

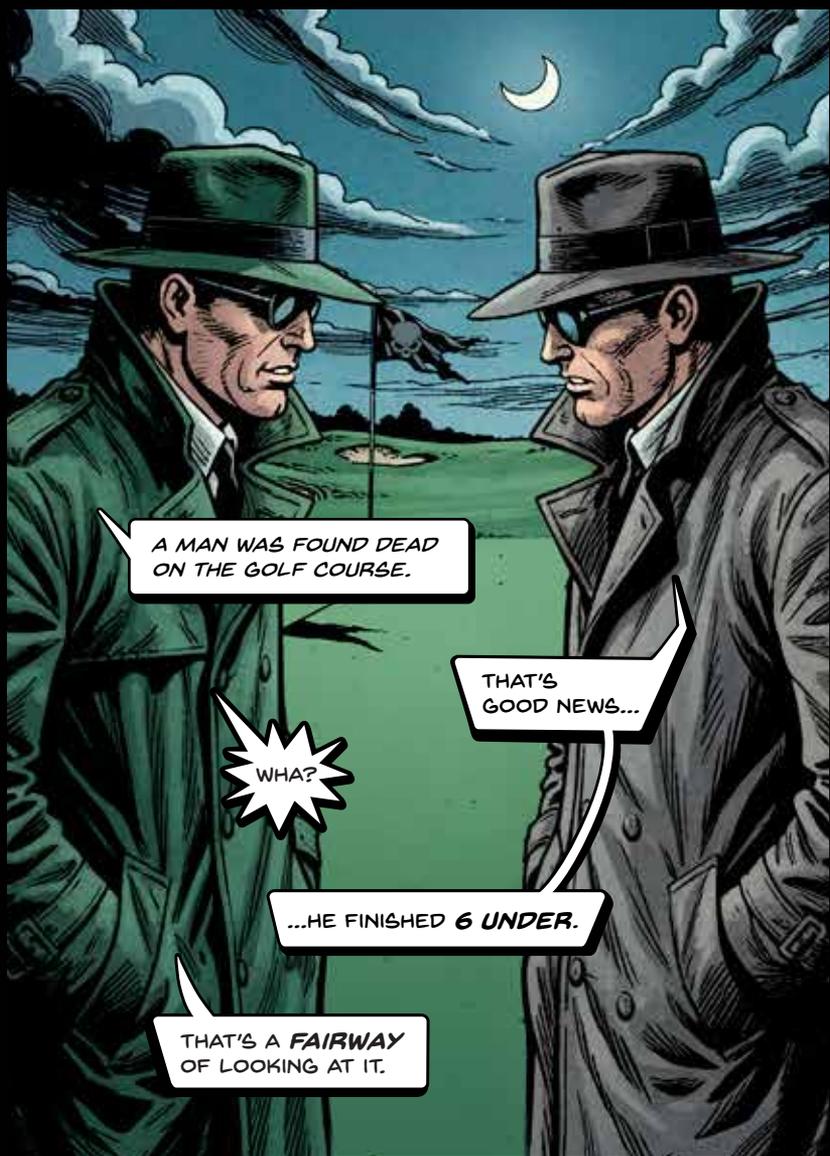
MURDER ON THE LINKS



A MICHIGAN PREMIERE BY
STEVEN DIETZ

FROM THE NOVEL BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

DIRECTED BY **DAVID BENDENA**



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It started with a dare. One hundred and ten years ago, Madge Miller provoked her sister Agatha Christie, challenging that she could not write a proper detective story. Like any good younger sibling would, Agatha got to work, publishing *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in 1920. And so it began.

As she carried on, she became Dame Agatha Christie, the “Queen of Crime” and remains the reigning best-selling fiction writer of all time. Famously, Agatha Christie has sold over 2 billion copies of her works worldwide. The receipts show that only the Bible and the works of Shakespeare can be ranked in front of her. Her titles continue to sell by the millions each year.

I don’t know if Steven Dietz had received a similar challenge at some early point in his life. But he himself is now one of America’s most prolific and most produced playwrights. And one whose work has graced our PRTC stage twice before: *More Fun Than Bowling* (1991) and *Honus & Me* (2005). We are thrilled to welcome him back as we now give you our version of Steven Dietz’s version of Agatha Christie’s third novel, *The Murder on the Links* (1923).

What started as a dare between two sisters over a century ago has now brought us all together tonight. It means a great deal that you have come to the Purple Rose to laugh with us. Until the end of May, only 7 people per week can sit in the very seat you are now in and escape for a while into our world of Hercule Poirot. Welcome, then, to this limited and exclusive trip to Merlinville-Sur-Mer, France. It is brought to you by a dedicated team of artists who delight in their work, in the sharing of it, and in being a new link in the chain of the grand history of The Agatha Christie Mystery.

Enjoy the show!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Bendena". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "B".

DAVID BENDENA
Director of *Murder on the Links*

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Founder & Artistic Director

KATIE HUBBARD
Managing Director

presents

MURDER ON THE LINKS

by Steven Dietz

Set Design
BRIAN DAMBACHER

Costume Design
SUZANNE YOUNG

Lighting Design
MATT TAYLOR[^]

Properties Design
DANNA SEGREST

Sound Design
ROBERT W HUBBARD

Stage Manager
STEFANIE DIN^{*}

Assistant Stage Manager
CARIDAD GUY^{*}

Director
DAVID BENDENA



^{*}Appearing through an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



[^]United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, IATSE is the union representing Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound and Projection Designers in Live Performance.

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PLEASE NOTE

There will be one 15-minute intermission during the performance.

Please keep the aisles clear for the actors' entrances and exits.

The making of photographs and/or recordings inside the theatre is strictly prohibited.

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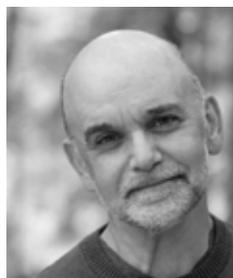
CAST OF CHARACTERS



BILL SIMMONS*
Hercule Poirot



CAITLIN CAVANNAUGH*
Captain Hastings



JOHN SEIBERT*
Man One



RUTH CRAWFORD*
Woman One



ASHLEY WICKETT*
Woman Two



JOHN BERNOS*
Man Two

Understudies: Benjamin Burt (Man Two), Taras Los (Hercule Poirot), Antoine McKay* (Man One), Lisa Michaels (Captain Hastings), Lottie Mae Prenevost (Woman Two), Maria Ru-djen* (Woman One)

*Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, The Purple Rose Theatre, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

TIME: 1923

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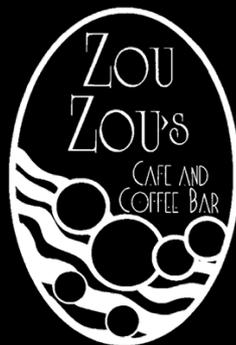
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JOHN BERNOS (Man Two) is excited to join The Purple Rose. Born and raised in Ann Arbor, he found his love of theatre at Pioneer High School and CSU Northridge, then trained at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in NYC. Stage highlights: *Urinetown*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Eastern Standard*, *August: Osage County*. Off-Broadway: *Corporated Secretaries*, *Comfort Women: A New Musical*. Now back in Michigan, John teaches at Dancer's Edge in Dexter, serves as a personal trainer at Liberty Athletic Club, and works as a UX designer. He also appears in productions across the state, including a turn at The Encore of Dexter in Disney's *Frozen*. He's grateful to The Purple Rose for the opportunity and to his family for their support. Gal. 1:5 @johnbernos

CAITLIN CAVANNAUGH (Captain Hastings) is excited to be back onstage at The Purple Rose! Among her 13 PRTC productions as an actor, favorites include *My Mother and the Michigan/Ohio War*, *Pickleball*, *Never Not Once*, the Sherlock trilogy and *Harvey*. Other Michigan credits: *Game. Set. Match!*, *Halftime with Don* (Tipping Point Theatre), *Predictor* (Williamston Theatre). Outside Michigan: Texas Shakespeare Festival, Sabanci International Theatre Festival (Turkey), Victory Gardens and Stage 773 (Chicago). TV: *American Rust*, *Chicago Fire*. Northern Illinois University (BFA Acting), Moscow Art Theatre School (Certificate in Acting). Huge thanks to David, Steven, this hilarious cast, everyone behind the scenes, Katie, Amy, Jeff, Rhi and Lucas, and to her grandparents, mom and James. Next up, you can see her this summer at Williamston Theatre in *The 39 Steps*. caitlincavanaugh.com @caitlincavanaugh

RUTH CRAWFORD (Woman One) has appeared in numerous equity theatre productions in Michigan. She's a proud Resident Artist at Purple Rose, where recent credits include *Office Christmas Party...*, *A Jukebox for The Algonquin*, *Roadsigns*, and *Welcome to Paradise*. At Tipping Point Theatre, she was in *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Ripcord*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Rabbit Hole*. Other favorites are *The Gin Game* at Williamston Theatre, *Good People* at the Performance Network, and *Arsenic and Old Lace* at Meadow Brook Theatre. As a member of the Colony Theatre in Los Angeles, her work included *The Cocktail Hour* and *Ring Round the Moon*. Ruth has also been featured in a number of movies and TV shows filmed in the Detroit area: *American Rust*, *Detroiters*, *Low Winter Sun*, *Flipped*, *Trust*, and *Guest Artist*. For Hugh.

Actors' Equity Association (Equity), founded in 1913, is the national labor union representing more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers in live theatre. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, administers benefits such as health and pension plans, and advocates to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the American theatre. Its mission is to ensure safe, fair, and dignified working environments for its members nationwide. Learn more at www.actorsequity.org.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JOHN SEIBERT (Man One)'s first appearances with Purple Rose date back to Season 1. He originated roles in *Shoe Man*, *The Vast Difference*, *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, *Sea of Fools*, *Panhandle Slim & The Oklahoma Kid*, *A Jukebox for the Algonquin* and *Bert & Trixie Visit The Vet* (Leonard the parrot). Michigan and Regional Credits: Tipping Point Theatre (*Grand Horizons*, *A Doll's House, Part 2*, *Vanya*, *Sonia*, *Masha and Spike*) and roles at Williamston Theatre, Performance Network, Jewish Ensemble, Meadow Brook, North Coast Rep (San Diego), Alabama Shakespeare Festival and five seasons with Actors Theatre of St. Paul. Film: *Batman vs. Superman*, *Kill The Irishman* and *Supersucker* (with Jeff Daniels). John taught at Eastern Michigan University for 30 years (Lecturer Emeritus). Love and thanks to Lynne.

BILL SIMMONS (Hercule Poirot) is happy to be back at PRTC 13 years after his previous production, *Miles & Ellie*. His other PRTC work includes *Our Town* and the world premieres of Carey Crim's *Some Couples May...* and *Wake*. In 2025, he directed *Halftime with Don* and *The Shark is Broken* for Tipping Point Theatre in Northville. A resident of Indianapolis, Bill served as artistic director and co-CEO of the Phoenix Theatre Cultural Centre in downtown Indianapolis from 2018 to 2022. In 2022, he created Bill Simmons Consulting to work with artists and nonprofits to imaginatively and strategically build resources and increase funding to change the world for the better.

ASHLEY WICKETT (Woman Two) is thrilled to be back at PRTC! You may remember her from *Fourteen Funerals* and *The Antichrist Cometh*. Regional: Detroit Public Theatre, Meadow Brook Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theatre, Livermore Shakespeare Festival, Pioneer Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre. Staged readings with The Shakespeare Project of Chicago, Barebones Theatre Productions, The New Harmony Project, Shakespeare in Detroit and ACT. Ashley is a director with Next Step Broadway and works as a private audition coach with performers of all ages. BFA in Theatre Performance: University of Evansville. MFA in Acting: American Conservatory Theatre. Thank you to the entire cast and crew at the Rose. Love to Patrick, Grace, Juliet & her parents!

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PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR

STEVEN DIETZ (Playwright) At PRTC: *More Fun than Bowling, Honus & Me*. Off-Broadway: *Fiction, Lonely Planet, God's Country, Trust*. Regional: forty-plus plays and adaptations at over one hundred theatres. International: plays in twenty-five countries worldwide. Film: Meg Ryan's *What Happens Later*, from his play, *Shooting Star*. For the '24-'25 season, Dietz was once again named one of the "Twenty Most Produced Playwrights in America" by *American Theatre Magazine*. Dietz was awarded the Steinberg New Play Citation for *Bloomsday*; the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award for both *Fiction* and *Still Life with Iris*; the PEN USA-West Award in Drama for *Lonely Planet*; and an Edgar® Award for *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*. He lives in Seattle and Austin.

DAVID BENDENA (Director) makes his directing debut with *Murder on the Links*. He is deeply grateful for the collaboration and guidance from the playwright, designers, cast, crew, stage management, Purple Rose artists & staff - a truly world-class team. Onstage, he has appeared at PRTC in 13 productions, including world premieres *Flint* and *Roadsigns*, both by Jeff Daniels. David has also worked with Michigan's Tipping Point Theatre and at other stages in Chicago and Kansas City. Outside of theatre, David is an audiobook narrator and frequent rhythm guitarist with the jazz band Djangophonique. All love and thanks to Trixie, Zozo & Jonny B.



DESIGNERS

BRIAN DAMBACHER (Scenic Design) Based in Detroit, Brian has worked as a freelance theatre artist, Technical Director and Production Manager at The Meadowbrook Theatre Ensemble, Resident Scenic Designer at Meadowbrook Theatre (2004 - 2007), Technical Director at Oakland University, Assistant Professor and Technical Director at Michigan State and Wayne State Universities, Head of Production at the Purple Rose, and resident artistic collaborator / technical designer for Satori Circus. Brian has been responsible for the execution and engineering of over 150 productions, and the design of more than 50 in a variety of theatre communities across the country, both professional and academic. He received his BA in Theatre from Oakland University in Rochester, MI and his MFA from The Yale School of Drama.

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DESIGNERS (cont.)

ROBERT W HUBBARD (Sound Design) brings a cinematic approach to designing sound, having studied theater at Eastern Michigan University and video post-production at Colorado Film School. He designed sound for several short films out of Colorado before circling back to the mitten to apply those principles to the stage. Credits include *Pickleball*, *Diva Royale*, *Human Error* and *Office Christmas Party*, *Grinch in Fight with Rudolph*, *Police Called* at the Purple Rose Theatre and an Off-Broadway production of *The Ruin*. Thrilled to be working with his good ol' high school buddy David Bendena for the first time in over a decade! And thanks to his lovely wife and pretty good kids for supporting his involvement in this adventure.

DANNA SEGREST (Properties Design) is very excited for you to see this ballet of props that we are calling *Murder on the Links* by Steven Dietz. It is so wonderful to work with David Bendena as the director and this terrific team! Danna has enjoyed being part of the Purple Rose Theatre Company since volunteering as backstage dresser for Terry Heck 35 years ago, February 5th. Danna is happy to wear many hats at the Rose, including Resident Properties Designer, a Resident Designer, Archival Photographer and Box Office Assistant. Thanks to Wade & Reeve...never take me to France!

MATT TAYLOR (Lighting Design) is a professional lighting designer for live entertainment and an associate professor at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. He's thrilled to return to the Purple Rose, where previous credits include *Human Error*, *The Antichrist Cometh*, and *My Mother and the Michigan/Ohio War*. His work spans theatre, dance, concerts, and cruise ships, with his work seen on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and at major regional theatres including the Old Globe (San Diego), Ford's Theatre (Washington, DC), and internationally at Centro de Convenciones Figali (Panamá City, Panamá). Additional credits include Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines and Busch Gardens Williamsburg. Matt is a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829. Visit www.matttaylordesign.lighting. Instagram: @tailormadesc313

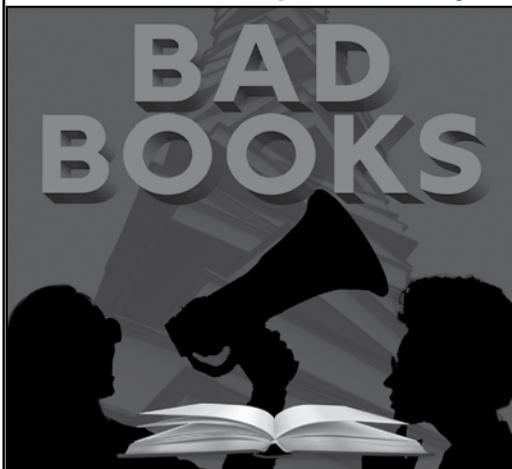
SUZANNE YOUNG (Costume Design) is proud to be a Resident Designer at The Purple Rose and designed her first show for the theatre, *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, in 2011. She is delighted to return for *Murder on the Links*. Among her other 18 Purple Rose designs are *My Mother and the Michigan/Ohio War*, *What Springs Forth*, *A Jukebox for The Algonquin*, the three Sherlock Holmes plays, *All My Sons*, and *Willow Run*. She has designed extensively in the local professional theatre community and won many awards, including Wilde Awards for two of the three Sherlock Holmes productions. Suzanne trained in London, England and has enjoyed a long career in costumes and costume design.



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STAGE MANAGEMENT

STEFANIE DIN (Stage Manager) is honored to be stage managing a show by the same playwright as her first Equity show, 20 years ago! Stefanie is a Resident Stage Manager at the Williamston Theatre and an Artistic Associate with The Michigan Shakespeare Festival. She was also part of Central Michigan University's Theatre Department and The PRTC's Apprentice Program. Stefanie thanks Katie, Jeff and Rhiannon for bringing her back, and Syd and Caridad for everything they do. Special thanks to Tony for always being an outstanding friend and mentor, her extraordinary family and friends for their love and support, and Brian and Keeley for being her inspiration every day. Love hard. Be kind. Always.

CARIDAD GUY (Assistant Stage Manager) is a professional freelance stage manager currently based around Ann Arbor, MI. She graduated from the University of Alabama in 2021 with a BA in Theatre and a minor in Business Management. This is her third production with the Purple Rose Theatre Company! Some of her most recent credits include Norma & Wanda (ASM/Deck Lead), Shakespeare in Love (SM), and My Mother and the Michigan/Ohio War (ASM/Deck Lead). She would like to thank her family, friends, and fiancé for their continuous love and support. Please enjoy the show!

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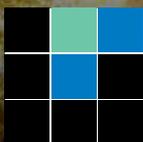
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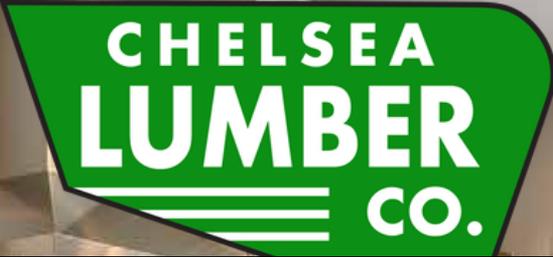
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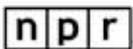
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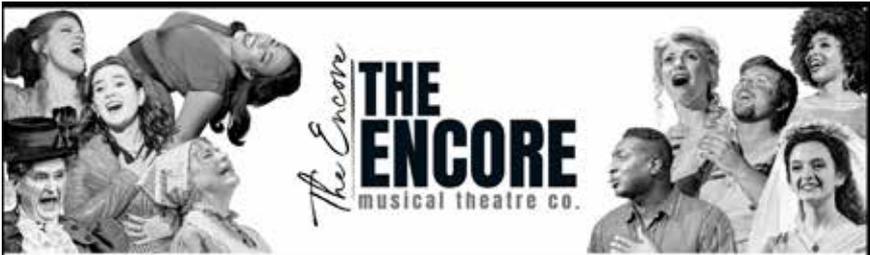
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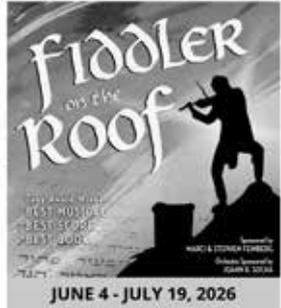
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JUNE 4 - JULY 19, 2026

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Flint Repertory Theatre &
University of Michigan-Flint's
Program of Theatre & Dance



Lucky Stiff

A Hilarious Musical Farce
Book & Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens
Music by Stephen Flaherty
Based on "The Man Who Broke the Bank
at Monte Carlo" by Michael Butterworth

March 20 - April 4
University of Michigan-Flint Theatre

Harry Witherspoon stands to inherit \$6,000,000. He just needs to take his recently murdered uncle on a vacation to Monte Carlo. Pass his uncle off as still living, and the money is his. Fail and his inheritance goes straight to the Universal Dog Home of Brooklyn ... or else his uncle's gun-toting ex! From the Tony Award-winning writing team Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty (*Ragtime*, *Once on This Island*, *Anastasia*), *Lucky Stiff* is an offbeat, hilarious murder mystery farce complete with mistaken identities, six million bucks in diamonds and a corpse in a wheelchair.

FIM Flint Repertory
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thefim.org/luckyrose

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\$15 | \$30 | \$35



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MURDER ON THE LINKS

by Steven Dietz

At this performance, the role of
Hercule Poirot
will be played by Taras Los.



TARAS LOS is happy to set foot in The Purple Rose theatre for the first time. Theatre studies earned him a BFA from Wayne State University and a MFA from University of Delaware. He has performed in theatres in New York, New Jersey, California and here in Michigan. He lived in California and had roles in 24 and According to Jim. He also dabbled in several independent films. Very excited to understudy in this production!

MURDER ON THE LINKS

by Steven Dietz

At this performance, the role of
Captain Hastings
will be played by Lisa Michaels.



LISA MICHAELS (she/her) is thrilled to be making her PRTC debut as an understudy for Captain Hastings! Lisa has performed with several Michigan theatres over the years including Detroit Public Theatre, Theatre Nova, Tipping Point Theatre, and Jewish Ensemble Theatre, to name a few. Most recently, she was seen in Open Book Theatre's *The Complete Works of Jane Austen, Abridged* (Jessica). Lisa is an alumna of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and proud member of British Equity. When not performing, she is a psychotherapist in private practice specializing in anxiety disorders, life transitions, and mental health in the arts. TU-VFV-AOK

MURDER ON THE LINKS

by Steven Dietz

At this performance, the role of
Man One
will be played by Antoine McKay*.



ANTOINE MCKAY's 37 year acting career began at Second City in Detroit and Chicago. His camera credits include commercials, TV (*Empire, Patriot, South Side, Chicago Med*), and films (*The Weatherman, All the Happy Families*). McKay has returned to the stage the last few years at the Detroit Repertory Theatre (*Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Annabella in July, Alamo Shoes, and Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*), and *Broke-ology* at Tipping Point Theatre. He also directed *Primary Trust* at the Detroit Repertory Theatre this season. His awards include Best Supporting Actor by the Detroit Free Press, Spirit of Detroit Award, and 2024 Wilde Award for Best Actor. Antoine thanks his wife Michelle for her support and dedicates his performances to his parents, Ivory and Jelena.

*Member, Actors' Equity Association

MURDER ON THE LINKS

by Steven Dietz

At this performance, the role of
Woman One
will be played by Maria Ru-djen*.



MARIA RU-DJEN most recently played the Nurse in *Bert & Trixie Visit the Vet*. Last season, she was honored to share the role of understudy for Madge with Mr. Daniels in his production of *Office Christmas Party*, *Grinch in Fight With Rudolph*, *Police Called*. Regional credits include the Lakeside Theatre's production of *I Remember Mama* in Toledo, and their inaugural production of *The Heiress*. She is also a proud recipient of an AudioFile Earphones Award for her narration of *After Oz* by Gordon McAlpine. Many thanks to the entire production team and staff at the Rose, and to her family for their unending support.

*Member, Actors' Equity Association

MURDER ON THE LINKS

by Steven Dietz

At this performance, the role of
Man Two
will be played by Benjamin Burt.



BENJAMIN BURT is thrilled to be making his debut with Purple Rose. Originally from Arizona, Ben appeared in over 25 plays in Phoenix, including *All My Sons*, *columbinus*, *Everything Will Be Different*, and *12th Night of the Living Dead*. After relocating to Los Angeles, Ben starred in *The Glass Menagerie*, and began training at the Beverly Hills Playhouse. Here in Michigan, Ben started working with the Farmington Players in their productions of *Humbug* and *A Very Farmington Christmas*. Television acting credits include *9-1-1: Lone Star* (FOX), *All American: Homecoming* (CW), *Bosch* (Amazon), and *Shameless* (Showtime). Directing credits: *Sex With Strangers* and *Belleville* (Crimson Square), *Clybourne Park* (Farmington Players), and the one-act play *FISH & FOWL* (Farmington Players).

MURDER ON THE LINKS

by Steven Dietz

At this performance, the role of
Woman Two
will be played by Lottie Mae Prenevost.



LOTTIE MAE PRENEVOST is thrilled to be making her Purple Rose debut in her hometown! Lottie is an actor and vocalist originally from Chelsea, Michigan, now based in Ann Arbor and NYC with a BFA in Musical Theater Performance from Otterbein University. Previous favorite credits: *Come From Away*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Mamma Mia*, *Ragtime*. Holiday album *Good Tidings* can be streamed anywhere. Thanks to the creatives for the opportunity to become part of the Purple Rose team. All my love and gratitude to Mom, Dad, Beau, Claire, and so many friends and family who always make the trip. Enjoy the show! IG: @lottie.mae.p

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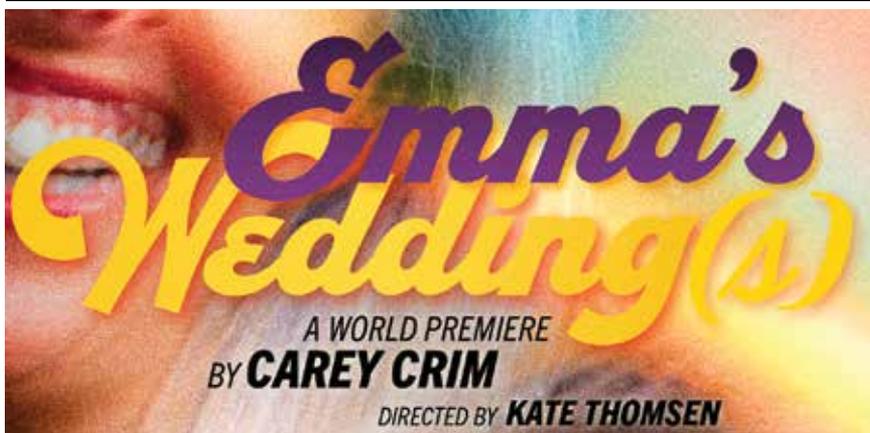
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UP NEXT



Emma's Wedding(s) **June 25 - August 30, 2026**

Emma is getting married. Again. For the fourth time, actually. But she's determined that this one will be the one. Gathering her less-than-enthusiastic best friends, they revisit each of Emma's previous weddings, leading to a hilarious romp through the decades, complete with '80s hair, dial-up internet, Boone's Farm wine and the enduring power of friendship.

You may recognize outdoor campers Emma, Robyn and Sallie Ben from our 2024 hit summer comedy *What Springs Forth*. *Emma's Wedding(s)* is a standalone story will appeal to fans of the original as well as welcome new audiences. **Contains adult language and subject matter.*

Tickets are on sale now at PurpleRoseTheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at 734.433.7673!

LIBRARY READINGS



Together, The Purple Rose and Chelsea District Library share free live play readings to promote and develop new work for our stage and theatre communities as far as our Zoom webinar can reach.

Virtual attendees are able to view a live play reading and offer feedback in a group chat with the cast, director and playwright.

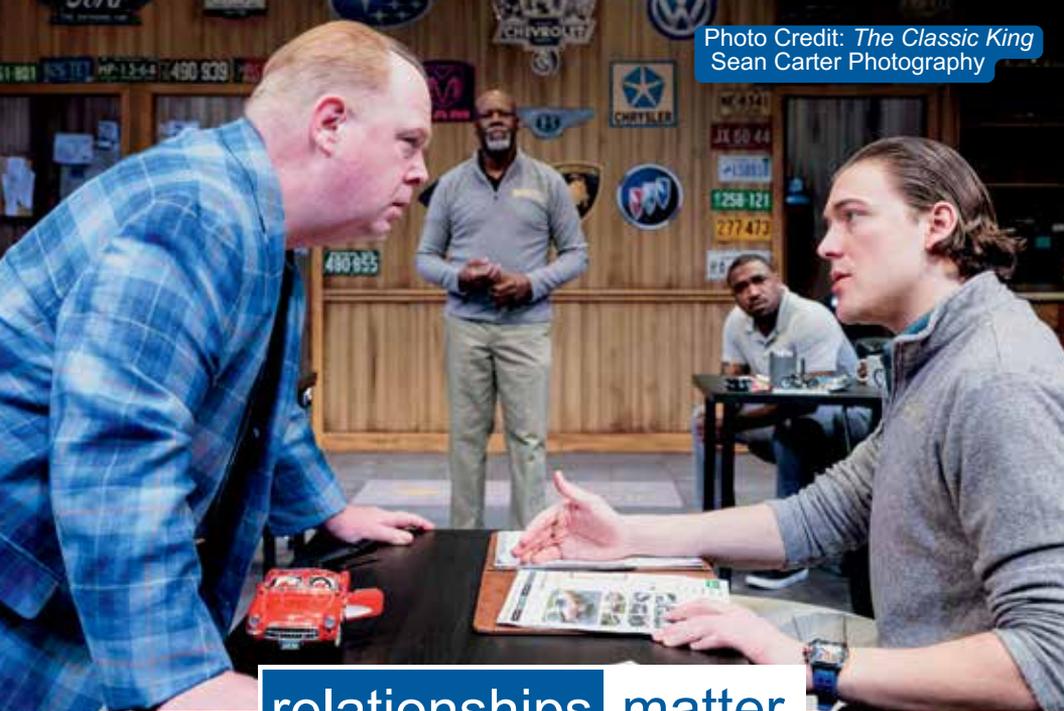
To join us, visit PurpleRoseTheatre.org/Readings for more information and how to register.

Upcoming Play Readings:

-Saturday, April 18, 2026 (Live & Zoom)

PRTC New Works Comedy Fest, Part of CDL's Literary Walk

-Saturday, May 16 at 10:30am (Zoom)



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