



NEWS RELEASE

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COMMONWEAL THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES 13TH ANNUAL IBSEN FESTIVAL

LANESBORO, MINN. — The Commonweal Theatre Company announces its 13th Annual Ibsen Festival April 16-18, 2010 in downtown Lanesboro. Named for the acclaimed “Father of Modern Drama,” the Festival is a celebration of Scandinavian theatre, visual art, music and dance, featuring over thirty different events and activities. This yearly gathering of artists and craftsmen was honored in 2008 by the Norwegian Government, who awarded the Commonweal Theatre one of only four inaugural International Ibsen Scholarships in recognition of ongoing commitment to producing the works of one of the world’s premiere playwrights.

The Ibsen Festival offers numerous events and presentations throughout the weekend to satisfy a variety of interests. Throughout the weekend, guests may attend film presentations, musical concerts, artisan displays and presentations, and a Norwegian/English Worship Service at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Lanesboro.

The Festival begins Friday evening at The Commonweal Theatre at 6:30 with an opening reception featuring the fascinating and thought-provoking exhibit *Honesty: The Art of Money* by award-winning artist John Ilg with refreshments provided by Scenic Valley Winery and Kari’s Scandinavian Restaurant, and music by Heidi Dybing. The evening continues with two exciting events – the final preview performance of *John Gabriel Borkman* at The Commonweal and a concert by musician Diane Jarvi, the Minnesotan Satakieli (Nightingale), at the St Mane Theatre.

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Saturday, April 17, offers an entire day and night's worth of activities. The documentary from Frontline, *The Madoff Affair*, will be screening at the Feed Mill Event Center while many of the region's finest Scandinavian artisans – including woodcarver Rebecca Hanna and rosemauler Sara Tollefson - will have their work on display and for purchase at the Sons of Norway Heimbygda Lodge Saturday, April 17 from 10 am to 5 pm.

The Commonweal Theatre will also host several events on Saturday, starting with a lecture at 10 am from Professor Simon Williams, Chair of the Department of Theater and Dance at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Titled *Coming to Terms With The Industrial Revolution*, Professor Williams' talk will illuminate the themes of Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* in the aftermath of America's own recent banking scandals. Then, at 1 pm, Henry (Hank) Shea, Fellow at the University of St. Thomas Law School's Halloran Center for Ethical Leadership, will present *Confronting the Temptations of Greed, Power and Money in Our Society*.

Also at The Commonweal on Saturday at 3 pm, will be a panel discussion on *Ibsen For a Contemporary Audience* featuring former Guthrie Resident Director Risa Brainin, playwright Jeffrey Hatcher and Commonweal Theatre's design team. Saturday night is highlighted by the opening performance of Henrik Ibsen's penultimate work, *John Gabriel Borkman*. Commonweal Theatre's production will feature Resident Artists Stela Burdt, Sarah Hawkins, David Hennessey, and Adrienne Sweeney with Hal Cropp - Commonweal's Artistic Director and a 2009 Nominee for the International Ibsen Award - in the title role.

All weekend, Scandinavian cuisine will be served at The Old Village Hall, Kari's Scandinavian Restaurant and Pedal Pushers Café, and visitors to The Commonweal may view the three-dimensional art exhibit, —*To Be A Poet is To See: Ibsen in Our Time* in addition to *Honesty: The Art of Money* throughout the run of *John Gabriel Borkman*.

While most events and classes require pre-registration, many are free. A complete list of Festival events is available by calling 1-800-657-7025 or going online to www.ibsenfest.org.

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The Commonweal is a non-profit professional theatre with year-round main stage and educational programming located at 208 Parkway Avenue North in historic downtown Lanesboro. For more information about the 2010 Ibsen Festival, contact Adrienne Sweeney at 507-467-2905 x208 or adrienne@commonwealtheatre.org.

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