

IRON BOUND

BY MARTYNA MAJOK
DIRECTED BY MARCELLA KEARNS

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THEATER CO.



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FORWARD THEATER COMPANY

presents

IRONBOUND

by **Martyna Majok**

Directed by **Marcella Kearns**

Scenic Designer
Lisa Schlenker**

Costume Designer
Shelley Cornia

Props Director
Jolie Sarajian

Lighting Designer
Noele Stollmack**

Composer & Sound Designer
Joe Cerqua**

Stage Manager
Abbi Hess*

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**Nancy Ciezki &
Diane Kostecke**

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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.



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



** Member of United Scenic Artists Local 829.

IRONBOUND was commissioned by a grant from the National New Play Network, with funding from the Smith Prize for New Plays, and was the winner of the 2014 David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize at Marin Theatre Company, Mill Valley, CA (Jasson Minadakis, Artistic Director; Michael Barker, Managing Director).

IRONBOUND was developed by Steppenwolf Theatre Company through its New Play Initiative, and was presented as part of its First Look Repertory of New Work at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, IL (Martha Lavey, Artistic Director; David Hawkanson, Executive Director).

Originally produced at Round House Theatre Company
(Ryan Rilette, Producing Artistic Director).

The New York Premiere of IRONBOUND was produced in 2016 by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and Women's Project Theater.



FORWARD THEATER Co

FORWARD THEATER COMPANY STAFF

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Artistic Associate Marcella Kearns

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Director of Development.....Sarah Milestone
Director of Marketing Scott Haden
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Business ManagerAlex Moskoff

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Assistant Stage ManagerMackenzie Smith
Dialect Coach..... Clare Arena Haden
Fight & Intimacy DirectorAmie Root
Assistant DirectorAli Mansouri
Technical DirectorAaron Sewell
CarpenterSteve Watson
Scenic ChargeCarri Dahl
Wardrobe Supervisor Reina Werth
Assistant Scenic Designer.....KyLee Hennes
Master ElectricianJulia McDaniel
Theater Technician Brad Toberman**
Sound Technician Ben Krueger

Set Construction/Build by Spotlight Construction - Adam Hastings, Owner

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

** Forward Theater is proud to work with the members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE).

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Jono De Leon	Laura Gordon	Colleen Madden	<i>*On sabbatical</i>

How We Work

Forward Theater's unique, three-branch organizational structure reflects our commitments to transparent communication and preserving the balance between the artistic choices and financial health of the company.

The first branch is the administrative staff, executing the daily operations of our theater. The second branch is the Board of Directors, responsible for financial and operational oversight. The third branch is the Advisory Company, made up of local professional theater artists, overseeing FTC's short- and long-term artistic plans.

Our bylaws have mandated paths of communication between these three branches and a system of checks and balances to keep FTC strong, focused on our artistic role in the community, and fiscally responsible.

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR...JEN UPHOFF GRAY

Welcome to Forward Theater Company's production of *Ironbound*, by the brilliant Pulitzer-winning playwright Martyna Majok.

We've framed our 2025-2026 season as one in which the characters on our stage are trying to "change the narrative" of their lives. Who better exemplifies that effort than an immigrant? I hope you will be as invested in Darja's story as we were in deciding to produce it.

This country frequently fails to live up to its highest aspirations, but we keep striving nonetheless. And those who choose to come to this country to help us become a "more perfect union" are often the best among us. I'm grateful to celebrate them with this play. Should you be so moved, we invite you to join us in supporting local organizations serving immigrants in our community. We've got QR codes in the lobby to connect you with several of them.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you through your questions at our nightly talkbacks, your social media posts (we're so grateful when you help spread the word about our productions!), and your emails to us about your experience here in the Playhouse. We do this for you.

And to **everyone** here right now, we thank you for choosing to spend this time with us. Enjoy the show!

FROM THE DIRECTOR...MARCELLA KEARNS

It takes a Pole to hold up the American flag.

I can't remember the first time I heard that from my grandmother:

When she was setting me up with a rich Polish friend (*you need lipstick*)?

Enlisting me to fry pierogi (*everything's better with butter*)?

Slipping me a twenty when no one was looking (*girls need cash*)?

Rooting for Solidarity and the fall of the Iron Curtain (*the workers did it!*)?

You get the idea. My babcia's pride was strong. You may have a similar history of culture and values served up from your first breath through the last meal you ate. Perhaps a similar story of matriarchs.

Written by a Polish immigrant, inspired by her mother, *Ironbound's* texture is Slavic: ferocious, open-eyed, spiky-funny, resilient. Its setting is New Jersey, where some of my Polish people persisted like weeds in concrete. Its dream is American, though not uniquely. Who on this planet, after all, doesn't want a better life?

American culture is deeply transactional. Martyna Majok doesn't shy away from that. But what is free in this story may unlock how we could try to reframe our relationship to culture and country in this, our semiquincentennial year.

To that I say *pomyślności*. - Marcella Kearns

Waiting for the Bus

"Hope deferred maketh the something sick, who said that?"

– Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Before Martyna Majok became a Pulitzer-winning playwright, she was an undocumented immigrant from Poland, living in the Newark area and surrounded by factories like those that once dotted *Ironbound*, an industrial section of Newark that gave Majok the title for her play.

"When I started writing *Ironbound*," Majok said in an interview, "I assumed nobody would [care], to be honest. I thought, 'who's gonna care about a poor Polish immigrant?'"

Majok asked that question nine years ago, shortly after the 2016 election. It's never felt more urgent. Inspired by and drawing from the experiences of her mother, Majok's immigrant is Darja, who holds the stage from start to finish in a play hop-scotching between 1992 (when Darja is 20) and 2014.

Arriving in America soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet empire, Darja wants to believe that this new land will offer new opportunities. What she finds instead is a country where nothing is free and where everything she might call her own can be taken.

Majok's opening stage direction states that there's stars beyond the smog enveloping Newark. But Darja can't see them. And there'll be moments during *Ironbound* when it's hard to see Darja herself as she channels crushing disappointments that can make her appear bitter and sardonic. Cynical and transactional. Afraid to dream and, at times, seemingly afraid to live.

But she carries on – much like those tramps in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, a play looming large in the background to this one. Darja's waiting takes place at a bus stop rather than beside a tree, as she logs time wondering if her ride to somewhere better will ever come. And if it doesn't? What if she, like Estragon and Vladimir, imagines moving forward while instead remaining stuck in place?

Ironbound honors those like Darja who nevertheless persist, daring to hope even as they pretend they do not and daring to sing their song even as they insist that only the naïve can make room for the music living in all of us and clamoring to be heard.

"Why should a land have so much meaning," Cynthia Erivo sings in *Wicked*, "when dark times befall it?"

Because of Majok's – Darja's? – stubborn belief in those stars beyond the smog. *Ironbound* challenges each of us to look harder and see better. It's a new year's resolution to live by.

For Emma Lazarus and Olga Tokarczuk
Milwaukee, December 2025

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).
 - 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 – Audio Description is offered on the third Saturday matinee of each production. A Tactile Tour is available upon request.
- Large print programs.
- Courtesy wheelchairs.
- Family Assist/Gender Neutral Restrooms.

You can pick up devices 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 2025-2026 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>(actors, directors, designers)</i>	\$301,461
Production personnel <i>(crew and technical support)</i>	\$164,990
Staff, benefits, payroll taxes	\$583,494
Accounting staff & consultants	\$33,805
Community Connections <i>(La Follette HS teaching artists; Engagement & Accessibility; other Engagement Programming)</i>	\$16,750
Playwright Royalties	\$104,471

Productions

Sets	\$18,500
Costumes	\$10,250
Lighting	\$3,250
Props	\$10,450
Sound	\$1,410
Playbills	\$12,200
Storage space	\$4,440
Miscellaneous <i>(scripts, auditions, transportation)</i>	\$13,950

Venue

Theater rental	\$73,508
Rehearsal space rental	\$16,375
Venue equipment rental	\$5,100
Security fees	\$8,400
Box office fees <i>(includes sales taxes)</i>	\$158,648

Company Expenses

Artist housing	\$26,700
Hospitality	\$6,670
COVID-19 Safety expenses	\$760

Operations

Office space rental	\$49,526
Operational expenses <i>(copier, internet, phone, database, supplies)</i>	\$20,320
Insurance	\$15,600
Payroll & Audit services	\$20,700
Banking <i>(incl. credit card processing fees)</i>	\$9,825
Organizational memberships	\$5,165

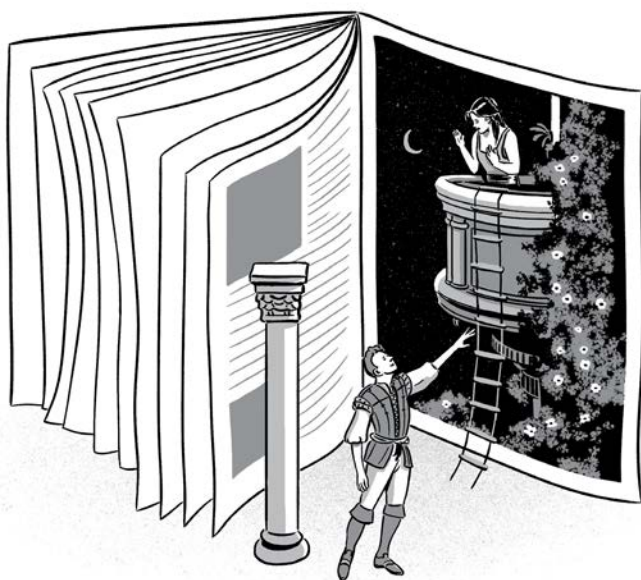
Marketing/Development

Marketing <i>(advertising, graphic design, etc.)</i>	\$89,355
Development/Donor Engagement	\$41,000

Total 2025-2026 Operating Budget: \$1,827,374

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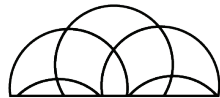
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WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO

IRONBOUND

by Martyna Majok

CAST

Darja..... Cassandra Bissell*
Tommy..... Jonathan Wainwright*
Maks..... Josh Krause*
Vic..... Gabriel Anderle

Setting:

A bus stop at night, a quarter-mile from a factory in Elizabeth, NJ.
Or where a factory used to be, depending on the year:
2014. 1992. Or 2006.

Understudies:

Stuart Jameson (Tommy & Maks), March Marren (Vic), and Abby Nichols (Darja)

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

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Gabriel Anderle (Vic)

is an Actor, Writer, and Creative Leader with a passion for leaving spaces better than he found them.

WISCONSIN (selected):

A Christmas Carol, Our

Town (Milwaukee Rep); *As You Like It, The Old Man and The Old Moon, Great Expectations* (Door Shakespeare); *Goosebumps the Musical, Holes, Animal Farm* (First Stage). CHICAGO (selected): *Ashland Avenue, The Antiquities, A Christmas Carol, Highway Patrol* (Goodman Theatre); *Judgment Day* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Love's Labor's Lost* (self-produced). TRAINING: UMN/Guthrie Theater BFA; Shakespeare's Globe; Milwaukee Rep's Professional Training Institute; First Stage's

Young Company. Gabe serves as the Merchandise Associate at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. He is also thrilled to be returning to Door Shakespeare this summer as their Managing Producer. For Team Anderle -- the theater makers and shakers that inspire him endlessly. WEBSITE: gabrielanderle.com IG: @gabriel.anderle



Cassandra Bissell

(Darja) happily returns to Forward Theater, having appeared previously in *Murder Girl, The Wanderers* and *Russian Troll Farm: A Workplace Comedy*.

Elsewhere in Wisconsin: Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

Theater, Next Act Theatre, Peninsula Players, Renaissance Theaterworks and Third Avenue Playworks. Regional: Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Arizona Theatre Co., Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Cleveland Play House, Contemporary Theater of Ohio, Court Theatre, First Folio, free Fall, Great Lakes Theater, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory, Northern Stage, Northlight Theatre, People's Light, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Steppenwolf and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Cassandra holds a BA in Gender Studies from the University of Chicago.



Josh Krause (Maks) is delighted to return to the Forward stage! Previously, for Forward: *A Case for the Existence of God* (Ryan), *Airness* (Shreddy Eddy), *The Amateurs* (Gregory/

Playwright); Recent regional favorites include *Boswell* (Boswell) and *The Mousetrap* (Giles) with Next Act; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Demetrius), *The Winter's Tale* (Clown), *The Barber and the Unnamed Prince* (Ricky), *The Virgin Queen Entertains Her Fool* (Ermo), *The Liar* (Cliton) for APT; *A Doll's House* (Torvald) and *Indecent* (Asch) with Milwaukee Chamber. He is a member of the Core Company at APT, and the Advisory Company at Forward Theater. Next up, Josh will be back at

American Players Theatre for his 9th season! Josh blows a kiss to his wife, Rachel, and their two year old, Vincent (Vinnie).



Jonathan Wainwright (Tommy) is thrilled to help tell this story with this wonderful group, and grateful to perform for Forward's lovely audiences in a full run. His last show here was

in the 2021 live-streamed production of *Lewiston/Clarkson* as Connor, a beautiful experience that, alas, was performed only once. He is a veteran Milwaukee actor, with extensive credits with the city's best companies, including *Othello*, *Of Mice And Men*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Junk*, *Dial M For Murder*, *The Coast Starlight*, and *Murder On The Orient Express*, Milwaukee Rep; *Coyote On A Fence*, *The Exonerated*, *Sideman*, *Back Of The Throat*, and *Grace*, Next Act Theatre; *Mauritius*, *The Good Father*, *Misery*, *Broken and Entered*, *Crimes Of The Heart*, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, to name a few. This spring he can be seen at Chamber Theatre in a piece ripped verbatim from FBI transcripts, *Is This A Room?* He'd like to dedicate his performance to his late Uncle Dave, and the great people at B-Side Records, on his beloved State Street.

UNDERSTUDY BIOGRAPHIES



Stuart Jameson (US/ Tommy & Maks) trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now Royal Conservatoire) in Glasgow, Scotland, graduating with a BA

(Acting) in 2002. Since then, he has tread the boards in numerous productions, but quit everything in 2011 to globetrot for eight years, including a hitchhike from

Germany to Cambodia. Stuart has worked extensively teaching drama and directing school productions around the world, most recently for MG21 Liberal Arts Charter in Monona. His favourite past roles include *Ken Preston* in Robin Maugham's *Enemy*; a literally drunk Hamlet in *Hamlet*; a twisted, dirty cop in Iain Heggie's *The Don*; and more outdoor Shakespeare than he cares to remember. Now settled in Madison, he is throwing his hat in the ring once again and is grateful

UNDERSTUDY BIOGRAPHIES

for the opportunity to be involved in his first Forward production. He hopes that in the future they will need to cast a token Englishman.



March Marren (US/Vic) is thrilled to be making their Forward debut! Recent credits include Ensemble in *Assassins* with Capital City Theatre and Ensemble/u.s.

Christopher in *Cinderella* with CTM. A graduate of CCPA, they also enjoy crocheting and are grateful for the endless support of their family and friends.



Abby Nichols (US/Darja) is thrilled to be a part of *Ironbound*. This is her first time working with Forward Theater and she is incredibly grateful for the opportunity. Abby

holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from Pace University. Credits include: *Annie*, *Junie B. Jones*, National Tours; *Matilda*, *Taste of Broadway*, Children's Theater of Madison; *Marry Me a Little*, Music Theatre of Madison; *On the Town*, Capital City Theatre. Abby owns Nichols Voice Studio here in Madison. She would like to thank her family and friends for their love and support, especially Arthur, Jasper, Mike, Eleanor, Wren, Mom, Dad, Emily, and The Pod. NicholsVoiceStudio.com

PRODUCTION ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Joe Cerqua (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 34 productions, most recently *Clyde's*, *What The Constitution Means To Me*, *Murder Girl*, *Summer, 1976*, *A Case for the Existence of God*, and *Primary Trust*. He has composed music and/or designed sound for over 350 productions in Chicago, nationally, and internationally. Recent projects include original music and sound design for 2 Crows Theater, Next Act Theater, American Players Theatre, The Clarence Brown Theater, and Milwaukee Rep. 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 thrilled to return to Forward Theater this season for *Ironbound* having previously

designed *Summer, 1976* and *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* with the company. Recent works at Children's Theater of Madison include *A Christmas Carol*, *Anne Frank*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and *Matilda*. With University Theater UW-Madison: *Fences* and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Ohio Light Opera highlights include *Orpheus in the Underworld*, and the world premiere of *Le Petite Duc*. Other productions include *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Tartuffe*, Eastman School of Music; *La Traviata*, LSU Opera; and *Iphigenia at Tarsus*, University Opera-UW Madison. Shelley was awarded a Kennedy Center Design Fellowship for work on *Trojan Women*. Love to RSC.

Abbi Hess (Stage Manager) is grateful to be back for a sixth season with Forward Theater Company and as the season's stage manager! 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*, *Much Ado About*

Nothing, The Comedy of Errors, Great River Shakespeare Festival; Airness, Artemisia, The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk, King James, Forward Theater. Thank you to family, friends, and the supportive people at Forward Theater!

Marcella Kearns (Director) is making her Forward directorial debut with *Ironbound*, though she is a veteran of Forward's stage (*Life Sucks, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, 44 Plays for 44 Presidents, The Love That Changed My Life Monologue Festival*) and proud staff member. Selected directing credits include projects for Utah Shakespeare Festival, Children's Theater of Madison, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Third Avenue PlayWorks, First Stage, Door Shakespeare, Marquette University, Carthage College, and UW-Milwaukee, including the world premieres of *Fighting for Home: Stories of Women Who Serve* and *Girls in the Boat*. A member of Actors' Equity Association, she holds a Master of Fine Arts in Acting from the University of South Carolina and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Canisius University. She completed a Fulbright Fellowship in Vienna, Austria and a Theatre Communications Group Observership on Shakespeare training. This one's for Babcia i Matka. Sto Lat!

Ali Mansouri (Assistant Director) is a theatre director, playwright, and PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He holds a master's degree in theater directing from the Art University of Tehran. Ali's work is grounded in a strong interest in applied theatre and theatre for social change, and he is especially drawn to collaborative, community-centered processes. At Forward Theater Company, Ali previously worked as the assistant director on *King James* (2023) and most recently directed Karl Curtis's *If There's One Thing...* as part of the *Guilty Pleasures* monologue festival this past summer. Alongside his academic work, he continues to explore how theatre can create spaces for listening, connection, and shared inquiry. Ali feels incredibly lucky to have found an artistic home in Madison and at

Forward Theater, where he is grateful for the generosity, trust, and creativity of the people he gets to work with.

Martyna Majok (Playwright) was born in Bytom, Poland, and aged in Jersey and Chicago. Productions include *Queens* (Lincoln Center Theatre/LCT3, Upcoming); *Cost of Living* (Manhattan Theatre Club and Williamstown Theatre Festival); and *Ironbound* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater/Women's Project Theatre). In addition, her plays have been performed and developed at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Round House Theatre, LABYrinth Theatre Company, The John F. Kennedy Center, Dorset Theatre Festival, Marin Theatre Company and New York Stage & Film, among others. Awards include The Dramatists Guild's Lanford Wilson Award, Helen Hayes Award's Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding Original New Play or Musical, the inaugural Women's Invitational Prize at Ashland New Play Festival, The Kennedy Center's Jean Kennedy Smith Award, Marin Theatre's David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize, New York Theatre Workshop's 2050 Fellowship, Aurora Theatre's Global Age Project Prize, National New Play Network's Smith Prize for Political Playwriting, Jane Chambers Student Feminist Playwriting Prize, and The Merage Foundation Fellowship for the American Dream.

Jolie Sarajian (Props Director) is excited for their second season with Forward Theater Company. Their recent properties credits include Props Designer with Madison Opera and Props Supervisor with the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival. Jolie also enjoys working in other avenues of theater, such as lighting design for Hamlet, Mercury Players Theatre; costume and lighting design for Da Classroom Aint Enuf, Broom Street Theater, and costume design for *Peter and the Starcatcher*, University Theatre at UW-Madison.

Lisa Schlenker (Scenic Designer) is delighted to be back at Forward Theater, collaborating on this beautiful story of triumph over adversity. She is also thankful to serve as Resident Scenic Designer and Production Manager at Northern Sky Theater, telling stories through song in the north woods. For over three decades Lisa has devoted time and passion to advancing skills in prop making, scenic design, and production management. Lisa's book with co-author Sandra Strawn: *The Properties Director's Tool Kit* is available through Focal Press and on Amazon.com. Lisa has enjoyed the recent pleasure of collaborating with several wonderful companies including Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Florentine Opera, Next Act, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, First Stage, and Opera Lafayette. Lisa is a proud member of Local USA 829, IATSE. Thank you for supporting live local theater!

Mackenzie Smith (Assistant Stage Manager) is appreciative and excited to be back for a second show with Forward Theater Company. Select favorite credits include: *Gutenberg! The Musical!*, Forward Theater Company; *The Barber and the Unnamed Prince*, American Players Theatre; *Life Doesn't Frighten Me*, *The Lightning Thief*, *Peter Pan*; Children's Theater of Madison. They would like to thank all of the people in their life that support them, and Forward Theater for bringing them onto the team!

Noele Stollmack (Scenic & Lighting Designer) Noele Stollmack's design work has appeared onstage at The Brooklyn Academy of Music, Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, Verizon Hall, The Library of Congress Theatre, as well as the opera companies of Santa Fe, Ontario, Houston, Portland, Vancouver, New Orleans, Nashville, Madison and Milwaukee. Regional design for the theatre includes Jeff Daniels Purple Rose Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Houston's

Alley Theatre, Wisconsin's Milwaukee Rep, Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Skylight Music Theatre, American Players Theatre, Forward Theater and First Stage. As Lighting Director for Houston Grand Opera, she supervised the lighting and special effects for over 50 productions along with designing the lighting for such productions as Andrei Serban's *Elektra*, Dr. Jonathan Miller's *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Aida*, and the world premieres of *Harvey Milk*, *Desert of Roses*, and *Dracula Diary*. Her AIA award winning architectural and public space lighting is installed throughout the Midwest. Member: United Scenic Arts Local 829.

Actors' Equity Association – AEA, or "Equity," founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. Equity is governed by its own members through an elected Council, representing principal actors, chorus actors and stage managers living in three regions: Eastern, Central and Western. Members at-large participate in Equity's governance through a system of regional Boards and Committees. Equity has 28 designated area liaison cities with over 100 members each.

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 in Madison, 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 Neshotah 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, Co-chair of their Mentor/Scholar committee, and a member of the Board of Directors.

Jen Uphoff Gray (Artistic Director) is a co-founder of FTC, serving as Artistic Director since 2009. She has directed 32 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 World Premiere Wisconsin, 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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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 and event leadership support received between **December 1, 2024 – December 16, 2025**. If you notice any discrepancies or have questions, 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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*James Carrington, Terry Bell, & Lachrisa Grandberry in Primary Trust
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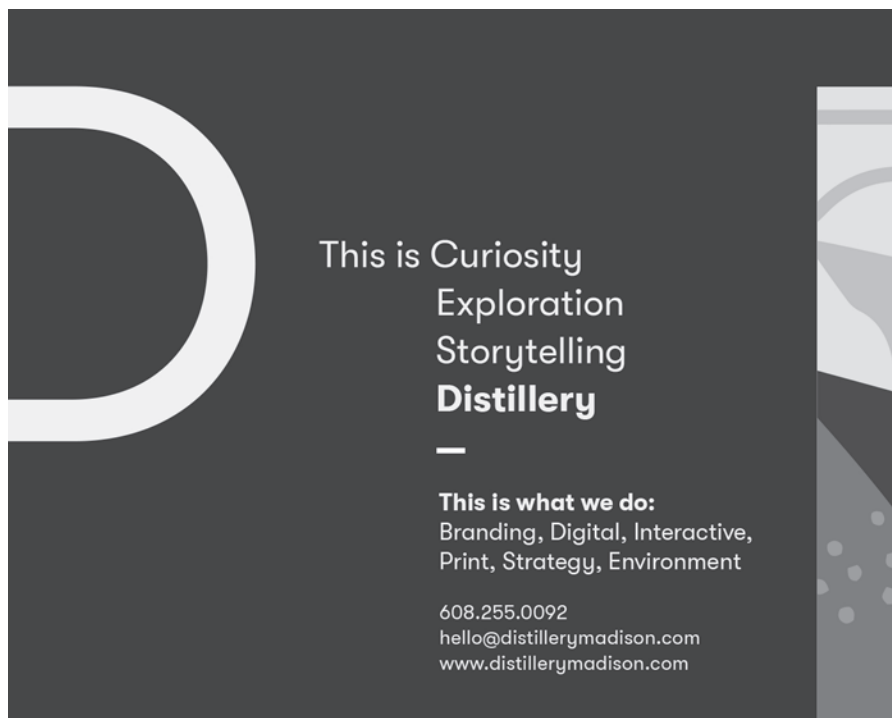
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