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Call For Submissions: Getting Ready for the 2020 Wisconsin Wrights New Play Development Project

By Ryan Albrechtson

“As a playwright, the hardest thing to do is to actually get your plays in front of people, in front of the right people,” says Karen Moeller, Artistic Associate at Forward Theater. “You need an opportunity to get in front of people who can actually get your play up on a stage. So, losing this program would have been a really sad thing.”

Moeller’s referring to Wisconsin Wrights, an endeavour for playwrights to communicate with professional directors, dramaturgs, and actors to develop their plays, culminating in public readings. The program, piloted in 2006, was originally a partnership between UW-Madison Division of Continuing Studies in Theatre, the UW-Madison University Theatre, and Madison Repertory Theatre. As it grew, they began to collaborate with some other theatre groups - including Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and Forward Theater.

“Eventually, funding stopped being available for the program on the UW side of things,” shares Moeller. “Sarah Marty, who was working at the time with Forward, was a key part of Wisconsin Wrights. She had the brilliant idea of Forward taking over stewardship of the program.”

Forward accepted stewardship of the program in 2014 and the rest is history. The 2020 Wisconsin Wrights New Play Development Project, which will be the third installment spearheaded by Forward Theater, begins accepting submissions on August 31st, 2019.

“The program is only open to Wisconsin residents. We feel very strongly about that,” says Moeller. “We have so many great playwrights in Wisconsin, and this is a real opportunity for them to get more recognition, more exposure, and hopefully give them a leg up in getting an actual production.”

Submissions are accepted until October 31st, 2019. At that time, each submission is anonymously reviewed by three separate readers. These readers are solicited from all around the state. Many of them are from theatre departments at UW schools and private universities, as well as artists,
directors, designers, and playwrights from different areas of the state. After the initial round of judging, a final list is made and the scripts are seen by three new readers, until the final scripts have been selected. These playwrights are then given the opportunity to workshop their plays with a professional cast and production, culminating in a public staged reading of their piece.

“The experience was quite pleasant,” recalls Eric Appleton, one of the winners selected in 2017 for his play *Hamm in Love and War*. “The most important part of the process for me was to hear how it worked with an audience; you can laugh at your own jokes all you want in the security of your own home, but if other people don’t laugh you’ve still got a lot of work to do.”

“Wisconsin Wrights was essential to the development of my play,” agrees Erica Berman, who wrote another 2017 winning piece, *No Wake*. “A playwright writes in a vacuum to a certain extent. Wisconsin Wrights affords playwrights the opportunity to work with theater professionals collaboratively and present their play to an audience at a staged reading. Every choice that the wonderful artists at Forward Theater made truly reflected the mission of the program, which is to put the development of the play at the center.”

Moeller’s advice for submitting your work?

“Have a group of friends over! Give them snacks, some wine, and read through the script together. It’s so helpful to hear your words out loud before submitting.”

Submissions are open from August 31st - October 31st, 2019. Details on how to submit your script can be found at forwardtheater.com

*No Wake* by Erica Berman; Pictured: Jim Buske, Jordan Alexandra Watson
All photos by Ross Zentner
“You ain’t seen nothing yet. It’s gonna be a night we’ll never forget.” Lyrics sung by the cast of Carrie, The Musical as they get ready for the prom. And, for the young artists involved in Capital City Theatre’s Conservatory program, these words certainly ring true.

Capital City Theatre Conservatory is an accomplished musical theatre training program, located right in the heart of the Midwest. Their top-level instruction bridges the gap between youth and adult skill sets, and primes those individuals who are looking to take the next step and build a professional musical theatre career.

“We’ve always had an education component to CCT since the beginning in 2014,” says Gail Becker, Director of Education for the organization. “It’s been a cornerstone of our company and paramount to our mission.”

As the company has grown since it’s beginnings, so have their impressive educational offerings. “We started with Find Your Light, our musical theatre intensive, and we had only one course,” says Becker. “Then it grew to two, then three, then we added a longer session for the Advanced and included more guest artists, workshops and a ballet intensive... We now have had over 400 students participate in our programs.”

This year, CCTC has taken another step in the development of the program, a fully staged production. This production, led by a professional production and design team, featured alumni from the company’s Find Your Light program. The inaugural conservatory production selected was Carrie, The Musical.

“Carrie has had a great following since it’s first foray onto the stage back in the 80’s. It’s got teenage angst multiplied by ten,” shares Becker. “It has great leading characters, an important message about kindness and the consequences of bullying, and also it’s a great Stephen King story. It fit our mission of grooming the next generation of musical theatre performers giving dramatic themes and meaty roles for these younger performers to dive into.”

“Capital City Theatre gives you all of the tools that you need to be successful in this industry,” says Tucker Stampen, an alumnus
of the Find Your Light program. “If you are part of the Find Your Light program, you cover such an encompassing ground, in such a short period of time... they are doing amazing things.”

The success of Carrie, The Musical is just the beginning for the continued growth of this program. “FYL has groomed nine seasons of alumni. Many are adults now and some were even adults when they took the course,” says Becker. “What I hope to happen with the Conservatory Production specifically, is that every year many alumni come back wanting to participate. We hope to not only include those who might still be in high school or college, but also the now adults who want to become mentors for these younger performers.”

More information about CCTC and their educational opportunities can be found at capitalcitytheatre.org

Laetitia Hollard as Carrie. Photo Credit: Kat Steinnon
It’s July 30, 2019 and its opening night for the Broadway hit, ANASTASIA at Overture Center for the Arts. The packed lobby looks like an ordinary Madison crowd -- selfies in front of the ANASTASIA press backdrop, concession lines filled with people buying snacks, drinks and merchandise, and a busy box office selling the last few seats available.

Yes, the patrons who attended ANASTASIA’s debut seemed like ordinary Madison theater goers except they were not just from Madison. They were from all over Wisconsin as well as from Illinois, Minnesota and Iowa.

According to data accumulated by Overture Center, overall attendance is becoming more diverse and is growing, establishing the arts organization as a regional institution. Box office reports show a 15% increase in total attendance from the 2016-17 to 2017-18 and of the 598,198 total draw last season, 40,090 of the ticket buyers lived outside of Overture’s 50-miles radius providing tremendous benefits to the Madison business community. In fact, on average, 7.6% of traveling ticket buyers stay in a hotel and are likely to spend $1,000 or more during their stay.

It’s not just the increase in patronage that’s helping Overture expand. Free and low-cost community programs are also on the rise. Now in its 10th year, The Jerry Awards, a high school music awards program is a statewide phenomenon hosting more than 9,500 students from across 30 counties. Overture’s Rising Stars, a program aimed to discover, develop and celebrate the wealth of talent in the region has grown to add audition sites in Oshkosh, Wausau and La Crosse.

Looking ahead to the 2019-20 schedule, Overture officials expect the arrow to keep pointing North. The Broadway and Overture Presents season features close to 100 performances including a record breaking 13 weeks of Broadway and more community programs are in the works.
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FORWARD THEATER COMPANY presents

MARY JANE
by Amy Herzog

Directed by Mary MacDonald Kerr

Scenic Designer Lisa Schlenker**
Lighting Designer Noele Stollmack**
Costume Designer Kim Instenes
Composer & Sound Designer Joe Cerqua**
Props Master Pamela Miles
Stage Manager Sarah Deming-Henes*

Mary Jane 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.

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** Member of United Scenic Artists Local 829

MARY JANE was originally produced in New York by New York Theatre Workshop, Jim Nicola, Artistic Director, Jeremy Blocker, Managing Director, September 25, 2017.

MARY JANE was commissioned by Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven, Connecticut, James Bundy, Artistic Director, Victoria Nolan, Managing Director, and received its first public performance on April 28, 2017.
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** Forward Theater is proud to work with the members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)
MARY JANE
Opening October 26th

On the Hill
William Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night
Oliver Goldsmith’s She Stoops to Conquer
William Shakespeare’s Macbeth
August Wilson’s Fences
Lauren Gunderson’s The Book of Will

In the Touchstone
George Bernard Shaw’s The Man of Destiny
Tennessee Williams’ A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur
Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House

Opening October 26th
Lucas Hnath’s A Doll’s House, Part 2

Bryant Louis Bentley, Gavin Lawrence, David Alan Anderson, Karen Aldridge and Jamal James, August Wilson’s Fences. Photo by Liz Lauren.

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MARY JANE 3
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Dear friends, welcome to Forward Theater’s 11th season (and second decade!). We are excited to be able to share these extraordinary stories with you. You will see casts of amazing local artists performing onstage, supported by the efforts of so many more local artisans behind the scenes.

We hope these stories will make you laugh, will make you cry, will make you think, and will send you back out onto Madison’s streets ready to engage with the world and with your own lives in new and profound ways.

We begin with Amy Herzog’s beautiful Mary Jane, which entranced us from our first reading of the script. I am so moved by Mary Jane’s way of looking at her life. In the hands of our beloved Clare Arena Haden, I know you will be as captivated by this character as I am. And what a cast we have assembled around her! It’s a thrill to welcome Caron, Nadja, Samara and Tosha to our mainstage for the first time. Under the wise guidance of their director Mary MacDonald Kerr, these five women are about to take you on an emotional journey that I suspect will stay with you for a long time.

In 2017, approx. 450,000 babies were born prematurely in the U.S. Thirty-five percent of those babies die soon after birth, and those that survive face a 20-50 percent morbidity rate. Technological advances in the last twenty years have improved the chances for survival. Along with survival, however, come big ethical questions about whether a life with an eminent chance of severe permanent handicaps is worth saving.

The play Mary Jane gives us a glimpse into the enormous task of parenting a severely disabled baby, and opens up discussions about love, loyalty, optimism, family, tenacity and faith.

Mary Jane herself shows us, yet again, what the human spirit is capable of enduring. The journey through her sons difficult life is unexpected and arduous, yet somehow an invaluable gift.

Midway through Amy Herzog’s Mary Jane, the beleaguered title character takes a mental break from caring for her seriously ill child to chat with a young woman who’s now in college. “I used to get high and hike in the mountains,” Mary Jane wistfully says, remembering her own carefree college days. “It was gorgeous... seems like a different life.”

Although Mary Jane unfolds in New York City, it can’t get away from nature’s wonders. The opening scene is titled “I’d be better off dancing in a forest.” The titles of the next two scenes feature, respectively, the sun and a ladybug – before concluding with an exhausted Mary Jane imagining that she’s “stargazing” as she stares at the ceiling above her pullout couch.

As this image suggests, Mary Jane’s open-ended days belong to an expansive past; Mary Jane now exists in a much more constricted present. By the time we catch up with her, she’s a single mom living in a cramped Queens apartment who also spends weeks at a time in an even smaller hospital room.
Mary Jane sleeps there alongside two-year-old Alex, who has cerebral palsy as well as a seizure disorder and lung disease. Her sleep is intermittent and fretful; half an ear is always cocked for changes in the sound and rhythm of the elaborate machines that keep Alex alive, with their beeps signaling a potentially fatal change in Alex’s precarious condition.

Mary Jane’s long-ago plans to become a teacher are now on hold; she’s hanging on by a thread to her job as an administrative assistant, with a boss who’s increasingly impatient at how many days she’s absent while caring for her son.

Mary Jane desperately needs that job because she needs its benefits, in a country where even Obamacare hasn’t made insurance affordable – and where nearly 30 million Americans remain uninsured.

And Mary Jane is in danger of losing her job because the United States is among just a handful of countries in the world that does not provide its citizens with paid parental leave to care for sick and disabled children.

**STANDING ALONE**

Herself the mother of a young child with a rare muscle disease, Herzog knows what she’s talking about when chronicling the numerous bureaucratic obstacles and micro-inequities impeding Mary Jane’s efforts to care for Alex.

But *Mary Jane* isn’t a redo of Michael Moore’s devastating film “Sicko” (2007), which masterfully indicts this country’s shamefully inadequate health care system. Herzog is more interested in how someone like Mary Jane nevertheless remains so resilient, staring down all the hardships in her life with remarkable courage, optimism and grace.

Rather than throwing herself a pity party, Mary Jane worries that those around her are OK; she’s so empathetic that she’ll be gently teased in this play for unconsciously imitating others’ expressions when they talk.

Herzog tells us that Mary Jane “doesn’t, generally, like to indulge in people hating”; she continually excuses the many people – from Alex’s father to the night nurses who sleep on duty – for letting her down. Preternaturally aware of others’ suffering, she becomes a lucid reflector, illuminating those around her even as her own feelings get lost in the shadows.

But as Herzog quietly suggests, Mary Jane also pays a price for standing tall even when she feels small. “I wonder if you have an outlet for expression or if you’re absorbing that all in your body,” her crusty but well-meaning building superintendent tells her in the opening scene.

Or as Hilton Als memorably wrote in his perceptive review of *Mary Jane*, “her extreme capability is also a way of obscuring her own needs.” Mary Jane has trained herself to expect less of others, even as she demands ever more of herself. Attentive to their needs, she often denies her own. Convinced she stands alone, she’s afraid to be vulnerable and let others in. Difficult as her life already is, she therefore risks making it even harder.
SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL

But those others – every one of them a woman – are all around her.

There’s Mary Jane’s building superintendent and a nurse who serves as her ever-reliable wing. A hospital doctor and a music therapist. A shy college student and a Buddhist chaplain. And two more mothers – one an aspiring professional and the other a Hasid who stays home – with similarly sick children.

These eight characters are played by four actors, thereby underscoring the many roles every woman must play – while emphasizing the empathy that allows each of these women to see the world from multiple perspectives.

“The reality of the world of sick kids is that it’s mostly women who take jobs in nursing, social work, special education, and therapy,” Herzog said during a 2017 interview, shortly after this play’s world premiere at Yale Repertory Theatre.

One might imagine each of these women as embodying unrealized selves existing within Mary Jane; it’s no accident that Herzog has referred to her heroine as an “Everywoman” who contains multitudes.

Or, to say the same thing somewhat differently, one might see these eight women as teaching Mary Jane that she is not alone – that there are indeed others in the world who reflect back to her all the many things that she feels and has long tamped down:

Care for others, yes, but also a need to care for herself. Unimaginable and abiding love for her son, but also unacknowledged resentment at the hand she’s been dealt by an inscrutable and seemingly hostile universe. Appreciation for the health care professionals who assist her, but also anger at a healthcare system that continually fails her.

Can all these others teach Mary Jane to see that feeling all she does simply makes her human? And to see her place in the constellation of love lighting up the world around her – illuminating the dark with a pattern that helps us make meaning in the void?

Brought to life for us by this talented cast of actors, might this constellation of voices teach us to see past the seeming chasms that separate us from each other, focusing instead on how much we share and all the ways we’re joined?

As one of this play’s most memorable characters asks Mary Jane – and, implicitly, every one of us – “can you still see,” despite all the ways life’s suffering can blind us to the world’s infinite wonder?

Such questions are reminiscent of the big, existential query that wraps up one of our greatest and most tough-minded plays: Thornton Wilder’s “Our Town.” It’s a question worthy of the great play you’re about to experience.

– Milwaukee, August 17, 2019
FROM THE ADVISORY COMPANY... JIM BUSKE

Hello and welcome to Forward Theater’s 11th season. The first ten years were both amazing and great fun. You can look forward to more of the same in the future. This season will be full of unexpected joys and moments that will touch your heart.

Now that our 10th anniversary season is behind us, it might be nice to take a few minutes and reflect on what was learned during that decade of putting on plays. Here are some things that stand out:

• Our unique model for starting and sustaining a theater seems to be working – over ten seasons we have grown and matured into one of the leading professional theaters in the state. And every season has been “in the black” financially!
• The wonderful Madison audiences are willing to support a theater that produces plays that both entertain and have substance – we’ve taken our audiences many different places over the 10 years and you have been willing to go on the journey with us.
• Theater artists are hardworking, professional, thoughtful, kind and very, very funny – working with hundreds of theater artists over the past decade has proven that putting on plays is good for the human spirit.
• Our supporters are generous – the financial support of our patrons, donors, and audience members has been overwhelming. Thank you!
• Making new friends is so much fun – meeting and getting to know so many of our audience members has been one of the greatest unexpected bonuses of starting a theater.

There are many more things that could be added to this list. Please know that in all we do, our audience and supporters are never taken for granted. Have a great time watching the shows this year! The members of the Advisory Company will see you in the lobby.
the power of community

Working together helps to make our community great. Your community energy company is proud to support Forward Theater Company. Visit mge.com/Foundation.
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 *Mary Jane*, we are introduced to several caregivers, all of them women. Why do you think Herzog made that choice? How does that compare to the makeup of the caregivers you know in the real world?

· We see Mary Jane give assistance to other caregivers, as well as receive assistance herself. Do you know someone who is a caregiver in their personal life? What are the ways in which you’ve been able to help or support her/him? Have you ever offered to give a caregiver respite? And if you’re a caregiver yourself, how do you get respite? What are the ways in which you wish people would help 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.

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MARY JANE
by Amy Herzog

CAST
Mary Jane ....................................................................................................................... Clare Arena Haden*
Ruthie/Tenkei .............................................................................................................. Caron Buinis
Sherry/Dr. Toros ......................................................................................................... Tosha Freeman
Brianne/Chaya ........................................................................................................... Samara Frame*
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The play will be performed without an intermission.

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

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Reinhart is proud to support Forward Theater Company in its mission to advance the arts in our community.

As long-standing partners in Madison’s business success, our attorneys are dedicated to helping clients face important issues, execute sound strategies, and achieve business goals—all while building lasting relationships.
Caron Buinis (Ruthie/Tenke) is thrilled to be making her Forward Theater debut. Her Chicagoland theatrical credits include A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder; A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum; Sweeney Todd; The Wizard of Oz; Cabaret; Oklahoma!; The Music Man; Saturday Night Fever; A Christmas Carol; It’s A Wonderful Life the Musical; King Liz; The Audience; Loving Repeating; The Full Monty; The Language Archive; The Spitfire Grill; and Kiss of the Spider Woman. On-camera credits include Chicago Fire and American Greed. Caron is also an active runner, having completed 24 marathons, and a singer with Acts of Kindness Cabaret, a performance group that donates cabaret shows to help charitable organizations in their fund raising efforts.

Samara Frame (Brianne/Chaya) is delighted for her first Playhouse run with Forward. She previously participated in the Two Steps Forward Monologue Festival and Wisconsin Wrights Festival’s Hamm in Love and War. Other local highlights include Love/Sick and Body Awareness (Phyllis). As a company member of Will Geer’s Theatricum Botanicum in Los Angeles, she performed in Cymbeline (Arviragus), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Puck, Hermia), As You Like It (Celia), The Three Musketeers (Queen Anne), Dracula, Merlin and more. One-person shows include My Name is Rachel Corrie and Bad Dates by Theresa Rebeck. Samara graduated from Northwestern University and is grateful to her rock of a family and to all of you for supporting live theatre.

Tosha Freeman (Sherry/Dr. Toros) is incredibly excited to make her Forward Theater debut! Formerly a member of the Memphis-based and nationally known Nubian Theatre Company, Tosha has worked Off-Broadway in the Gospel music production of Momma Don’t, and toured Russia with the critically acclaimed production of A Salute to Africans in Russia. An accomplished Recording Artist, Tosha’s latest single, “1Life2LiV” was placed on the Official 61st Grammy Awards Ballot in five categories. Most recently she was seen as the Jailer in The Comedy of Errors (Optimist Theatre). Past roles include Maggie/Mama Hester/Betsy in Just a Conversation Over Chicken and Dumplings (Bronzeville Arts Ensemble); Miss Connolly in The Potting Shed (Acacia Theatre); Miss Edna in Locomotion (First Stage Children’s Theatre); Jimmons/Rallier 3 in Handmade or Go Home (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre Young Playwrights Festival); and Miss Leah in Flyin’ West (Bronzeville Arts Ensemble). Tosha is truly grateful for this opportunity. “To GOD Be the Glory!” www.bignoisenow.com/toshafreeman.html

Clare Arena Haden (Mary Jane) is gratefully appearing in her 4th show with Forward Theater. Other productions with Forward include Silent Sky, Outside Mullingar, and Fun Home, and she is a proud member of their Advisory Company and Literary Committee. She was most recently seen as the Nurse in Theatre LILA’s R&J. Clare frequently works as a Voice and Text coach for Milwaukee Repertory Theater and is a Faculty Associate at the School of Nursing at UW-Madison, using actor training techniques to improve first impression formation. A most heartfelt
Joe Cerqua (Sound Designer/Composer) 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 Life Sucks, Skeleton Crew, 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 300 productions in Chicago, nationally, and internationally. Recent projects include original music and sound design for She Stoops to Conquer at American Players Theater; Rhinoceros at the American Conservatory Theater; Things I Know to Be True at Milwaukee Rep and Arizona Theater Company, Edward Tulane at First Stage; Rhinoceros at the Asolo, Alabama Story, Outside Mullingar at the Clarence Brown Theater; The City of Conversation at Northlight; Dear Elizabeth at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre; One House Over, The Foreigner, The Glass Menagerie Good People, and Of Mice and Men at Milwaukee Rep; Tom Jones at Actors Theatre of Louisville; Born Yesterday, 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 Creative Director and Producer for the Music Department at Columbia College Chicago. Future projects include concerts with Cerqua Rivera, and original music and sound design for A Wrinkle in Time at First Stage, Gently Down the Stream at Milwaukee Chamber, and Peter Pan on her 70th Birthday at Forward.

Sarah Deming-Henes (Stage Manager) Last season at Forward Theater Company Sarah stage managed Skeleton Crew, Fun Home, Heisenberg, and Life Sucks - which was all so enjoyable that she was terrifically excited to return for a second season! Sarah has proudly worked at many other
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Wisconsin-based theaters; towards the west she has delighted in stage managing at American Players Theatre for 14 seasons (spread out over several years since 2001); and towards the east, in Milwaukee, she has spent many happy seasons stage managing at theaters including; First Stage, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Most recently she spent the month of August farther east (or way, way west, depending on how you figure it) at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival where she thrilled at stage managing Boswell - a show that included many faces familiar to FTC. Many thanks to her family and friends for unfailing kindnesses!

**Kim Instenes (Costume Designer)** This is Kim's first time working at Forward and she is excited to be working with the talented people here. Kim works as a freelance costume and makeup designer in the Milwaukee/Chicago area. Professional design credits include Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily, Doubt and Jeeves Intervenes at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre; The Giver, Big - The Musical and The Snow at First Stage Children's Theater; Romeo and Juliet at Milwaukee Shakespeare as well as work at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Renaissance Theaterworks, Utah Shakespeare Festival, and the Racine Theatre Guild. She is currently on the theatre faculty at Carthage College where she has designed Silent Sky, A Seat at the Table (new play by Regina Taylor), and Into the Woods, to name a few. She holds an MFA in costume design and technology from Ohio University, and a BA in theatre from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

**Mary MacDonald Kerr (Director)** is delighted to be directing Mary Jane for Forward Theater. She most recently directed West Side Story for Hope Summer Rep in Holland, MI and Cyrano at Titan Theatre in New York City. She is primarily a theatre artist in Milwaukee WI, both as a director and actor. Favorite directing projects include Luna Gale for Renaissance Theaterworks; Beast on the Moon and The Glass Menagerie for In Tandem Theatre; Crimes of the Heart for Milwaukee Chamber Theatre; Going to St. Ives and Vigil for Next Act Theatre; and Urinetown and Mother Courage for Carthage College. Favorite acting roles include Pope Joan in Top Girls and Anna in Burn This for Renaissance Theaterworks; QZ in The Few and Sheila in Joe Egg for Milwaukee Chamber and Terry Glimmer in Side Man at Next Act.

**Pamela Miles (Props Master)** is delighted to return to Forward for her sixth 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 eleven seasons as the Associate Scenic Charge Artist, as well as completed four fall shows as the Scenic Charge Artist. Other companies she has painted for include: Arizona Broadway Theatre, Children's Theatre of Madison, Madison Ballet (Dracula: A Rock Ballet) and the Summit Credit Union Inspiration Branch project. She has performed the role of Props Master for the Black Theatre Troupe in Phoenix, AZ, and American Players Theatre's Mary's Wedding.

**Enya Nett (Assistant Stage Manager)** This is Enya's 4th production with Forward Theater, including the 2019 summer Monologue Festival. Most of her theater background comes from her time at Ripon Collage where she earned a BA degree in English and Theater, and minored in Art. While completing her degree, she performed a large variety of roles for many shows ranging from Director and Stage Manager, to Designer, Board Operator, and many others. Outside of work, Enya spends a lot of time with her family, which includes two very playful little cats. She has many hobbies such as writing, and
creating art, and hopes to one day have the opportunity to use these skills to help create a movie.

**Tony Reitano (Stage Manager - Interim)** is delighted to rejoin Forward Theater Company after serving as Stage Manager for this year’s *Two Steps Forward* Monologue Festival. He has served as Stage Manager for Capital City Theatre Company’s *On the Town, Hunchback of Notre Dame, Gypsy, and Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill*. Tony started as a NY actor, then moved to Los Angeles and ultimately saved thousands of lives as Vince the Crash Dummy in the award-winning Safety Belt campaign. Longtime Production Manager for Pat Hazell’s *The Wonder Bread Years and Cocktails With Larry Miller*, he was also Stage Manager for *Bunk Bed Brothers* at the Marcus Center, Theatre Lila’s *Suitcase Dreams*, and Four Seasons’ *Follies*. He is the author of the Live Radio Plays *Young St. Nick, Sleepy Hollow & Other Headless Tales, Legends of the Leprechauns, and The Bard on Broadway*. Tony and his wife, Leslie Esser-Reitano, are founders of Heartline Theatricals. Tony is a long-time member of Actors Equity Association.

**Lisa Schlenker (Scenic Designer)** is pleased to join the creative team and Forward Theater staff for this warm and intimate project, as Forward continues the tradition of engaging theatre goers through deeply personal storytelling. Lisa is a Milwaukee-based Scenic Designer who enjoys a diverse freelance life with a variety of Wisconsin-based theatres. Avocationally, she can be found giving care to Wisconsin’s native bats at Wisconsin Humane Society Wildlife Center, where she is an active wildlife rehabilitator. Lisa’s book with co-author Sandra Strawn: *The Properties Director’s Tool Kit* is available on Amazon.com. Recent design work: *Carmina Burana* (Milwaukee Opera Theatre); *WindJammers; Dairy Heirs; We Like It Where; Dad’s Season Tickets* (Northern Sky). Upcoming projects: *Fires in the Mirror* (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre); *Nunsense* (Milwaukee Rep); *Happy Days* (Renaissance Theaterworks); *The Tragedy of Carmen* (Florentine Opera); *The Blacksmith* (Opera Lafayette). Thank you for supporting live local theatre!

**Noele Stollmack (Lighting Designer)** Noele is happy to be returning to Forward Theater for another season. Her lighting has appeared onstage at The Brooklyn Academy of Music, Sydney Opera House, and the Library of Congress Theatre, as well as the opera companies of Ontario, Costa Mesa, Portland, Vancouver, New Orleans, Nashville, and Santa Fe. Regional design for the theatre includes the Milwaukee Rep, Baltimore Center Stage, Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Skylight Music Theatre, American Players Theatre, and Jeff Daniel’s Purple Rose Theater. Lighting and Scenic Realization includes Meredith Monk’s international tours of *mercy & impermanence*. As Lighting Director for the Houston Grand Opera, she supervised lighting for over 50 operas and designed such productions as Andrei Serban’s *Elektra*, Dr. Jonathan Miller’s *Der Rosenkavalier, Aida*, and the world premiers of *Harvey Milk, Desert of Roses, and Dracula Diary*. Member, United Scenic Artists local 829.

**Kevin Zimmer (Technical Director)** has worked with Forward Theater since the 2009-2010 season, first as master carpenter and now as Technical Director. In addition, he worked as a Master Carpenter for Madison Repertory Theatre, 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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This season, Clare Arena Haden (Mary Jane) is the fund’s honoree. Since 2015 in some of our most beloved productions: Silent Sky, Outside Mullingar, and Fun Home. She is a proud member of FTC’s Advisory Company and Literary Committee.

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.
Our sponsors, attendees, and everyone who participated in our celebratory Feast Forward Gala helped us raise more than $80,000 for productions, artists, and community engagement programming that will successfully launch Forward Theater into its next decade. **THANK YOU!**

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We are pleased to recognize contributions received August 16, 2018 – August 16, 2019. If you notice any errors in acknowledgement or have questions about donation options, please contact Julia Nicholas at 608-234-5001 or jnicholas@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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Arts calendar paired with local restaurants
Dinner AND A Show

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Forward Theater Company
Armed with prescriptions, feeding tubes, and medical equipment, Mary Jane fully embraces the daily grind of caring for her young, sick child.

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Edgewood College
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PARADE
Middleton Players Theatre
Leo Frank, a Brooklyn-raised Jew living in Georgia, is put on trial for the murder of thirteen-year-old Mary Phagan.

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The story of an extraordinary girl who, armed with a vivid imagination and a sharp mind, proves that you can change your story and your destiny.

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Nobody could have anticipated the success of this ensemble of student musicians from Chicago’s Mexican-American barrios.

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The band uses their unique blend of classical and hip-hop music to overcome stereotypes while encouraging all to join together to break down cultural barriers.  

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In 1978, America’s longest running band skyrocketed to world-wide fame with their multi-week chart topper Kiss You All Over.  

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One of Off-Broadway’s biggest smash hits that parodies the classic Golden Girls moments with puppets!  

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The captivating sound of nine unadulterated human voices coming together to make extraordinary music.  

**FOR PETER PAN ON HER 70TH BIRTHDAY**  
Forward Theater Company  
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**JOYCE YANG PLAYS PROKOFIEV**  
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**JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS**
Overture Center for the Arts
15 of the finest jazz soloists and ensemble players today, this versatile orchestra performs a vast repertoire.

**OTHER DESERT CITIES**
Madison Theatre Guild
Brooke returns home after a six-year absence to celebrate Christmas with her Republican parents, where she announces that she is about to publish a memoir.

**DUCK SOUP CINEMA: HYPOCRITES**
Overture Center for the Arts
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**THE DROWSY CHAPERONE**
Edgewood College
When a die-hard theatre fan plays his favorite cast album, the characters come to life in this hilarious and farcical musical parody.

**CLASSIC ALBUMS LIVE PERFORMS PINK FLOYD’S THE WALL**
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**RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER: THE MUSICAL**
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**HAMILTON**
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The story of America's Founding Father Alexander Hamilton featuring a score that blends hip-hop, jazz, blues, rap, R&B and Broadway.

**A MADISON SYMPHONY CHRISTMAS**
Madison Symphony Orchestra
The beloved tradition features holiday classics and new music with three choruses and opera singers Mackenzie Whitney and Michelle Johnson.
Our founder and publisher, Steve Marcus, embarked on the journey to create the high-quality, professional playbills that greet you at every performance back in 1988.

Fresh out of the University of Wisconsin Madison, Marcus applied to sell theater program ads for three prominent Milwaukee theaters: Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Theatre Tesseract and Clavis Theatre. The companies were able to hire Marcus thanks to a grant opportunity.

“At the time, all of the smaller theatre companies were competing for program advertisers,” says Janet Newton, who previously served as the general manager of Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. “I was familiar with the concept of creating one company to produce programs for all local performing arts venues, using support from a large pool of advertisers, so writing a grant to kick off this idea seemed like the perfect choice for this grant opportunity.”

Marcus quickly added on to his initial job description by designing the programs himself. Today, Footlights has 19 employees including sales account executives, graphic designers, editors and writers. Footlights has also expanded its playbill services to Madison and Chicago and serves over 140 theater clients in all three major markets.

“What a pleasure it has been to watch and observe an idea develop into a dynamic reality,” Newton shares. “I went on to earn a teaching certification and took my students to many professional productions in Milwaukee. I would often point out the beautiful glossy programs and say, ‘I know the young man who started this company. Look at what you can do with an education and tenacity! You can make anything happen.’ Steve Marcus did it, and this company is still growing.”

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Learn a little more about our humble beginnings

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