



NEWS RELEASE

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COMMONWEAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES WORLD PREMIERE

LANESBORO, MINN. — The Commonweal Theatre Company will produce the world premiere of *A Midnight Dreary* by resident artist Scott Dixon from October 31 – November 15. The play is this season's "November Nights" selection – part of Commonweal's New Play Development Program.

Dixon, who previously wrote Commonweal's 2005 holiday show *The Nutcracker and The Mouse King*, has long wanted to write a play about the life and work of one of his favorite authors, Edgar Allan Poe. "I can still remember reading Poe as a kid," he says, "and realizing even then that these stories were utterly unlike anything I'd ever come across before."

The title of the play comes from the opening line of Poe's famous poem, "The Raven", and the story follows the author through a feverish dream mixing scenes from his life and works. But is he simply lost in a labyrinth of his own making, or being given a last chance to set things right?

"It fits the basic rule for all our productions - it's a good story told in a very unusual style," said Commonweal's Artistic Director Hal Cropp. "This telling of Poe's life centers around the ghosts that 'haunt' us as we move through our daily lives, and ultimately what it is about our lives that will echo on after we've gone. And the questions are raised in a manner that infuses the story with the beauty of Poe's poetry and the titillation that accompanies his most famous stories."

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The production of *A Midnight Dreary* is particularly relevant as 2009 marks the bicentennial of Poe's birth with special commemorative events happening all year long at The Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia (where Poe spent most of his youth) and throughout Baltimore, Maryland - location of his final resting place. The show also marks the 100th production in the history of the Commonweal Theatre,

"November Nights" is part of Commonweal Theatre's New Play Development Program, engaging playwrights in the development and production of new works written not only for its specific community of theatergoers, but its community of artists as well. Commonweal has had an active role in the creation of nearly two dozen new works for the American stage, many of which have received their world premieres in Lanesboro.

A Midnight Dreary will have discounted preview performances on October 29 and 30 before its official opening on Halloween Night. The show will run from October 31 through November 15, offering a post-performance discussion with the cast and playwright after every performance.

The Commonweal is a non-profit professional theatre, now occupying its brand new home at 208 Parkway Avenue North in historic downtown Lanesboro. For more information about the Commonweal's 2008 season, visit www.commonwealtheatre.org or call 800-657-7025.

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