



SUMMER, 1976

BY DAVID AUBURN
DIRECTED BY
LAURA GORDON
& LAURA ROOK

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FORWARD THEATER COMPANY

presents the Wisconsin premiere of

SUMMER, 1976

by **David Auburn**

Directed by **Laura Gordon*** & Laura Rook**

Scenic Designer
Jason Fassi**

Lighting & Projection Designer
Jason Fassi**

Costume Designer
Shelley Cornia

Composer & Sound Designer
Joe Cerqua**

Props Designer
Kaya Sarajian

Stage Manager
Shawn Galligan*

Summer, 1976 is generously sponsored by:

**Steve & Jacqui
Suleski**



This play was supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Evjue Foundation, Inc., the charitable arm of *The Capital Times*.

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* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



** Member of United Scenic Artists Local 829



*** Member of Stage Directors & Choreographers Society

"Summer, 1976" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com



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FROM THE CO-DIRECTOR...LAURA GORDON

Retrospection: the action of looking back on or reviewing past events or situations, especially those in one's own life.

I recently received an email from an old boyfriend of mine. He was cleaning out his mother's house and found an unopened letter I had sent there in the '80s which he never received. It contained a number of photographs and he wondered if I'd like to have them back. I opened that parcel and saw my history. Photos of the two of us, my family, my dogs, my friends. A letter full of mundane news of the day and self deprecating humor. A time capsule from 1986.

I found myself trying to remember just who I was at that time in my life, and all the forks in the road that have brought me to who I am now. Reflecting on those I have lost and friendships that have drifted away.

Against the backdrop of the Bicentennial and Second Wave Feminism, in a decade that saw the Roe v Wade decision and the Equal Rights Amendment trying to make its way through state legislatures for ratification, playwright David Auburn takes us back to the summer of 1976 and highlights the complex, pivotal relationship between two women as they forge an unlikely friendship. We are witness to their shared history and the unfolding of a friendship in retrospect.

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR...JEN UPHOFF GRAY

Welcome to Forward Theater's Wisconsin Premiere production of *Summer, 1976*, by David Auburn. I was immediately invested in this story when we read it last year. The play's exploration of motherhood and the choices we make as women (and as humans) struck me so deeply. And its setting against the backdrop of Second Wave Feminism in the 1970s made me think about my own mother, who had her three children in that decade. It makes the political personal, and the personal political.

So I was already looking forward to seeing this play on our stage. Once co-director Laura Gordon and her amazing cast (Heidi Armbruster and Colleen Madden) decided that the actresses would switch roles in alternating performances, my excitement went through the roof. It's a display of bravery and skill that will make this a legendary event. You may need to see it twice!

I can't wait to hear what you think about *Summer, 1976*, and look forward to your questions at our nightly talkbacks, your social media posts (we're always grateful when you help spread the word about our productions), and your emails to us about your experiences in the Playhouse.

As always, we thank you for choosing to spend this time with us. Enjoy the show!

FROM THE ADVISORY COMPANY...JONO DE LEON, DEPUTY

We are halfway there friends! This is notes from the Advisory Company number 3 of 4, hopefully you have been collecting them so you have a full season set! Stick around for FTC staff, AC, and Board Member trading cards which I just thought of.

If *King James* looked at the beginning of friendships, and *Murder Girl* looked at other types of friendship (familial and work) then *Summer, 1976* takes a look at where friendships can end up over time. Alice and Diana become friends in the summer of 1976 and drift apart as the years go on. This play looks at how friendships develop, how they handle those awkward situations we sometimes find ourselves in, and how we can lose track of people who were once very close and important to us. This play looks at the lifespan of a friendship and many iterations it can go through over time.

I am excited to see our cast in this play. They will be swapping roles over the course of the show runs so if you ever thought to yourself "how would that character be different if it was handled by a different actor?" well, now is the time to find out. See it twice!

Hopefully you leave tonight with a deeper appreciation for the friendships you have and maybe even a want to cultivate past friendships that have not been as prominent in your life. Hey! Did your seat buddy you made during *King James* sit next to you at this one? Are they here tonight? Did you bring a new friend to Forward? Are you excited to hear about what we are doing next season? Because our season announcement is in a couple of months and the AC is excited to share that information with you! Stay up to date with Forward on social media (did you know we have a podcast?) and subscribe to our newsletter so you can get dates and reminders.

Alright. Those are my notes for this one. Grab a drink with your seat buddy, read the rest of the program, and get ready to enjoy a small dose of summer. See you at the next one.

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS...DAVE CHAIMSON, CHAIR

As we gather in the Playhouse, it's hard to think of summer during winter's cold grip, but here we are. The warmth of this theater and the community we've built together remind us that, much like the women in *Summer, 1976*, we are fortunate to have established strong, enduring relationships that grow and evolve through the years.

The friendship between Diana and Alice in the play is a powerful reminder of how seemingly small moments can alter the course of our lives, just as the support you've shown us has shaped the success of Forward Theater Company. Your generosity, whether through ticket purchases, your participation in our endowment campaign, or simply by showing up and sharing your love of theater, has allowed us to thrive, even in the most challenging of times. Like the characters in this play, we have navigated obstacles and emerged stronger for it, and we couldn't have done it without you.

We are grateful for the trust and support you continue to provide, and we look forward to the future we're building together. In just a couple of months, we'll be announcing our 2025-2026 season, and we can't wait to share with you what we have in store for our 17th year. Thank you for being a part of our family; you make everything possible.

At the Crossroads

Who was she really, this woman? She was my mum, of course, but that was only one part, and I want to know all the parts . . . She stares out of the window, but what she is looking at I cannot see.

– Chris Power, “Summer 1976,” from *Mothers* (2018)

Two women together is a work/nothing in civilization has made simple,/two people together is a work/heroic in its ordinariness

– Adrienne Rich, “Twenty-One Love Poems,” from *The Dream of a Common Language* (1978)

Diana is a self-described “square,” imagining her neighbor Alice as a “free spirit,” a “sleepy-eyed little hippie.” Alice describes Diana as “kind of uptight” and admits “I sort of immediately hated her.”

Living in Columbus, Ohio, Diana is a single mother; Alice is a married mother. Diana is punctilious and neat; Alice is carefree and messy. Diana has family money; Alice and her husband are scraping by on his untenured faculty salary. Diana loves to cook; Alice treats cooking as a duty. Diana can be an overbearing snob; Alice is emphatically middlebrow.

Like the eponymously named Roman goddess, Diana initially projects as self-sufficient, aloof, competent, and a bit intimidating. Like Lewis Carroll’s eponymously named fictional character, Alice initially projects as bored, innocent, naive, and a bit lost.

They’d never have become friends if their respective five-year-old girls hadn’t bonded during the summer of 1976, as the nation celebrated the bicentennial of America’s “Declaration of Independence.” Because they become friends, they learn, alongside us, that “people aren’t just one thing.”

“This is obvious now,” Alice reflects, more than a quarter century later. But “I was young,” coming of age along with her country in a decade when the freedoms and discoveries promised by second-wave feminism reached high tide and began to recede.

The Ambivalent Seventies

Standing just past the midpoint between Woodstock and Reagan’s recession, 1976 was a year caught betwixt and between; even as it basked in the afterglow of the Sixties, it also foreshadowed the grimmer and meaner decade to come.

Roe v. Wade was just three years old (and three years too late to give Diana and Alice the freedom to choose). It had only been two years since Congress gave married women the right to open bank accounts and apply for credit cards. It had been just one year since the U.S. Supreme Court banned state laws prohibiting women from serving on juries. And it had been in January of 1976 itself that *Time* magazine named “the American women” as what it then still called the Man of the Year.

But women in 1976 still earned just 60 cents for every dollar earned by men in comparable jobs. Proposed state Equal Rights Amendments had been trounced by voters in New York and New Jersey the prior November; the once seemingly surefire passage of the national ERA had become uncertain. Opposition to *Roe* was growing exponentially. And for all the apparent freedom it offered, newly available no-fault divorce was impoverishing women breaking free from unhappy marriages.

“Great things were promised me,” Diana says, in a rueful confession that’s as much about her generation as herself. “I promised them to myself.” Buoyed by all that had recently changed, how could those promises remain unfulfilled, for women like Alice and Diana and for a nation seemingly ready at long last to make good on what Jefferson’s “Declaration” had once promised?

Reflecting on what prompted him to write *Summer, 1976* two decades into the 21st century, playwright David Auburn – himself a young child living in Columbus that year – remembers the world of 1976 as one of “possibility, hope, and expectation.”

A Fresh Start

Auburn’s play poignantly channels the disconnect between such dreams and the disappointments besetting the women of his parents’ generation. But as is continually true in Auburn’s work – think of his Pulitzer-winning, similarly female-centric play *Proof* – disappointment never curdles into outright despair.

As *Summer, 1976* makes clear, things don’t transpire for Alice and Diana quite as either had imagined. Life isn’t a blueprint – what Diana memorably refers to as an “over-embroidered shroud” one might “drape” over a “lifeless life.” And neither marriage nor kids are an insurance plan or an escape from the journeys of self-discovery each of us must take.

Instead, Auburn’s play highlights what inevitably happens during moments of change and transition – when, to paraphrase Alice, we discover that people, our lives, and our histories are multiple and open-ended.

It's no accident that in addition to 1776 and 1976, Auburn's script obliquely references two other historically significant crossroads moments in the fraught history of democracy and the right to choose: England during the debate culminating in the landmark 1832 Reform Act expanding voter rights and Germany during the tumultuous final years of the Weimar Republic.

When Alice admits at one point that "I don't know who I am" and when Diana in turn admits "I'm not entirely myself," both women are simultaneously opening themselves to the prospect of "leav[ing] behind everything that's caused you to squander yourself" – and, as one of them puts it, "becom[ing] something completely *new*."

Will they? Can they?

I'll let the two magnificent actors you're about to see – Heidi Armbruster and Colleen Madden – answer that question.

Suffice it to say for now that there's nothing gratuitous in the fact that depending on what night you see Forward's production, either of these actors could be performing either role; they'll switch off, throughout the run.

Content dictates form: By embodying both characters, Armbruster and Madden underscore Auburn's suggestion that each of us contains multitudes.

When we genuinely engage with those around us, we don't just serve as lucid reflectors allowing them to better see themselves. We also discover all we ourselves could be –so that we might make good on this nation's promise by pursuing life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as equals, together.

*In memory of Grace Paley and Adrienne Rich
– Milwaukee and Chicago, December 2024*



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ACCESSIBILITY AT FORWARD THEATER

Forward Theater's mission is to expand the cultural life for Madison-area audiences, which means inviting *all* of our community in to access and enjoy live, professional theater. Forward is proud to provide:

- Assistive Listening Devices, which amplify sound through either a receiver and headphones, or a T-coil/Induction Loop (for those with compatible hearing aids or cochlear implants).
 - o Tip: Come early to sit and test your device, and keep your phone away from the device to avoid interference.
- ASL-interpreted performances, offered on the third Saturday matinee of each production. Designated seating that offers an unobstructed view of the ASL interpreter is available as a ticket option.
- Audio Description - Offered on the third Saturday matinee of each production.
- Large-print programs.
- Tactile tours for visually impaired patrons.
- Courtesy wheelchairs.
- Family Assist/Gender Neutral Restrooms.

You can access these devices and services at the Accessibility Station in the Playhouse lobby.

We are continuing to add services to enhance the experience of live theater for guests with disabilities, through realistic action steps and authentic relationship building. Would you like to utilize or learn more about these services? Have feedback or suggestions? Contact us: Audience Services 608-234-5001 x1 | Email: bcollins@forwardtheater.com

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledging Ho-Chunk Nation's ancestral lands, Forward Theater and Overture Center for the Arts celebrate the rich traditions, heritage, and culture that thrived long before our arrival. We respectfully recognize this Ho-Chunk land and affirm that we are better when we stand together.

We encourage you to visit ho-chunknation.com to learn more.

FTC'S 2024-2025 SEASON BUDGET

Thank you for purchasing a ticket to this production!

We are grateful to everyone who supports our work through ticket sales and other financial gifts. Key among our founding values is transparency. To that end, we share with you our annual budget, as an organization's budget is its clearest expression of its priorities. Producing professional theater is not inexpensive, but we consider carefully how we spend each dollar. And we are proud that such a significant amount of our spending is done locally, in support of local artists and local businesses. Thank you for your part in making it all possible!

People

Artistic personnel & benefits <i>(72 actors, directors, designers)</i>	\$217,424
Production personnel <i>(55 crew and technical support)</i>	\$181,335
Staff, benefits, payroll taxes <i>(6 full-time, 1 part-time)</i>	\$564,657
Accounting staff & consultants	\$32,820
Community Connections <i>(La Follette HS teaching artists; Engagement & Accessibility; other Outreach Programming)</i>	\$32,820
Playwright Royalties	\$89,866

Productions

Sets	\$18,700
Costumes	\$9,200
Lighting	\$4,000
Props	\$10,600
Sound	\$2,050
Playbills	\$10,400
Construction/Storage space	\$9,396
Miscellaneous <i>(scripts, auditions, transportation)</i>	\$11,750

Venue

Theater rental	\$69,862
Rehearsal space rental	\$15,336
Venue equipment rental	\$8,350
Security fees	\$3,450
Box office fees <i>(includes sales taxes)</i>	\$144,872

Company Expenses

Artist housing	\$6,400
Hospitality	\$6,680
COVID-19 Safety expenses	\$1,250

Operations

Office space rental	\$54,458
Operational expenses <i>(copier, internet, phone, database, supplies)</i>	\$19,980
Insurance	\$15,600
Payroll & Audit services	\$21,525
Banking <i>(incl. credit card processing fees)</i>	\$17,575
Organizational memberships	\$3,660

Marketing/Development

Marketing <i>(advertising, graphic design, etc.)</i>	\$93,485
Development/Donor Engagement	\$44,500

Total 2024-2025 Operating Budget: \$1,722,001

SUMMER, 1976

by David Auburn

CAST

Diana/AliceHeidi Armbruster*
Diana/AliceColleen Madden*

Understudies:

Shannon Coltrane (Diana) and Carrie Sweet (Alice)

*Performers appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

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Heidi Armbruster (Diana/Alice) has extensive New York and regional theater credits. Notable world premieres include: *Time Stands Still* (Broadway);

Disgraced (Lincoln Center - Pulitzer Prize); *Lewiston/Clarkston* (Rattlestick); *Man from Nebraska* (Second Stage); *Poor Behavior* (Primary Stages); *Boy* (Keen Company); *Dov and Ali* (Playwrights Realm); *The Fifth Column* (The Mint); and *Sea of Tranquility* (The Atlantic); *Scarecrow* (Dorset Theatre Festival and Next Act); *Wife of a Salesman* (Milwaukee Rep); *Clarkston* (Dallas Theatre Center); *Queens for a Year* (Hartford Stage); *At the Old Place* (The Old Globe); and *The Great Gatsby* (The Guthrie). Drama League Nomination for *Tea and Sympathy* (Keen Company). Film and TV credits: Michelle on *Younger* and *Noelle* on *Manifest*, as well as *Evil*, *Pose*, *Dead Ringers*, *Ray Donovan*, *The Deuce*, *Divorce*, *Daredevil*.



Colleen Madden (Diana/Alice) is delighted to be back on the Forward stage! Previous productions with Forward include: *Why Torture Is Wrong*

and *the People Who Love Them*, *Going to St. Ives*, *Love Stories*, *Or,,*, *Silent Sky*, *Heisenberg*, and *What the Constitution Means to Me*. Colleen is a Core Company Member at American Players Theatre in Spring Green, and a member of Forward Theater's Advisory Company. Regional theater: Seattle Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Alliance Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, Two Rivers Theater, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theater, as well as NYC's Irish Repertory Theater. Television: ABC's *All My Children*; NBC's *Chicago PD* and *Chicago Fire*. You can see her in the streaming films *Brutal Season* and *Aquarians*. Thank you for supporting live theater.

UNDERSTUDY BIOGRAPHIES



Shannon Coltrane (US/Diana) is elated to be part of this project. New-ish to the Midwest, she holds an MFA (NIU), MA (NYU) & BFA (USC). A theatre

maker and drama therapist, Shannon acts and directs with local professional theatres and schools, and teaches curriculum exploring theatre for therapy and social justice. Favorite credits include: *Lifers* (Rain), *On the Exhale* (Woman), *Revolutionists* (Marie Antoinette), *Intentions* (Lou), *The Glass Menagerie* (Amanda Wingfield), *Romeo and Juliet* (Lady Capulet), *Private Lives* (Amanda), *Camelot* (Guinevere), *Avenue Q* (Kate Monster), *The Great Gatsby* (Daisy Buchanan), *Ordinary Days* (Claire), *God of Carnage* (Annette), and *Maidens Prayer* (Cynthia). Favorite directing projects include: Edgewood HS (*Peter & the*

Starcatcher), NIU (*Lungs*), CTM (*Chicago*). In May, see Shannon in Artists' Ensemble's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd!* Thank you to my best buds, Louie and Benny, and to you, for supporting professional theatre and valuing the arts for the future of our global community.



Carrie Sweet (US/ Alice) will be forever grateful for the opportunity to work with this incredible cast and crew, and to be a part of a Forward

Theater production. She has been active in the Madison theater community for the past ten years and is excited to make her return to theater following a brief hiatus after the birth of her daughter. This one's for you, Emmy.

PRODUCTION ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Joe Cerqua (Resident Composer & Sound Designer) is a freelance composer, producer, vocalist and sound designer. He is thrilled to be the Resident Composer and Sound Designer at Forward Theater where he has previously composed and designed sound for 33 productions, most recently *Murder Girl*, *What the Constitution Means To Me*, and *Clyde's*. He has composed music and/or designed sound for over 300 productions in Chicago, nationally, and internationally. Recent projects include original music and sound design for 2 Crows Theater, Next Act Theatre, American Players Theatre, The Clarence Brown Theater, and Forward Theater. Joe is the Producing Director/Composer in residence for the Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, a critically acclaimed 13-piece jazz orchestra and 10-member dance company. He is the Creative Director and Producer for the Music Department at Columbia College Chicago.

Shelley Cornia (Costume Designer) is delighted to return to Forward Theater for *Summer, 1976* after designing *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* with the company last year. Recent works include *A Christmas Carol*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, *Freaky Friday* and *Mockingbird*, Children's Theater of Madison and *Fences*, *Trojan Women*, *A Little Night Music*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *A Flea In Her Ear*, University Theater, UW-Madison. Previous work includes *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Le Petite Duc*, Ohio Light Opera; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Tartuffe*, Eastman School of Music; *La Traviata*, LSU Opera; *Iphigenia at Tarsus* University Opera-UW Madison. Shelley was awarded a Kennedy Center Design Fellowship for work on *Trojan Women*. Love to RBC.

Jason Fassel (Scenic, Lighting, & Projection Designer)

Summer, 1976 marks Jason's 11th FTC production including *Heisenberg*, *Fun Home*, *Red* and most recently *Clydes's*. This is the 21st design collaboration with Director Laura Gordon, 4th at Forward. Over the last two decades, Jason has consumed mass quantities of electricity at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Ballet, American Players Theatre, First Stage, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Next Act Theatre, Forward Theater Company, Florentine Opera, Northern Sky Theatre, Peninsula Players, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, The Fireside and many others. Jason is member of Scenic Artists Local #829, Milwaukee IATSE Stagehands Local #18 and a proud alumni of University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. IG:@AntiShadows FB:@AntiShadows Lighting Design Portfolio and information at www.AntiShadows.com

Shawn Galligan (Stage Manager)

This is Shawn's third season with Forward Theater. With a background in performance, Shawn switched to stage management in 2011. But you can still find him onstage from time to time. He has worked for theaters in Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin, both onstage and backstage. Shawn has been a company member with Northern Sky Theater since 2014, starting as an intern and is now the Production Stage Manager. He has stage managed for Madison Ballet and was a company member with Interrobang Theatre Project in Chicago. Shawn is a recreational cyclist, bike mechanic, and a lover of board games and miniatures gaming.

Laura Gordon (Co-Director)

A Milwaukee based actor and director, Laura happily returns to Forward where she has appeared on stage in *Artemisia* and *Good People*, and directed *Heisenberg*, *Red*, and *Going to St. Ives*. Other directing credits include *Ring Round the Moon*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *An Ideal Husband*, *The Royal Family*, Edward

Albee's Seascape, *Old Times*, American Players Theatre; *The Foreigner*, *Venus in Fur*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Almost Maine*, Milwaukee Rep; *Russian Transport*, *Skin Tight*, *Amelia*, Renaissance Theaterworks; *Scarecrow*, *The Revolutionists*, *Motherhood Out Loud*, Next Act Theatre; *The Thanksgiving Play*, *Well*, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre; *The Book of Will*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Santa Cruz Shakespeare; *Boswell*, 59E59; *Steel Magnolias*, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park/Indiana Rep; *Boeing-Boeing*, Indiana Rep. Laura is a Lunt-Fontanne Fellow and a member of Forward Theater's Advisory Company.

Adam Hastings (Technical Director)

is delighted to be working with Forward Theater this season! As the proud owner of *Spotlight Construction Co.* – collaborating with Next Act, Milwaukee Chamber, Forward, The Fireside, Black Arts Milwaukee, among others throughout theatre and entertainment industries – he would like to thank the highly talented production and creative team behind *Summer, 1976* and hopes you enjoy the show.

Abbi Hess (Assistant Stage Manager)

is grateful to be back for a fifth season with Forward Theater Company! Past favorite credits include: *Bare & The Amish Project*, Outskirts Theatre Co.; *Mamma Mia*, Lake Country Playhouse; *Next to Normal & Hamlet: A Cover*, Carroll University; *2 Pianos 4 Hands & The Legend of Georgia McBride*, Milwaukee Rep; *Every Brilliant Thing & Imbroglia*, Great River Shakespeare Festival; *Airness and Artemisia*, Forward Theater. Thank you to family, friends, and the supportive people at Forward Theater!

Laura Rook (Co-Director)

is so grateful to be working with Laura Gordon and this incredible team at Forward. Other directing credits include *Cinderella* at Marriot Theatre, *Once Upon A Bridge* at American Players Theatre, and *The How and the Why* with Two Crows Theatre Company. She has worked as

assistant director to Katie Spellman on *The Music Man*; Brenda DeVita on *Love's Labour's Lost*; Shana Cooper on *The Lady From the Sea*; and Kiera Fromm on *A Doll's House*. As an actor, she has worked at places like Chicago Shakespeare, Writers Theatre, Court Theatre, Asolo Repertory Theatre, The Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks and many others. She is a core company member at American Players Theatre where she has worked for over a decade.

Kaya Sarajian (Props Designer) is a recent graduate of UW Madison with various theater specializations. Recent credits include props design for *King James* and *Murder Girl*, Forward Theater; *The Wiz*, Children's Theater of Madison; costume design for *Peter and the Starcatcher*, University Theatre (UW-Madison); as well as lighting design for *Classroom Ain't Enough*, Broom Street Theater. Kaya is excited for their third production with Forward Theater and hopes that you enjoy the show.

FORWARD THEATER STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

Bri Collins (Audience & Donor Relations Manager) manages audience services and donor relations for Forward Theater. She has been born and raised mostly in the Madison area. She graduated from UW Stevens Point with a BFA in Theater Design and Technology in Stage Management. After graduation she moved to the Twin Cities to work in the Regional Theater scene. Bri is excited to experience her second season here at Forward. She is passionate about making theater accessible to everyone with the high quality of work that Forward Theater produces.

Scott Haden (Director of Marketing) has been Forward Theater's Director of Marketing since 2013. He previously served as Managing Director of the Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre in Grand Lake, CO, and has enjoyed acting at various regional theaters across the country, including American Players Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Writers' Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, and Theatre at the Center. For FTC, Scott appeared in the *Two Steps Forward Monologue Festival* and *Russian Troll Farm*. Scott is a proud member of Actors' Equity,

and holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from the Webster University Conservatory of Theatre Arts.

Marcella Kearns (Artistic Associate) is a Milwaukee-based artist and administrator. A member of Actors' Equity Association and former Fulbright Fellow (Austria), she also serves on the faculty of First Stage's Young Company, Marquette University, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her directing credits include the world premieres of *Fighting For Home: Stories of Women Who Serve* and Alice Austen's *Girls in the Boat*. As an actor, she has most often split her time between Madison and Milwaukee; at Forward, she appeared in *44 Plays for 44 Presidents*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *Life Sucks*, and Forward's inaugural Monologue Festival, *The Love That Changed My Life*, where she originated one of a pair of Christopher Durang pieces. She holds an MFA in Acting from the University of South Carolina and a BA in English from Canisius University, and she completed a TCG Observership in approaches to Shakespeare training.

Celia Klehr (Company Manager) co-founded FTC by bringing together professional theater artists around her

dining table when the Madison Repertory Theatre closed in 2009. Because she believes that theater is most relevant when it is for, by, and of a community, Celia has made Madison her home, both professionally and personally. She was a founding member of Madison Rep's Acting Company. During her 14 years with the Madison Rep she appeared in more than 20 productions, served as company manager for three years, and earned her Equity card. As the Company Manager for FTC, she hosts Advisory Company meetings, staff retreats, family picnics, and fundraising events at her home on Madison's east side. Along with finding homes for our visiting artists, Celia works to help all our artists feel at home and able to do their best work. You will find her in the lobby greeting our audience.

Sarah Milestone (Director of Development) joined the Forward staff in 2021. She holds a degree in Art History and Women's Studies from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Sarah previously led development, strategic planning and special events for several arts organizations including the Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Museum, American Ballet Theatre, Wisconsin Historical Foundation, and Taliesin Preservation. In addition, she serves on the Board of Visitors of the UW Madison Art Department and Briarpatch Youth Services. Sarah grew up on Madison's west side, and now lives just steps from Overture Center with her sweet pup, Pearl.

Alex Moskoff (Business Manager) has been Forward's Business Manager since 2012. He started as a part time employee, then continued to work with Forward through an outside accounting firm, and more recently continued his work with Forward through his own small accounting business, Counting On the Arts, in order to focus on non-profit arts organizations.

Alex serves several other arts organizations in the area. He has a Bachelor's degree in legal studies (and studied film and television) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. After college Alex worked as a production accountant at Warner Bros. Television in Los Angeles. A native Madisonian, Alex lives on the east side with his wife (a professional chef/baker), and their daughter Olivia.

Julie Swenson (Managing Director) joined Forward as Managing Director after 17 seasons as Producing Director for Renaissance Theaterworks in Milwaukee. Julie received a BA in theater from Illinois Wesleyan University and became a member of Actors' Equity Association while living in New York City. Julie fell in love with the Forward family when she worked as an actor in Forward's production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* in the role of Masha. Outside of theater she served on the Village of Nashotah board serving as President for two terms and was the host of *New Home Building Today* on WTMJ-4 in Milwaukee. She is a member of the Downtown Rotary Madison and Co-chair of the Mentor/Scholar committee.

Jen Uphoff Gray (Artistic Director) is a co-founder of FTC, serving as Artistic Director since 2009. She has directed 27 mainstage productions for Forward. Regionally, Jen has directed for Madison Rep and Milwaukee Shakespeare. She has directed national tours (*Copenhagen*) and was the Associate Director on Broadway of *Copenhagen*, *Cabaret*, *The Blue Room* (starring Nicole Kidman) and *The Life*. Jen founded Premiere Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Directors Lab, and is and is now serving as President of WPW's Board of Directors. Jen grew up in the Madison area, holds a degree in Dramatic Literature & Stage History from Harvard College, and with her husband Peter has raised their three kids (Jamie, Seeger, and Arden) on Madison's west side.



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As we celebrate our 16th Season we are so grateful to all who make Forward Theater possible. Our community partnerships, innovative programming and artistic quality would not happen without the support from our generous donors. Whether you have made a first-time gift or you have faithfully supported Forward Theater throughout the years, you are part of our theater community and Forward's history. Thank you.

We are pleased to recognize contributions to the annual fund received between **December 1, 2023 – December 17, 2024**. If you notice any errors in acknowledgement or have questions about donation options, please contact Sarah Milestone at 608-234-5001 or smilestone@forwardtheater.com. To make a tax-deductible donation to Forward Theater online or learn about donor benefits, visit our website at forwardtheater.com. To mail in a contribution, please use the following address: Forward Theater, P.O. Box 14574, Madison, WI 53708.

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If you are interested in learning more about the campaign or have questions about donating, please contact Development Director, Sarah Milestone by phone at 608-234-5001 or by email at smilestone@forwardtheater.com.

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