



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 19, 2008

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COMMONWEAL THEATRE RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL IBSEN SCHOLARSHIP

LANESBORO, MINN. — The Commonweal Theatre Company has received one of the first International Ibsen Scholarships awarded by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture. These scholarships represent a desire of the Norwegian government to support models of artistic work that focus on issues of form and content in the spirit of one of the world's great playwrights, Henrik Ibsen.

The Award Committee, chaired by actress Liv Ullmann, welcomed Commonweal's Artistic Director Hal Cropp and Ibsen Festival Coordinator Adrienne Sweeney to receive the award at the International Ibsen Conference. There, they joined other scholarship recipients from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Norway and 2008 International Ibsen Award-Winner Peter Brook at a ceremony hosted at Ibsenhuset in Skien.

"To be given one of the first Ibsen scholarships ever, to be the only North American company so honored, to be recognized in this fashion by the Norwegian government, is a truly humbling experience, one which validates our belief that our commitment to Ibsen's work is vital for our community and for the future of theatre everywhere," said Cropp. "The financial award will allow us to take the development of our Ibsen Festival to a place of national renown and will further strengthen our efforts to bring quality productions of this towering Norwegian, this world figure to underserved audiences throughout the Midwest."

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The scholarship – valued at 250,000 Norwegian kroner (approximately \$43,000 US) – will support study and travel to expand the theatre’s knowledge of and resonance with the canon of Ibsen’s works. Commonweal’s signature commitment to producing Ibsen began in 1998 and through growing popularity has evolved to include the Ibsen Festival – a city-wide celebration of Scandanavian theatre, art, music, and dance. In March and April of 2009, Commonweal will produce *Hedda Gabler* and tour the show to a half-dozen cities in Minnesota and Wisconsin before it officially opens for an eight week run in Lanesboro.

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, visit www.commonwealtheatre.org or call 800-657-7025.

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