Don Tubesing & Nancy Loving Tubesing

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Diane Ballweg
Nancy Ciezki & Diane Kostecke
W. Jerome Frautschi
Steve & Jacqui Suleski
Threshold/Efrat Livny

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Beth Bovis & David Feldstein
Tim Crisp & Laura O'Brien
John & Karen Icke
David & Paula Kraemer
Kathie Nichols
Terry & Jean Prah
Tom Repts & Fran Wong
Jane & David Villa

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Anonymous
Rozan & Brian Anderson
Merry Anderson
Dean & Nancy Baumgardner
Phil & Kit Blake
Diane M. Bless
Peggy & Christopher Bugg
Jane Coleman
David & Janet Daniel
Martin Densch
Carla & Michael DiIorio
Charles Ford & Sharon James
Dolores & Paul Gohdes
Betty & Walter Gray

JoAnn Gruber-Hagen & Doug Hagen
Kathleen Harker
Roth & Lynne Judd
Roger & Sheryl LePage
Susan & Jonathan Lipp
Susan Lloyd
Lovers of the Arts
Kathleen McElroy & David Newby
Chad & Jolen Neumann
Karen Olivo
Joan Pulver
Ken & Nancy Ragland
Dean & Therese Richards
James & Carol Ruhly
Tim & Ann Salut
Lynda Sharpe
Tim & Pat Size
Jeffrey Steele & Jocelyn Riley
Jane Taves
Sherry Wagner-Henry & Mick Henry
William John Wartmann
Janet Zimmerman

\$500 - \$999

Donna & George Beestman
Lewis Bosworth
Sherry & Doug Caves
Keith & Linda Clifford
Sarah Day
William & Janine DeAtley
Ted DeDee
Walter & Londa Dewey
Kim & Bill Donovan
Jim & Jean Elvekrog
Mike Fischer & Elaine Griffin
Marla & Larry Frank

Mary & Jay Gallagher
Casey Garhart
Peter Gray & Jennifer Uphoff Gray
Paul & Sarah Harari
Marc Henderson
Bob Hodgson & Dot Steele
William & Anne Hunnax
Margaret & Tony Koblinski
Bill & Jennifer Kraemer
Peter & Jill Lundberg
Don & Mary Metz
Karen & Allan Moore
Dan & Joyce Muxfeld
David Myers
Tom & Julia Nicholas
John & Jane Norman
Pamela Oliver & John Lemke
Zorba & Penny Paster
Judith Pierotti
Susan A. Riedel
Willa Schlecht
Dean & Carol Schroeder
Joe & Mary Ellyn Sensenbrenner
Joe & Jeanne Silverberg
Janette Smart
David & Suad Stratton
Cheri Teal
Scott Thornton
Pat & Deb Turski
Brent & Sara Wagner
Lee & Mary Waldhart
Christine Weigt
Kenneth & Virginia Yuska
Theodora Zehner
Ledell Zellers & Simon Anderson



Nearly one hundred attendees stayed for an engaging conversation with the cast, novelist, playwright, director, Dr. Mike Messina (Psychology Executive and Director of the PTSD Program at William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital), and – most heartening – each other following the private performance exclusively for veterans, their families, and service providers. Our heartfelt thanks to the Veterans Hospital and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum for their instrumental role in sharing this opportunity with area veterans.

AUTHENTIC AND UNIVERSAL LEARNING TO STAY SHINES

Learning to Stay was Forward Theater’s first commissioned play. Adapted by James DeVita from the novel by Erin Celello, it told the story of a military spouse struggling with her husband’s PTSD.

This production accomplished everything we wanted — it felt authentic to those who have experienced this type of trauma and eye-opening to those who haven’t. The positive ripple effects and universality of the story, however, were much broader than we could have imagined.

“I have heard several people describe the play, Learning to Stay, as ‘powerful.’ It is certainly that. However, the flow of emotional energy and physical action has led me to a better word: ‘stunning.’ I have read about men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to the US with very serious wounds. Wounds that are visible and wounds no less serious that are invisible. But reading is not the same as seeing and feeling. The actors in this play have helped me at least begin to feel their pain.” -Myron Talcott

“This is exactly what I see in my work. Exactly. You nailed it.” - A psychiatrist in Madison VA’s PTSD clinic following our private performance for veterans, their families, and service providers

“I had the good fortune to attend last night’s performance of Learning to Stay at the Overture Center. As a Marine Corps veteran, it was an exceptional experience for my wife and I. We were still talking about it this morning.” -Jeff Boudreau

“I think about Veterans who have seen combat and what they have been through - the bigger question for me why wouldn’t all Veterans be dealing with PTSD - ‘soul meaning’ issues. I don’t want to take away from the trauma for returning veterans, but it has meaning beyond the returning veterans. A friend and I were talking about some parallels in dealing with spouses that had dementia - with the different layers of reality, not being able to leave our spouses alone, and the level of pretense that ‘everything is fine.’ Another friend said that she had connected the play with their family’s struggles with their adolescent daughter.” -Dorothea Torstenson



National Endowment for the Arts
arts.gov

The NEA rigorously evaluates projects based on artistic excellence and community impact. We were proud to receive a grant in support of *Learning to Stay*.



The commission of *Learning to Stay* was generously funded by Don Tubesing and Nancy Loving Tubesing (left) through their Pfeifer-Hamilton Legacy Fund; pictured with Jennifer Uphoff Gray, Erin Celello, and James DeVita



Malkia Stampley, Di’Monte Henning, and Kat Wodtke in *Learning to Stay*; Photo by Zane Williams

“I returned after yesterday’s performance so profoundly moved that I did what I always do when that happens: I wrote.”

Excerpt from *Homecoming*
by Lewis Bosworth

I dream the fantasies of a decorated man,
Beribboned and exalted, his thunder claps
Echoing throughout the ward in which he
Sleeps, bottles of pills to guard him.

Such is the world of anxiety, odd breaks to
Touch my loved one, her backstory, as vivid
As mine, is dying on the vine, our fable one
Perverted portrayal of destiny.

We speak the language of a student trying
Out his gap year to avoid the stress of being
Grown up, when the passage of time grants
No favors or refreshment.

Is this act two of my life, and did I skip the
Prologue? I experience now only daily
Hiccups of fear and loss, and she is trying
To love a touchstone.

I live in multiple dwelling-places, homes, yes,
Some in foreign lands, some upstate local,
Some in safety nets swollen by well-wishers
And methods.

I try to fly away, to invent my own environs,
To stretch out on a cloud or bury my toes
In sand, but to no avail because I keep seeing
My home base, and I must learn to stay.

Sun starts to shine on my tangled world as
An old barn becomes new to me, and a dog,
My service companion, comes to rescue me
From the fields of war.

“As a producer of contemporary work, we have benefited from the investments of many regional theaters across the country in developing new plays. What we keep hearing from the people with experience who’ve read the script is how untold [the spouse’s] perspective is. With Learning to Stay we were able to ‘pay it forward’ by commissioning a play with a unique perspective.”

-Director Jennifer Uphoff Gray,
in *American Theatre Magazine*



Clare Arena Haden and DeShawn McKinney perform scenes from *Learning to Stay*

LEARNING TO STAY PREVIEW AT THRESHOLD

Forward Theater supporter Efrat Livny generously funds our ongoing theater access program with Goodman Community Center students and seniors. Threshold, the vibrant community center she founded, was our host for this *Learning to Stay* preview event.

Goodman Center students who are regular participants in FTC’s theater access program, along with other interested patrons, got to see firsthand how a director and actors work together to bring a script to life. Forward Theater’s Advisory Company members Jim Buske and Clare Arena Haden, along with UW student and FTC collaborator DeShawn McKinney, presented a scene from *Learning to Stay* and then showed how a director’s suggestions could lead to new approaches to the piece. The students were transfixed by the major changes in tone that could be accomplished through small adjustments, and were eager to get on their feet and give it a try themselves. They got the chance a few days later when cast member Di’Monte Henning visited the Goodman Center for their post-performance discussion.



Cross-generational understanding on the couch for Mitch Bultman and Susan Sweeney; Photo by Zane Williams

DISSOLVING THE GENERATION GAP THROUGH THEATER

4000 Miles by Amy Herzog
November 3 – 20, 2016

“The play was powerful - not a breath could be heard from the audience during much of it. Although billed as a comedy, it was deeply thoughtful about our human condition and relationships...a tremendous impact on our community’s well-being.” -Ann Rifenberg



Intergenerational conflict for Lucy Tan and Mitch Bultman; Photo by Zane Williams

“4000 Miles is the sort of quirky/touching family comedy *Forward’s* made a specialty of in recent years, and there’s a genuine warmth that comes from watching these two characters move beyond their self-imposed prisons toward understanding, self-awareness and new possibilities. It’s that feeling that lingers.”

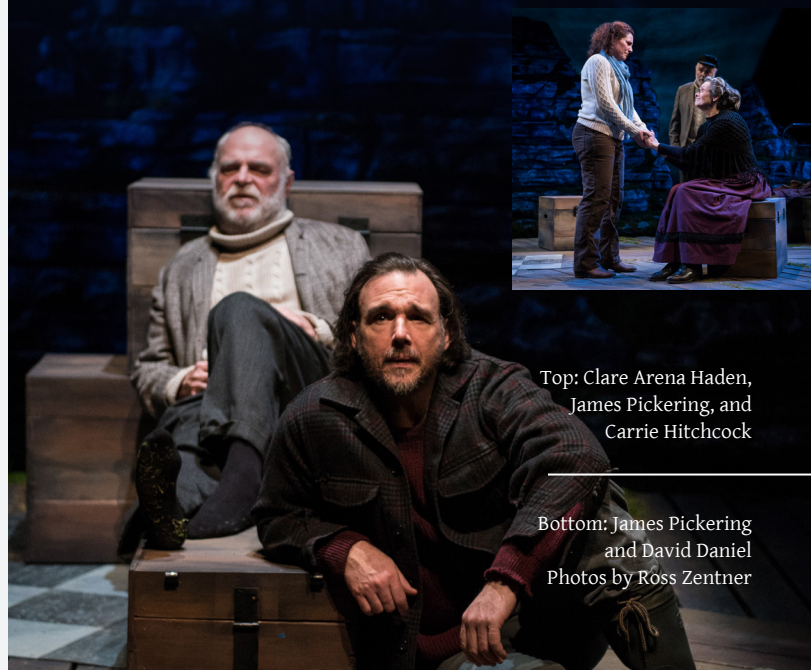
-Aaron Conklin, *Madison Magazine*

FALLING IN LOVE IN THE LUSH IRISH COUNTRYSIDE

Outside Mullingar
by John Patrick Shanley
January 26 – February 12, 2017

“I saw the performance last night. It was magical. I’ve been thinking of honey bees, flowers and the quiet that surrounds since. Thank you so much for this experience!” -Deanna Sutcliffe Heller

“‘Maybe the quiet around the thing is as important as the thing itself,’ Anthony muses toward the end of *Outside Mullingar*. That line embodies the play. It’s a love story, sure. A family story, a story about life and death. But the story and the characters thrive in liminal spaces: the long spaces between dying and death, the years that pass before two people fall in love.” -Amelia Cook Fontella, *Isthmus*



Top: Clare Arena Haden, James Pickering, and Carrie Hitchcock

Bottom: James Pickering and David Daniel
Photos by Ross Zentner

EXPANDING CONNECTIONS BEYOND THE PLAYHOUSE

In 2016, we embarked on a three-year *From Page to Stage* program to enrich the lives of Dane County residents through free performances and play discussions at their local libraries. We were able to expand our connections with communities outside of Madison, provide additional employment for our local artists, and – hopefully – make theater feel even more accessible and relatable for patrons who might not have attended shows at Overture Center.

“Libraries are increasingly receptive to hosting a monologue or Play Club event based on the success of this year.”

-Susie Engwall, Beyond the Page Program Manager

Favorites from previous *Soul Food* and *Banned Books* Monologue Festivals were performed at six libraries -- Middleton, Sun Prairie, Waunakee, DeForest, Mount Horeb, and Stoughton – followed by our signature talkbacks.

FTC Play Clubs – part book club, part performance experience – give patrons the opportunity to explore a play in-depth through guided discussion, performance of scenes, and discussion with directors and actors. Ten of these events were offered during the 2016-2017 season – in Middleton and Verona (*4000 Miles*), Belleville, Oregon, and Madison (*Outside Mullingar*), and Cross Plains, DeForest, McFarland, Middleton, and Madison (*Learning to Stay*).

Made possible by support from: Beyond the Page, Dane Arts, Madison Community Foundation, and the Wisconsin Humanities Council

Forward Theater Company once again finished its season in the black thanks to robust ticket sales, strong support from individuals and the community, and careful financial management.

TOTAL AUDIENCE: 14,457

THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDATION, GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATE SUPPORTERS!



The Evjue Foundation, the charitable arm of *The Capital Times*



with additional funds from the Evjue Foundation, the charitable arm of *The Capital Times*



with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts

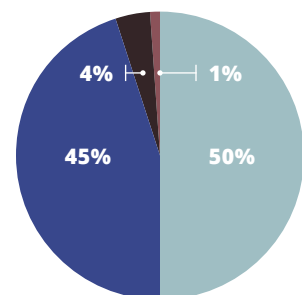


First Business Bank
Promega
The QTI Group

Stafford Rosenbaum, LLP
Steve Brown Apartments

ANOTHER SEASON IN THE BLACK

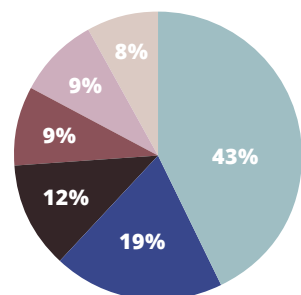
2016-2017 OPERATING FUNDS



WHERE THEY CAME FROM

- Ticket sales*
- Contributed income
- Events
- Investments/in-kind/other

CONTRIBUTIONS MAKE UP A LARGE AND VITAL PART OF OUR REVENUES. **THANK YOU!**



HOW THEY WERE USED

- Artistic, production, and outreach
- Venue*
- Communications
- Development
- Strategic fund
- General and administrative

*includes box office fees

FORTY ARTISTS INVOLVED IN NURTURING NEW WORK

Someone's Gotta Do It Monologue Festival
September 22 – 24, 2016



Zhalarina Sanders
in Coleman's *Enough
Trouble in the World:*
Photo by Ross
Zentner

In 2016-2017, audiences were treated to original monologues from characters sharing their exhilarating, necessary, and outlandishly absurd work stories. Our *Someone's Gotta Do It* Monologue Festival enabled us to pay twelve writers (both a one-time fee for the Festival plus a royalty each subsequent time we perform their piece at other venues around the area), twelve directors, and twelve actors, in addition to stage managers and crew. These festivals are not only entertaining events for our audiences, they also offer FTC the opportunity to work with new artists and give them the chance to connect with each other in a supportive way.

"I am honored to be able to play this character. Our experiences overlap so much that I personally connect with her and I tap into that on stage, which I consider a privilege. I feel like I'm sharing a part of myself with the audience. Our rehearsal process has been very collaborative and we've been able to understand the

character outside of the script and from many different angles. If people walk away with only a fraction of the joy being a part of this has brought me, I will be content."

-Zhalarina Sanders (actor), *Someone's Gotta Do It*

WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR MONOLOGUES?

The *Someone's Gotta Do It* monologues will start making the rounds at area libraries next year. Date and location information will be available on our website soon.

Our *Out of the Fire* Banned Books Monologues are now available for licensing around the country (heck, even around the world!). In July 2017, we received our first royalty payment from Iowa State University for the rights to produce these pieces, generating funds for all those playwrights.

FORWARD THEATER'S MISSION STATEMENT

Create a home base for Wisconsin theater professionals and audiences that expands the cultural and economic life of the greater Madison area.

IN 2016-2017, WE FULFILLED THAT BY

ARTISTS

Sustaining our nurturing, collaborative environment.
Increasing wages.

CULTURAL LIFE

Presenting contemporary work about the way we live now.
Connecting our plays with issues in our community.
Expanding accessibility.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Strengthening the area's economy by spending locally.
Employing local artists – 108 hires – more than 95% of who live in Southern Wisconsin and enliven our communities.



P.O. BOX 14574 | MADISON, WI 53708