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gaslight



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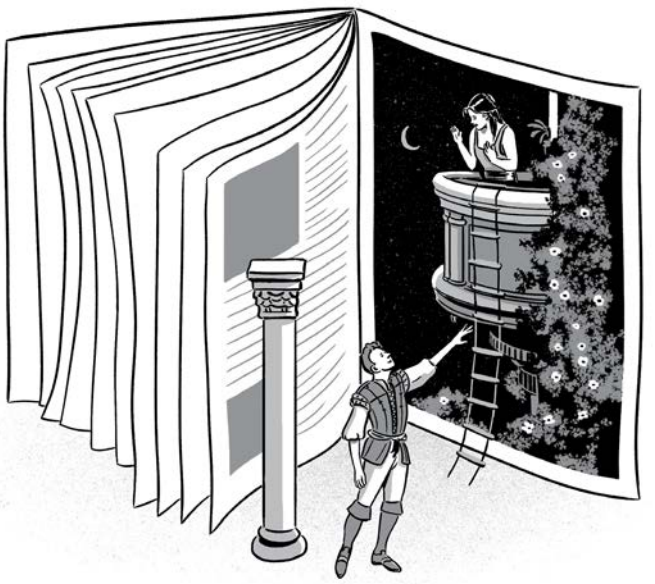
BY STEVEN DIETZ

Adapted from the original play by Patrick Hamilton

DIRECTED BY JEN UPHOFF GRAY

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presents the World Premiere of

GASLIGHT

by **Steven Dietz**

Adapted from the original play by Patrick Hamilton

Directed by **Jen Uphoff Gray**

Scenic Designer
Lisa Schlenker**

Lighting Designer
Noele Stollmack**

Costume Designer
Karen Brown-Larimore

Composer & Sound Designer
Joe Cerqua**

Props Director
Jolie Sarajian

Stage Manager
Abbi Hess*

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"Gaslight (Dietz)" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com



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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 DIRECTOR...JEN UPHOFF GRAY

Welcome to Forward Theater's 18th season, and our Wisconsin premiere of this new adaptation of *Gaslight*.

Honestly, it's difficult in 2026 to remember that before Patrick Hamilton's original 1938 stage play *Gaslight* we didn't have this term in our vocabulary to describe an all-too-common type of human manipulation:

> ***gas·light·ing*** *[Merriam-Webster]*
> psychological manipulation of a person usually over an extended period of time that causes the victim to question the validity of their own thoughts, perception of reality, or memories and typically leads to confusion, loss of confidence and self-esteem, uncertainty of one's emotional or mental stability, and a dependency on the perpetrator

Now Steven Dietz has given us a new version of the classic play – keeping all the Gilded-Age atmosphere and psychological suspense of the past versions, while allowing the story to resonate even more powerfully in our present. I hope this production will give you some enjoyable thrills as you sit in the Playhouse, as well as a few insights into human behavior to contemplate in the days afterwards.

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 theater-going experience. We do this for you.

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

IN HONOR OF

KAREN MOELLER



Forward's 2027-2028 Season is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague Karen Moeller, who left us far too soon.

Karen's history with Forward was long and impactful. She appeared on our mainstage 7 times, from our very first production (*All About Eve*) to her starring role in *Marjorie Prime*. Karen served on Forward's Advisory Company for several years, before joining our staff as Artistic Associate from 2014-2022.

She championed local actors and local writers, and brought great joy to everyone who encountered her, onstage and off. Forward Theater Company was deeply impacted by Karen's contributions, and we miss her profoundly.

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A CLOSER LOOK...ADVISORY COMPANY MEMBER MIKE FISCHER

Take Back the Night
By Mike Fischer

"I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus – but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad."
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wall-Paper* (1892)

Used as a verb, "gaslight" – the protracted psychological manipulation and isolation of a person that leads her to doubt her own reality and mental stability while becoming dependent on the perpetrator – only entered the language in 1938, thanks to the play you're about to see. Playwright Patrick Hamilton's 1938 thriller is set in the 1880s, but there's a reason that playwright Steven Dietz's adaptation – the version Forward will stage – made its world premiere in 2023. That's the year after Merriam-Webster named "gaslighting" its 2022 Word of the Year, following an astounding uptick of nearly 2,000% in lookups.

2022 was also Year 3 of the pandemic, which left us feeling adrift and alone in a world where social media was making it increasingly difficult to muster common trust and believe in shared truths. Cut off from one another, it was becoming ever easier for any of us to imagine that we were just imagining things – especially when trolls aplenty told us our truths were fake news.

"What an imagination you have," the gaslighting Jack tells Bella, his long-suffering wife. "It blinds you to what is *real*."

Does it?

Or do the sounds Bella hears and things she sees, the objects she loses and the dreams she defers, have a texture and reality all their own – even as Jack doubts them and she doubts herself? You'll need to lean in and watch for answers to these questions. But before you go, I'll leave you with this:

It's no accident that Bella is isolated: her father dead, her mother in an asylum, her relatives failing to communicate, her servants seemingly at odds with her (Dietz is attuned to how class divisions can play an integral role in fostering social isolation).

When we're islanded from the world – shut away in our rooms or disappearing into our screens, barraged by liars claiming to speak truth and told repeatedly that those speaking truth are liars, we're all setting ourselves up to be gaslighted.

We can avoid that fate by coming together, in communities through which our monologues might become conversations as we collaborate on telling dialogic stories of who we are and might yet become.

Which, come to think of it, is a fair definition of what theater does. Welcome to a sacred space where – even when the lights come down – we can move forward and illuminate all the world.

For Gloria Steinem
Chicago, September 17-18, 2026


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Colin Cover, Phoebe Gonzalez, Ana J. Kuwonu & Trevyn Wong, The Clockmaker, 2026. Photo by Hannah Jo Anderson.
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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).
    - 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 2026-2027 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 *(actors, directors, designers)*	$302,512
Production personnel *(crew and technical support)*	$176,165
Staff, benefits, payroll taxes	$617,453
Accounting staff & consultants	$ 33,820
Community Connections *(La Follette HS teaching artists; Engagement & Accessibility; other Outreach Programming)*	$ 14,440
Playwright Royalties	$ 82,886
Productions	
Sets	$19,000
Costumes	$10,200
Lighting	$500
Props	$9,500
Sound	$550
Playbills	$12,000
Storage space	$4,560
Miscellaneous *(scripts, auditions, transportation)*	$9,600

Venue	
Theater rental	$81,113
Rehearsal space rental	$16,128
Venue equipment rental	$15,626
Security fees	$10,140
Box office fees *(includes sales taxes)*	$200,558
Company Expenses	
Artist housing	$27,498
Hospitality	$14,120
COVID-19 Safety expenses	$560
Operations	
Office space rental	$51,006
Operational expenses *(copier, internet, phone, database, supplies)*	$25,310
Insurance	$16,600
Payroll & Audit services	$21,760
Banking *(incl. credit card processing fees)*	$27,975
Organizational memberships	$5,354
Marketing/Development	
Marketing *(advertising, graphic design, etc.)*	$92,930
Development/Donor Engagement	$28,700

Total 2026-2027 Operating Budget: $1,928,864

GASLIGHT

by Steven Dietz

Based on the original play by Patrick Hamilton

CAST

Mrs. Manningham (Bella) ..... Phoebe González*
Mr. Manningham (Jack) ..... Neil Brookshire*
Elizabeth ..... Rhonda Rae Busch
Nancy ..... Caroline Hansen
Sergeant Rough ..... Michael Huftile
Police Officers ..... Nick Chiaverini, Trey Danis III

Setting/Time:
New York City. The late 1880s.

The living room of a gloomy three-story house on the East Side.

Understudies:
Casem AbuLughod (Sergeant Rough), Stuart Jameson (Mr. Manningham),
Molly Kempfer (Mrs. Manningham & Nancy), Carrie Sweet (Elizabeth)

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

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However, we welcome you to take photos in the theater before and after the performance! If you are sharing images to social media, please take a moment to credit the production designers below:

Lisa Schlenker, Scenic Design | Noele Stollmack, Lighting Design |
Karen Brown-Larimore, Costume Design | Jolie Sarajian, Props Director

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Neil Brookshire (Mr. Manningham) Theater credits: *Barefoot in the Park, Witch, Photograph 51, The Violet Hour,* Renaissance Theaterworks; *There Is A Happiness That Morning Is, The Last White Man,* Next Act Theatre; *Before the Mountains of Madness*, Two Crows Theatre Co. Other Wisconsin and regional theaters: Peninsula Players, Door Shakespeare, Third Avenue Playworks, Great Lakes Theater, People's Light, Cadence Theatre Co, Boise Contemporary Theater, Idaho Dance Theatre, Opera Idaho, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, Tennessee Shakespeare Co., and eleven seasons with Idaho Shakespeare Festival. He was Assistant Director for *The 39 Steps*, American Players Theatre. He is co-writer/performer of *Bent Compass*, a solo show of true stories of an Army Medic. He lives in Wisconsin.



Rhonda Rae Busch (Elizabeth)is thrilled to be included with this talented group of theatre professionals that make up the Gaslight team! A Milwaukee based actor, Rhonda Rae has performed with many of the state's theatres, including Skylight Music Theatre, Marcus Performing Arts Center, Door Shakespeare, Fireside Dinner Theatre, Northern Sky Theater, First Stage, CTM, and In Tandem. Favorite credits include *Les Miserables* (Madame Thernardier), *Deathtrap* (Helga Tendorp), *The Spitfire Grill* (Effy), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Golde), *White Christmas* (Martha), *Nunsense* (Reverend Mother), *Into the Woods* (Jack's Mother), *Church Basement Ladies* (Mavis), *Music Man* (Widow Paroo), and *Rosalind* (Mistress Quickly). Love to Bill for 40 years of wedded bliss, and special thanks to Eva Nimmer for the audition expertise. Instagram: @rhondatherae



Nick Chiaverini (Police Officer) is excited to be making his Forward Theater stage debut! Nick is an actor, motion capture performer, and voice actor based in Madison, Wisconsin. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in Theatre Performance and Communication Studies. Some of his recent productions include *A Christmas Carol* and *Newsies;* CTM. He has also appeared as a motion capture actor/stunt actor for Call of Duty: Black Ops 6, Call of Duty: Black Ops 7, and Call of Duty: Warzone.



Trey Danis III (Police Officer) has been in many community theatre productions in Madison and is delighted to be joining Forward for the first time. He hopes you enjoy the show and will come see whatever production he does next.



Phoebe González (Mrs. Manningham) is grateful to be back at Forward Theater so soon after playing Hannah in the world premiere of Lauren Gunderson's *Lady Disdain* last spring. She is a proud member of APT's Core Company, where favorite roles include Marianne in *Constellations*, Marela in *Anna in the Tropics*, and Julia in *Fallen Angels*. Regionally, she has worked with the Kennedy Center (RIP), Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, American Shakespeare Center, the Marriott Theatre,

Paramount Theater, Teatro Vista, and Writers Theatre (where her recent performance as Rosalind in Shauna Taub's musical adaptation of *As You Like It* earned her a Joseph Jefferson Award nomination). TV: Chicago Med, Chicago PD (NBC). She studied acting, musical theatre, and playwriting at Northwestern University. Always immensely grateful for my family and community, without whom I would never be able to survive such a bizarre and beautiful life in the arts. Con mucho amor.



Caroline Hansen (Nancy) (she/her) is oh so grateful to be working with Forward Theater this season. She was last seen working with Forward in the 2025 *Guilty Pleasures* Monologue Festival, performing *Lost* written by Sophie Bohr under the direction of Roseann Sheridan. Other credits include *Lungs*, Vanguard Milwaukee; *Newsies,* Children's Theater of Madison; and *Assassins*, Capital City Theatre. Caroline can be seen next in Madison in *The Lightning Thief*, Children's Theater of Madison; and on stage in Milwaukee in *Liberation*, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. Much love to her family, friends, and Michael.



Michael Huftile (Sergeant Rough) is excited to return to Forward Theater and to work with Jen again after collaborations on *The Farnsworth Invention, Silent Sky,* and *Marjorie Prime*. Madison audiences may also be familiar with him from his work with Theatre LILA on *Suitcase Dreams, The Bed, Trash,* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Michael spent several seasons as an actor at American Players Theatre in Spring Green, where he is currently on the year-round staff as part of the maintenance team. Michael's regional work includes shows at the Goodman Theater, Court Theatre, Madison Rep, Northlight Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Colorado Shakespeare. He received his MFA from Brandies University and lives in Spring Green, where he also volunteered for many years as an EMT and firefighter. Thank you for supporting the arts! And a special thanks to his amazing, gorgeous and ghost-writing wife, Carey.

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UNDERSTUDY BIOGRAPHIES

Casem AbuLughod (US/Sergeant Rough) See production artist bio.

Stuart Jameson (U/S Mr. Manningham) is grateful to be making his second appearance as part of the Forward team, having first understudied for last season's *Ironbound*. He trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now Royal Conservatoire) in Glasgow, Scotland, graduating with a BA (Acting) in 2002. Aside from acting, Stuart has worked as a children's drama teacher and director around the world, and will direct his first full-scale adult production next March with *And Then There Were None* for Sun Prairie Civic Theatre. Previous acting credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Lysander) for Collusion Theatre, Scotland; *Macbeth* (Malcolm) for Glasgow Rep; and, more recently, *Eurydice* (Nasty Interesting Man/Child) for Madison Theater Guild. A dedicated Halloweenie, Stuart hopes you enjoy this spooky yet profoundly important work.



Molly Kempfer (US/ Mrs. Manningham, U/S Nancy) is thrilled to be coming back to her hometown to work with Forward Theater Company on a classic like *Gaslight*. Some of her favorite roles include Artemis in *Finder and the North Star* (Children's Theater of Madison); Little Red in *Into the Woods* (Forte Theatre Company); and Mina in *12 Ophelias* (Strawdog Theatre Company). When she's not professionally playing pretend, you can find her baking bread or working on her next crochet project. Her heartfelt thanks goes out to her family and friends for their support. Love you, Dad! Follow along with all her adventures - @ molly_kempfer



Carrie Sweet (US/ Elizabeth) is thrilled to once again be working with the incomparable team that is Forward Theater. She was most recently seen in their last Monologue Festival, *Guilty Pleasures.* This one is for her little Eliza bean.

PRODUCTION ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Casem AbuLughod (Assistant Director) (www.rhymeswithawesome.com) is a Madison based performer and human. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin - Madison, he holds a Master of Arts in Applied Theatre from the City University of New York as well. A proud member of Forward's Advisory Company, he performs and teaches improv with MBI, an actor and teaching artist with Whoopensocker, and has been lucky enough to perform with Madison area theater companies. Forward fans may remember him as Ted in *Murder Girl,* The Legionnaire/Danny in *What the Constitution Means to Me,* and Egor in *Russian Troll Farm*. He would like you (yes, you reading this right now) to know that you are awesome. All of his love to his LifeBoo and his mini me who keeps getting less mini.

Karen Brown-Larimore (Costume Designer) is excited to be designing for Forward Theater again. Her previous work with Forward Theater includes costume design for *Primary Trust, King James*, *The Garbologists,* and *The Wanderers*. Her costumes have also graced the stages of Northern Sky Theater, Capital City Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Madison Opera, Madison

Ballet, Madison Savoyards, Opera for the Young, Skylight Music Theatre, Madison Rep, and Children's Theater of Madison. Her recent designs include *The Thing with Feathers* and *Something in the Water* for Northern Sky Theater, *The Fisherman's Daughters* for The Milwaukee Rep, and *The Everlasting Faint* for Madison Opera. Her upcoming designs include *Postcards from Morocco* for Madison Opera. She is a proud member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees in Madison (IATSE 251). You may also find her design work in your own home, as she designed the original clothes for the Molly, Samantha, and Kirsten dolls for the American Girl Doll Collection.

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 Theatre, Next Act Theatre, 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.

Whitney Derendinger (Fight Choreographer) is an actor, teacher, and stage combat instructor with over 25 years of professional experience in theatre. He has worked with CTM, Forward Theater, Repertory Theatre of America, St. Louis Shakespeare, and American Players Theatre, and has held certifications in unarmed combat, single rapier, rapier & dagger, quarterstaff, knife, and theatrical firearms safety. Favorite past roles include Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Caleb in *The Whipping Man*, and the entire cast of *Pounding Nails in the Floor with my Forehead*. All my love to Deb and Eden!

Steven Dietz (Playwright) For the '26-'27 season, playwright was once again named one of the "20 Most Produced Playwrights in America" by American Theatre Magazine. Dietz is the Edgar® Award-winning author of multiple thrillers for the stage, including *Gaslight* (from Patrick Hamilton), *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* (from Arthur Conan Doyle), *Yankee Tavern*, *On Clover Road*, *How a Boy Falls*, *Mirror Lake* and the recently premiered *Vineland Place*. Dietz was awarded the Steinberg New Play Citation for *Bloomsday*, the PEN USA-West Award in Drama for *Lonely Planet*, and the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award for both *Fiction* and *Still Life with Iris*. Previously a professor at UT/Austin, Dietz continues to teach masterclasses in playwriting, directing, story-making and collaboration across the U.S. His forthcoming book is entitled *The Living Play: Actionable Strategies for the Stage*. Dietz and his wife, playwright Allison Gregory, divide their time between Austin and Seattle.

Caroline Dischell (Assistant Scenic Designer) is thrilled to be working with Forward Theater for the first time. Recent scenic designs include *It's a Wonderful Life,* Milwaukee Rep; *Next to Normal, Men on Boats, Hadestown Jr,* Waukesha Civic Theatre; *Golden Girls: A Holiday Special,* Purse String Productions; an English Language and US premiere of *Yellow Inn*, Illinois State University; and an immersive production of *La Cage Aux Folles,* Outskirts Theatre Co. You'll see her design work again this season at Falls Patio Players' *A Christmas Carol* and Next Act's *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen*. When not designing sets she can be found painting them at Milwaukee Rep. She holds an MFA in scenic design from Illinois State University and a

BA in drama from UNC-Asheville. Website: carolinedischelldesign.com

Abbi Hess (Stage Manager) is grateful to be back for a seventh 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*, *Imbroglio*, *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!

Jolie Sarajian (Props Director) is excited for their third season with Forward Theater Company. Their other properties credits include Props Director with Fireside Dinner Theatre and Madison Opera. 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 of Wisconsin-Madison Theatre.

Lisa Schlenker (Scenic Designer) is delighted to join the Forward family once again for this timely re-telling of the *Gaslight* story. Ms. Schlenker is a scenic designer rooted in Wisconsin theatre for nearly four decades. She holds a BA in Music and Theatre from Augustana College and an MFA in Theatre Technology from UW–Madison. A proud member of USA Local 829 IATSE, the Production Managers Forum, and the Society of Prop Managers, Lisa is co-author with Sandra Strawn of *The Properties Director's Tool Kit*. Her scene design and production work has appeared with numerous theatre and opera companies throughout Wisconsin and beyond. Education, mentorship, and arts advocacy remain central to her practice, alongside service to several arts and nonprofit boards. At her home base Northern Sky Theater, Lisa serves as Resident Designer and Production Manager, uniting design, craft, problem-solving, and storytelling. For Lisa, theatre is an art of transformation: ordinary materials become extraordinary objects, empty stages become worlds, and imagination becomes shared memory.

Mackenzie Smith (Assistant Stage Manager) is appreciative and excited to be back for a second season with Forward Theater Company. Select favorite credits include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Great River Shakespeare Festival; *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 everyone for their support!

Noele Stollmack (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 Rosenkavelier, Aida,* and the world premieres of *Harvey Milk, Desert of Roses,* and *Dracula Diary.* Her AIA award winning architectural and public space

PRODUCTION ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

lighting is installed throughout the Midwest. Member: United Scenic Arts Local 829.

Jen Uphoff Gray (Director) is the artistic director of Forward Theater Company – this is the 34th show she has directed for FTC. She also directed the National Tour of Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*, and during twelve years working On- and Off-Broadway she served as Associate Director for *Copenhagen*, *Cabaret*, *The Blue Room*, and *The Life*. Jen is the founder of both World Premiere Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Directors Lab. *With gratitude for the many wonderful people who have served on Forward's Board of Directors and their unflagging support of theater in our community – none of this would be possible without their dedication.*

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.

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. 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) See production artist bio.

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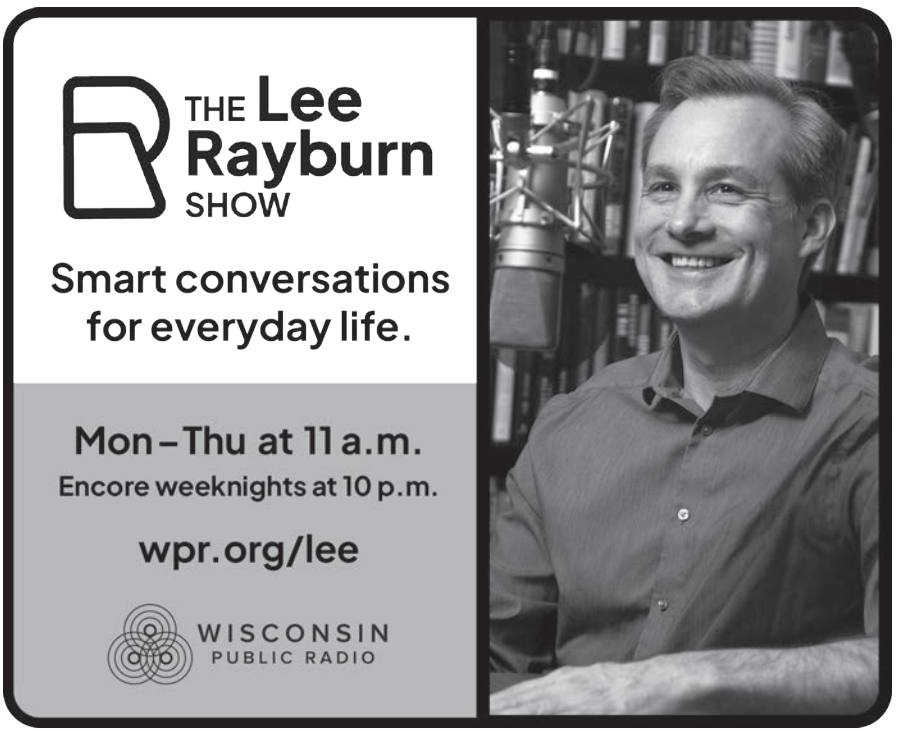
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Whether you have made a first-time gift or you have faithfully supported Forward Theater throughout the years, you are part of our theater community and Forward's history. Thank you.

We are pleased to recognize contributions and event leadership support received between **September 1, 2025 – September 25, 2026.** 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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In memory of Mary Janet McGowan
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In honor of Barbara Zahn
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In honor of the Forward Theater Staff
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In honor of the wonderful people who make Forward Theater
Jill & Pete Lundberg

THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS OF FORWARD THEATER VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteers help Forward Theater by staffing events, helping with mailings and other office support. If you would like more information, please visit our website at Forwardtheater.com or contact Company Manager Celia Klehr at 608-234-5001.

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"We've included FTC in our estate and legacy plan because we want future generations to experience the sense of connection and belonging that we feel being a part of this theater community.

The stories brought to life at Forward Theater Company constantly remind us that beautiful, inspiring, and provocative works of art are being created right here in Wisconsin."

- Adam Erdmann and Shawn Langel, Linda Garrity Legacy Guild members

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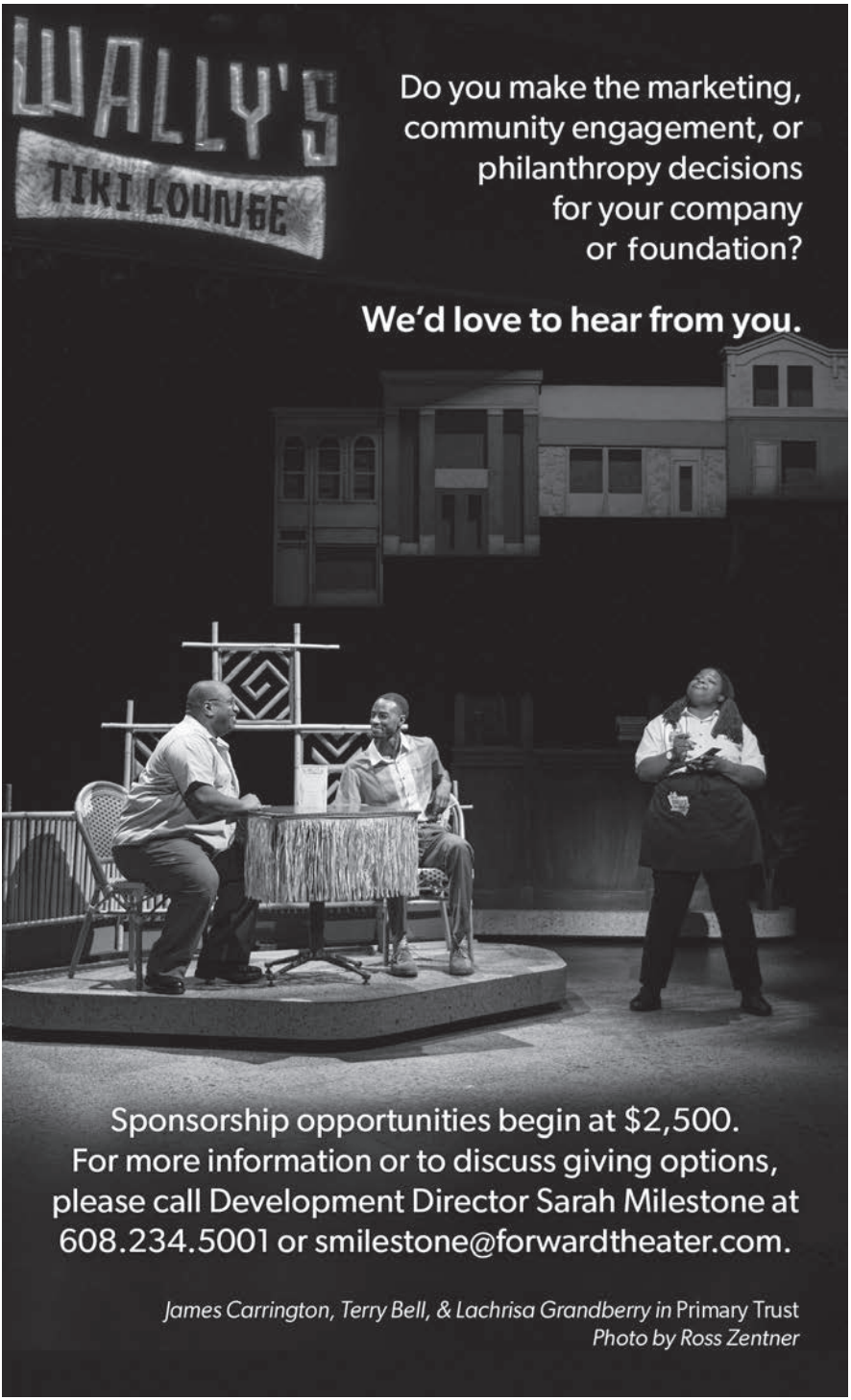
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Please contact Sarah Milestone at 608-234-5001 or smilestone@forwardtheater.com for more information.

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James Carrington, Terry Bell, & Lachrisa Grandberry in Primary Trust
Photo by Ross Zentner

THE GAME SHOW

FEB 28, 2027 | 2-6PM

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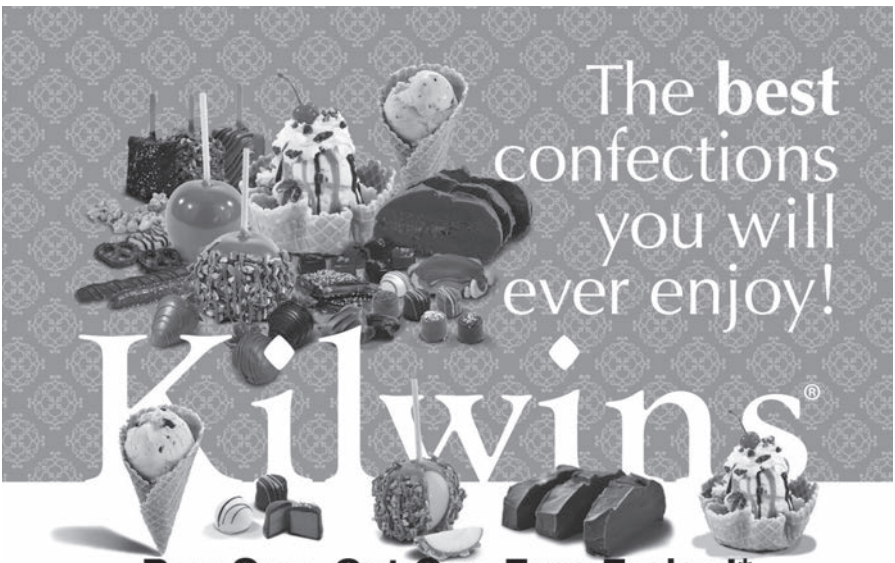
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