FORWARD THEATER COMPANY
presents
SKELETON CREW
By Dominique Morisseau
Directed by Jake Penner
Scenic Designer
Joseph Varga
Lighting Designer
Marisa Abbott
Costume Designer
Monica Kilkus
Composer & Sound Designer
Joe Cerqua**
Props Designer
Pamela Miles
Stage Manager
Sarah Deming-Henes*
Assistant Director
Kennedie Camille King
Choreographer
Aliya Mayers

Skeleton Crew is generously sponsored by:

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.

This project is supported by Dane Arts with additional funds from the Endres Mfg. Company Foundation, The Evjue Foundation, Inc., the charitable arm of The Capital Times, the W. Jerome Frautschi Foundation, and the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation.

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Skeleton Crew is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.
SKELETON CREW was developed at the Lark Play Development Center, New York City and the 2014 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at the Sundance Resort
Winner of the 2014 Sky Cooper New American Play Prize at Marin Theatre Company, Mill Valley, CA, Artistic Director, Jasson Minadakis; Managing Director, Michael Barker

World Premiere
Presented By Atlantic Theater Company
New York City, 2016
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* Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

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Chris Klopatek as Orlando in *As You Like It*, now playing on the Hill Stage.  
Photo by Liz Lauren.

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THE MADISON CONCOURSE HOTEL
AND GOVERNOR’S CLUB
Unemployment finally ran out. I needed a job. Any job.

So, I got what I thought was an easy job. I got a job driving a cab.

And assuming driving a cab was easy was, to this day, the most shameful thing I’ve ever done. Because it wasn’t. Far from it.

I won’t tell you the name of the cab company I drove for, but you’re probably pretty familiar with them already. They’ve been in business since before our skyline looked the way it does today. You may even know their phone number by heart. You may even be getting a free ride to the polls from them in November. You may even remember seeing them show up on a freezing Valentine’s Day a few years ago to do laps around the Square, honking the protest chant of a few dozen thousand people who felt weakening American unions was perhaps not the American thing to do.

Yep. Those guys.

Hanging out in the breakroom behind the garage at 4 in the morning of my first overnight shift, the Styrofoam coffee cup shaking in my hand after what surely would have been my first time getting robbed had a cop not been doing a field sobriety test in front of the Oscar Mayer building where I let off the fare whose scapula bulged in the shape of a gun grip, I noticed something I never assumed I would.


And when the caffeine surged and the timeclock chunked away another minute, I realized that the drivers at this cab company weren’t just punching a clock the way I’d planned to do. These drivers were serious. These drivers were seekers. These drivers exhibited the same singular trait that the artists I live my life around do. These drivers were obsessed. Obsessed with understanding this multi-tentacled beast that is a city’s transportation system. Obsessed with sharpening this craft of ferrying people safely to the next part of their lives that need attention. Obsessed with the art of shaving a minute on the beltline at rush hour.

And so I became obsessed.

I wouldn’t stay long at this job before I got lucky with a long-term contract at a theater near Madison, but with the time I had left, I was on the other drivers with the tenacity of a Times reporter. Where do you loiter if you want an Epic-to-airport fare? What times of day do you go North-around the lake? If someone pulls a gun on you, how do you signal dispatch? Who has the best public restrooms in town?

The real drivers knew I wasn’t long for The Life, but they could tell I was into it (for whatever reason) and so they indulged my stupid questions. But once they’d told me their tricks, they started telling me their secrets. And what I learned was that these drivers took a tremendous amount of pride in what they did. And why wouldn’t they? Cab drivers are an essential part of any city – they are literally responsible for getting its citizens safely where they need to go. Researchers have found that the brains of London city cab drivers have larger than normal hippocampi – a discovery they hope will pave the way for restoring the minds of stroke victims, Alzheimer’s patients, and those suffering from brain trauma.

All of this is to say, we desperately need these highly skilled workers. And workers who make cars. And workers who make homes. And workers who grow food. And workers who tell stories on the stage. They’re all an important part of this America, and providing them the chance at a comfortable living and a bright future would perhaps be the American thing to do.
SEASON 10!!! I admit it – we’re pretty excited about this milestone.

In our first nine seasons we produced 25 mainstage shows, 4 monologue festivals, and 11 staged readings of new plays by Wisconsin authors. We employed 825 professional artists and technicians to mount our productions, over 95% of whom live in Southern Wisconsin. We sold 105,093 tickets, and partnered with dozens of local nonprofits to expand our impact far beyond the walls of the Overture Center.

And now – thanks to YOUR support and enthusiasm – we’ve expanded our season! Dominique Morisseau’s brilliant Skeleton Crew kicks this year off in grand FTC fashion with an engaging and insightful script, creative design, and a cast of outstanding professional actors, both new and familiar. All these elements come together under the leadership of director Jake Penner to create a theater experience I am confident will linger with you for a long time.

FTC is a company founded to be of, by and for our community. And I think we have succeeded in that goal because of the many ways in which YOU engage with us. So please consider this a personal invitation from me to you to keep the dialogue going. Stay after today’s performance for a talkback with the cast. Come to hear one of our free preshow lectures, every Thursday and Sunday an hour before showtime. Send us a message via the social media platform of your choice. And know that you will always find Forward staff, board members and Advisory Company members here to welcome you in the Playhouse lobby and hear YOUR thoughts on how we can better serve the greater Madison area.

At the end of every performance, you applaud our performers. When you do, please know that we applaud YOU for making all of this possible.
THANK YOU AUDIENCE!

This year, Forward Theater Company is beginning its 10th Season and celebrating its 10th Anniversary — all because of YOU. Subscribers have renewed at a rate approaching 90% — a level almost unheard of among our peers. Single ticket sales have always been reliably brisk. And our audience members have increased their donations significantly year over year, last year contributing more than $325,500 to your theater.

In Forward Theater’s nine previous seasons, your support has allowed your theater to hire 825 artists, almost all of whom are Wisconsin residents, and to pay them a living wage. Your support has allowed your theater to establish partnerships with 32 local non-profits and to provide 45 free performances at Dane County libraries as part of its community outreach efforts. And the ART! Your support has allowed your theater to produce two mainstage world premiers, eight mainstage regional premiers, 20 mainstage Wisconsin premiers, 11 readings of full-length new plays by Wisconsin authors, and 49 original monologues.

So, what’s next?

Because of you, the AUDIENCE, your theater has added a fourth main stage production to the lineup for its 10th Season: Skeleton Crew, Fun Home, Heisenberg, and Life Sucks. Because of you, your theater will have one extra opportunity each year to pay its actors, technicians and other theater professionals a living wage. Because of you, your theater will have one extra opportunity each year to reach out with our non-profit partners to the community on important issues. Because of you, your theater will have one extra opportunity each year to express its art, to engage its audience, and for all of us to experience together something more about the human condition.

How can your theater ever thank you enough?

FROM THE ADVISORY COMPANY... JIM BUSKE

Welcome to our TENTH SEASON! This is going to be a sensational year for Forward Theater (FTC) and, hopefully, for everyone in our audiences. Besides the ten-year milestone, we are expanding our season to four full productions and producing our very first musical.

I think it’s appropriate, as we hit the decade mark, to take a few moments to thank the people who have helped make FTC a success. As most of you already know, FTC started with a group of ten theater professionals sitting around a table planning and dreaming about starting a theater. One of the first things we realized is that we were going to need a whole lot of help.

And so, thanks to:

• All of the wonderful folks who have served on the FTC Board of Directors. Their hard work and tireless support of FTC’s artistic vision has been amazing. With their strong direction and guidance, FTC has been “in the black” financially every year.

• All of the folks who make up the FTC staff. They are hardworking, selfless and willing to work many hours to make FTC run smoothly.

• All of the theatrical artists who have worked with FTC. Hundreds of gifted theater professionals have worked with us over the past decade. They have all left their mark, in some way, on FTC.

• All of the donors, sponsors, volunteers and audience members who have given their support and enthusiasm to help make FTC a spectacular dream come true for those ten people who first sat around the table many years ago.

Have a great time watching the shows this year! The members of the Advisory Company will see you in the lobby.
GOING FORWARD – A CONVERSATION

We invite you to consider the topics below and discuss them with your fellow audience members. We also hope you will join the cast at a talkback after each performance, as audience and artists meet to discuss these and any other issues brought to light by today’s show. And please keep the conversation going – on the drive home, at work, with friends, or by sharing your thoughts on our Facebook page.

Let’s start the conversation:

• In 2017, the Oscar Mayer plant in Madison closed its final production line after a two-year process that saw the elimination or relocation of over 1,600 jobs. Do you know anyone who worked there? How was our community affected by the plant closing? Do you feel that manufacturing jobs are important to the economy of the Madison area? To the economy of Wisconsin? Of the USA? How does their loss affect our city/state/country?

• The characters in Skeleton Crew each have very different options if the plant closes and their jobs are eliminated. As you watch the play, try to put yourself in each of their shoes. What would be the thing you would want to protect: your family, your career, your personal happiness or the rule and order of authority? How do you choose when your goals may be in conflict with people who are important to you?

To learn even more about the play, playwright, and Forward Theater’s production, please join us at our pre-show talks, one hour before every Thursday evening and Sunday afternoon performance, at the Playhouse Rotunda stage. Pre-show talks are free, and open to the public.
Electricity is more than a convenience; it’s essential to the way we live our lives. When you flip the switch, boot up a laptop or just kick back and watch a movie, you depend on safe, reliable electricity.

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SKELETON CREW
By Dominique Morisseau

CAST

Faye.................................................................................................................................................. Marti Gobel*
Dez ........................................................................................................................................ Sherrick Robinson
Shanita ................................................................................................................................... Candace Thomas
Reggie...................................................................................................................................... DiMonte Henning*

The play will be performed with a 15 minute intermission.

Please Note: The audience is asked to silence cell phones and refrain from using electronic devices in any way during the performance. The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

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

Marti Gobel (Faye) is a Wisconsin local artist and a proud member of AEA and SAG/AFTRA. She once more returns to Forward Theater with an open heart and the excitement that only comes with working at a company who offer love and respect to its artists. Ms. Gobel has performed at Forward Theater in In the Next Room, Mr. Burns and several small, powerful projects outside of their season proper. Most recently, she directed Ike Holter’s Exit Strategy. Marti looks ahead to a wonderful season directing for Renaissance Theaterworks, Next Act Theatre, First Stage and various independent projects. A firm believer in the Performance Arts as a means to deepen education in our schools, Ms. Gobel continues to work as Teaching Artist all over Wisconsin.

DiMonte Henning (Reggie) is excited to return to Forward Theater for Skeleton Crew! A native of Milwaukee, DiMonte serves as Producing Artistic Director of the theatre-arts organization, Lights! Camera! Soul! He was most recently seen in Milwaukee Repertory Theatre’s production of Our Town as George Gibbs. His other credits include: The Wiz (First Stage); Deathtrap (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre); Dreamgirls (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); Much Ado About Nothing (Optimist Theatre); A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Theatre Lila and Children’s Theater of Madison); August Wilson’s Jitney (Andre Lee Ellis & Co.); Learning To Stay (Forward Theater Company); Burying The Bones (InTandem Theatre); and Hair (Skylight Music Theatre). He will also be appearing in a Guest Star role in an upcoming episode of NBC’s Chicago PD this Fall. Other TV credits include: UBER, Chicago P.D. Cellcom, and Harley-Davidson. All the Love to his family and friends.

Sherrick Robinson (Dez) is thrilled to be performing for Forward Theater! A native of Milwaukee, he was last seen as the Cat In the Hat in Children’s Theater of Madison’s Seussical The Musical! Other recent performances include Donkey in Shrek The Musical (Children’s Theater of Madison); Wrestler/Referee in Luchadora! (First Stage); and Sam in Holes (First Stage). When not on stage, he helps run daring missions at EscapeMKE in Milwaukee. He wishes to thank his friends and family for their support. Special thanks to his darling wife Stephanie. www.SherrickRobinson.com

Candace Thomas (Shanita) is honored to be making her Forward Theater debut. Favorite stage credits: The Wiz (First Stage); Much Ado About Nothing (Optimist Theater); Man of LaMancha, A Christmas Carol (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); The Tempest, The Threepenny Opera (Theatre South Carolina); Spring Awakening (Theater Horizon); and Little Shop of Horrors (Bristol Riverside Theater; Barrymore Award nomination for best supporting actress in a musical, 2014). Television credits: Chicago Fire (NBC), Easy (Netflix), and American Greed (CNBC). Candace holds an MFA in Acting from the University of South Carolina.
TECHNICAL ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Marisa Abbott (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be part of the team on Skeleton Crew. Marisa is based out of Milwaukee and works as a freelance Lighting Designer, Electrician, and Scenic Artist. Recent designs include Sex With Strangers (Renaissance Theaterworks); Lost Girl (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre's PTI Program); Momentum (Milwaukee Ballet II); The Skin of Our Teeth and Animal Farm (First Stage); Artifacts (Wildspace Dance); and Victory For Victoria (Milwaukee Opera Theatre). Marisa has also helped paint scenery for Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, and Kohl’s Wild Theatre. http://marisaabbott.wixsite.com/marisaabbottdesign.

Joe Cerqua (Composer/Sound Designer) is a freelance composer, producer, vocalist and sound designer. He is thrilled to be working with Forward Theater again where he has previously composed and designed sound for I and You, Exit Strategy, Marjorie Prime, Learning to Stay, Outside Mullingar, 4000 Miles, Mr. Burns, The Flick, Silent Sky, Vanya and Sonya, ..., The Other Place, From Up Here, Or, Red, Sons of the Prophet, Good People, 44 Plays for 44 Presidents, Love Stories, In the Next Room, ..., Going to St. Ives, Why Torture is Wrong, ..., and The Farnsworth Invention. He has composed music and/or designed sound for over 250 productions in Chicago, nationally, and internationally. Recent projects include original music and sound design for The Foreigner and The Glass Menagerie, Outside Mullingar at the Clarence Brown Theater; The City of Conversation at Northlight; Dear Elizabeth at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre; Good People and Of Mice and Men at Milwaukee Rep; Tom Jones at Actors Theatre of Louisville; The Unexpected Man, Seascape, Private Lives, The Ideal Husband and The African Company Presents Richard the III at American Players Theatre; American Buffalo at Deaf West in LA; Rainmaker at American Blues; Wedding Band, The School of Lies, and The Time of Our Lives at the Artistic Home; and El Nogalar at the Goodman Theatre. 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 Director of Production for the Music Department at Columbia College Chicago. Future projects include concerts with Cerqua Rivera, and original music and sound design for Alabama Story at the Clarence Brown Theater, One House Over at Milwaukee Rep, Edward Tulane at First Stage, and Rhinoceros at the Asolo.

Sarah Deming-Henes (Stage Manager) After 9 seasons of being an enthusiastic fan of Forward Theater Co.'s work, Sarah is simply delighted to join in all the fun! Since 2001 she has proudly worked 14 seasons at American Players Theatre, where her very first professional (AEA) stage management contract was Thornton Wilder's The Matchmaker - starring Sarah Day. When not at APT, she has enjoyed working at many Milwaukee theater companies, including First Stage, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and, most recently and most often, The Milwaukee Repertory Theater - where she has SMed at least 1 production a season since 2011. Many thanks to her family and friends for unfailing kindnesses!

Ashton LaReau (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to be back at Forward Theater Company this season. He has previously Assistant Stage Managed at American Players Theatre and is a proud graduate of Edgewood College.

Pamela Miles (Props Designer) Pam is delighted to return to Forward for her fifth season. She is so proud to be a part of this generous and courageous company. Pam lives in Spring Green, WI where she has worked at American Players Theatre for ten summer seasons as the Assistant Charge Artist, as well as completed two Fall shows as the Scenic Charge Artist. Other companies she has painted for include: Arizona Broadway Theatre, Children's Theater of Madison, Madison Ballet (Dracula) and the Summit Credit
Union Inspiration Branch project. She has performed the role of Properties Designer with the Black Theatre Troupe in Phoenix, AZ and American Players Theatre for *Mary’s Wedding*.

**Monica Kilkus** (Costume Designer) Monica’s previous costume designs for Forward Theater include *Exit Strategy*, *4000 Miles*, *44 Plays for 44 Presidents*, *Sons of the Prophet* and *The Other Place*. She is also a member of FTC’s Advisory Company. Elsewhere in Madison, she has designed for Children’s Theater of Madison, Four Seasons Theater, Theatre LILA and she has created costumes for Madison Opera and Madison Ballet. Prior to settling here, she was a Costume Production Supervisor for the Los Angeles Opera, working on over twenty productions including three world premieres.

**Kennedie Camille King** (Assistant Director) is a multidisciplinary artist, director, and curator whose work seeks to explore and critique intersectional narratives about queer dark skin Black Women. She is currently a junior at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, double majoring in Communication Arts and Afro-American Studies, where she is a part of the First Wave Hip Hop Urban Arts Scholarship Program. Through the First Wave community she has been able to continue her art as a poet and performer. Her interdisciplinary approach to storytelling allows for dynamic interplay between the narrative and the visual.

**Aliya Mayers** (Choreographer) Aliya Mayers, raised in Pleasantville, NY, is currently pursuing a BFA in Dance as well as a certificate in Pilates at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She has performed works by faculty members Li Chiao-Ping, Liz Sexe, Marlene Skog, Christopher Walker and Jin-Wen Yu, as well as works by guest artists Heidi Latsky, Rosalind Newman and Scott Ewen. This past summer, Aliya attended Axis Connect, a commercial dance intensive in Los Angeles and New York. Aliya has apprenticed with Heidi Latsky Dance in New York City where she performed in Latsky’s work, *On Display*, at Lincoln Center and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Aliya has also performed in the Undergraduate Theater Association’s production of *Songs for a New World* as their dance captain and continues to train in jazz and musical theater at Steps on Broadway in New York City.

**Dominique Morisseau** (Playwright) is the author of The Detroit Project (A 3-Play Cycle) which includes the following plays: Skeleton Crew (Atlantic Theater Company); Paradise Blue (Signature Theatre); and Detroit ’67 (Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem and NBT). Additional plays include: Pipeline (Lincoln Center Theatre); Sunset Baby (LAByrinth Theatre); Blood at the Root (National Black Theatre); and Follow Me To Nellie’s (Premiere Stages). She is also the book writer on the new musical Ain’t Too Proud – The Life and Times of the Temptations (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Dominique is an alumna of The Public Theater Emerging Writer’s Group, Women’s Project Lab, and Lark Playwrights Workshop and has developed work at Sundance Lab, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Eugene O’Neil Playwrights Conference. Her work has been commissioned by Steppenwolf Theater, Women's Project, South Coast Rep, People’s Light and Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Penumbra Theatre. She most recently served as Co-Producer on the Showtime series “Shameless”. Awards include: Spirit of Detroit Award, PoNY Fellowship, Sky-Cooper Prize, TEER Trailblazer Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, Audelec Awards, NBFT August Wilson Playwriting Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama, OBIE Award, Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellowship, and being named one of Variety’s Women of Impact for 2017-18.

**Jake Penner** (Director) is a director and Advisory Company member at Forward Theater. Recent credits include *Blood Knot* (American Players Theatre); *Marjorie Prime*, *Exit Strategy*, *I and You*, *Learning to Stay*,
Forward Theater Company

4000 Miles, Someone’s Gotta Do It (Forward Theater Company); No Wake (Wisconsin Wrights New Play Festival); The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs (Left of Left Center); Line Breaks Festival (First Wave UW). Thank you to Jen Uphoff Gray and the entire FTC family for the chance to tell this story, and to Jenna for your unending support. For Patty and for David.

Joseph Varga (Scenic Designer) has been designing professionally at theatres all over the country for four decades, from productions at Milwaukee Rep to Berkshire Theatre Festival to the Shakespeare festivals of Alabama, Colorado, and Georgia. Based in Madison, Wisconsin, for Forward Theater he’s designed: Sons of the Prophet, From Up Here, 4000 Miles; Madison Opera: Sweeney Todd; Fresco Opera: Handel’s Rinaldo; Madison Rep: The Price, Talley’s Folly, Home, Private Collection, The Diary of Ann Frank, Bus Stop; Children’s Theater of Madison: The Velveteen Rabbit; University Theatre: The Beaux’ Stratagem; University Opera: La Bohème [2018] and for Four Seasons Theatre: Kiss Me Kate!, 1776. His design for Madison Ballet’s The Nutcracker appears annually at Overture Hall. A UW-Madison professor emeritus from the Department of Theatre and Drama, his portfolio of designs is on view at www.joevarga.com.

Kevin Zimmer (Technical Director) has worked with Forward Theater since the 2009-2010 season, first as master carpenter and as Technical Director for the past two years. In addition he worked as a Master Carpenter for Madison Rep, Master Carpenter for CTM, and Shop Foreman and Carpenter for American Players Theatre. Additional credits include professional work in the theatre community in St. Louis and as a Welder at the St. Louis City Museum.

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MADISON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
JOHN DEMAIN | MUSIC DIRECTOR

AX IS BACK!

John DeMain, Conductor
Emanuel Ax, Piano

Higdon: Fanfare Ritmico
Prokofiev: Romeo and Juliet Suite
Brahms: Concerto No. 2, Emanuel Ax, Piano

SEASON PREMIERE
FRI, SEPT. 28
7:30 PM
SAT, SEPT. 29
8:00 PM
SUN, SEPT. 30
2:30 PM

“Mr. Ax has always been a superb Brahmsian...”
—The New York Times

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PHOTO: LISA-MARIE MAZZUCCO

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PHOTO: LISA-MARIE MAZZUCCO
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The inimitable Colleen Burns – one of our original collaborators – is no longer with us. A professional actress for more than 30 years, Colleen was instrumental in the creation of Forward Theater Company in 2009. Her enormous talent, her professionalism, her laughter, and her dedication to her art will be the legacy that lives on in all our hearts. Proceeds from this fund underwrite the salary for one actress per season as a tribute to Colleen, who brought so much joy to Madison audiences.

This season, Marti Gobel (Skeleton Crew), is the fund’s honoree. Marti has worked with Forward Theater since 2010 as an actress and director. She acted in In the Next Room or the vibrator play, Mr. Burns, a post-electric play, and most recently directed last season’s Exit Strategy.

To make your own contribution to continue to celebrate Colleen’s legacy, please contact Julia Nicholas at 608-234-5001 or jnicholas@forwardtheater.com or make an online donation and note “Colleen Burns Memorial Fund” in the comment section.
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These generous donors have made commitments of $10,000 or more to support our growth in 2018–2019, FTC’s 10th Anniversary Season.

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- Mryna Williamson
- Teddy Zehner

Forward Theater Company is a member of the Madison Arts Production Center (MAPC), which provides high quality, functional, affordable production space, equipment, and theatrical inventory for Madison area artists and arts organizations. For information on rentals and membership options go to ctmtheater.org or contact Mike Lawler at 255-2080.