



NEWS RELEASE

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COMMONWEAL THEATRE'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS READY FOR 2010

LANESBORO, MINN. — The Commonweal Theatre Company in Lanesboro, MN is readying its educational programs for an exciting year in 2010. Education is an integral part of the theatre's mission, creating opportunities for Commonweal artists to teach, study, and practice their craft while serving the region in a unique way. "By teaching, we're forced to confront our own assumptions about our art," explains Commonweal's Artistic Director Hal Cropp. "Sharing our knowledge and experience with others sharpens our own work while simultaneously grooming and deepening the love of theatre for future audiences."

One cornerstone of Commonweal's educational programming is the Student Matinee Series. In 2009, more than 1600 middle and high school students attended special student matinee performances of Commonweal's mainstage shows. Karen Rooney from Holmen High School says the production of *Hedda Gabler* seen by her seniors was "a highlight of the year for my AP Literature students". Laura Christiansen from ZED Futures/CHOICE brought a class to see *A Midnight Dreary* last fall. "We all enjoyed the experience," she says. "It opened a new door to some kids who'd never been to live theatre".

For only \$5 per person, participants in the Student Matinee Series receive tickets to a weekday morning performance at the Commonweal, a comprehensive study guide, a technical theatre demonstration, a post-

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show discussion with the cast, and a pre-show workshop in their classroom taught by the actors. The Student Matinee Series is underwritten by F&M Community Bank, who also pay for the admission for any student from Lanesboro High School, Fillmore Central, or Chatfield High School. “F&M Community Bank has played and continues to play a vital role,” says Cropp, “in removing barriers standing between us and the young people of our region.” Teachers needing more information can contact David Hennessey at 507-467-2905 ext 205 or email david@commonwealtheatre.org

This summer, Commonweal again offers a unique opportunity for high school students to participate in an intensive two-week, non-residential theatre training program. At the Commonweal Conservatory, students work directly with artists from all over the country, exploring a variety of topics and skills from Acting to Improvisation to Play Analysis and more. Previous theatre experience is not required. Enrollment is by application and space in the Conservatory is limited. For more information, contact Jerome Yorke at 507-467-2905 ext 210 or email education@commonwealtheatre.org.

For young theatre artists looking to transition from their academic to professional careers, Commonweal’s Apprenticeship Program is a ten-month immersion in the theatre’s artist/administrator model. In addition to roles onstage and behind-the-scenes, the Apprentice Company rotates through assignments with the Sales and Marketing, Development, and Production Teams to gain practical experience in all aspects of operating a non-profit organization. At the conclusion of their time, the Apprentice Company produces and performs in a capstone project. This year, Commonweal Apprentices will present *Death and the Ploughman* on the stage at the Commonweal March 18th through 28th. Tickets are available by calling the box office at 1-800-657-7025 or emailing tickets@commonwealtheatre.org. To learn more about the Apprenticeship Program, call Hal Cropp at 507-467-2905 ext 203 or email hal@commonwealtheatre.org.

The Commonweal Theatre Company is a non-profit professional company with year-round mainstage and educational programming located at 208 Parkway Avenue North in historic downtown Lanesboro. For more information, visit www.commonwealtheatre.org or call 1-800-657-7025.

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