

Mariemont Players Inc.
presents



RUMORS
BY
NEIL SIMON

January 11 - 28, 2024
Walton Creek Theatre



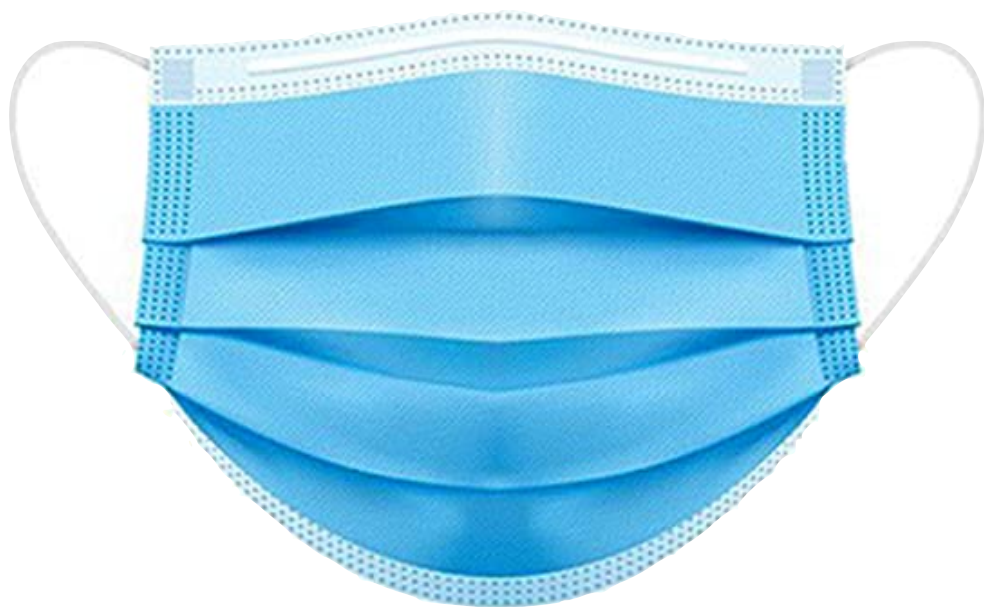
Mariemont Players Inc. will be following the guidelines from the CDC in order to keep our



audiences, actors, staff and crew as safe as possible.

Masks Are Recommended because of our small space and the close proximity to the actors.

They are no longer mandatory.



Mariemont Players

presents

Rumors

By Neil Simon

Directed by Ed Cohen

Produced by Vicki Rafferty

January 11 - 28, 2024

TIME:

The present.

PLACE:

Sneden's Landing home of Charlie & Myra Brock.

**THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE
INTERMISSION.**

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"**Rumors**" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

SPECIAL THANKS

Steve Farley

Paul Kreft

Loveland Police Department

Elegant Treasures Custom Embroidery

Mary Edwards

Footlighters

Larry Brown

Elaine Michael

Brogan & Hesketh Formal Wear

Dale Robertson Jewelers

To all of our ushers and to anyone who may have joined the effort after we went to print!

Welcome to Mariemont Players

The Mariemont Players (MPI) was formed 87 years ago as a church group that performed plays in the village of Mariemont, Ohio. Founded in 1936, the group began a regular season of performances in the 1950s and was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on August 28, 1956 by its president, Woodrow (Woody) Jarrett. In honor of Woody & Lois Jarrett's longtime commitment to the theater, the auditorium is named for them.

In 1960, for slightly more than \$8000, the group bought the old Plainville four-room school building. Volunteer members have been converting the structure into the Walton Creek Theater ever since. The original cornerstone was laid in 1869, but the present solid brick building at the intersection of Walton Creek and Muchmore Roads dates from 1910. We're fortunate to be one of the few local community theaters with a permanent home. Our continuing improvements to the building include a remodeled auditorium with new seating, aisle lights and an electromagnetic hearing loop for the hearing-impaired. Our elevator to the auditorium accommodates those with physical handicaps, including wheelchairs. A handicap accessible restroom is on the first floor.

The Players have had 1000s of members during the past 85 years. Some have even become film actors, Broadway musical directors and played roles in professional theater, TV commercials, corporate videos and voice-overs plus dozens of support roles in media and the creative arts.

Join Us!

Open audition dates for each production are announced on our Facebook page, on our website at mariemontplayers.com or behindthecurtaincincy.com. Cast requirements change on a show-to-show basis with no experience required.

There are many opportunities to work backstage as part of our technical production staff. If your talents or interests include props, costumes, set design and construction, painting, music, lights, sound or stage managing – we have something for you! Contact Vicki Rafferty at vsrraff@mac.com or Bill Pauly (set construction) at billpauly33@gmail.com about the next chance to get involved.

Become a Patron

Your generous donations make it possible to continue improving our theater. Donations are tax-deductible and are acknowledged in the program for each show of the season. You may donate online at our website (www.mariemontplayers.com) or send a check (write patron donation on the memo line) to MPI, 4101 Walton Creek Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45227.

Please consider supporting MPI at one of these levels.

Director \$100+

Producer \$75-99

Angel \$50-74

Quarter Club \$25-49

Patron \$15-24

THANK YOU for your support!



Director's Notes

I've been fortunate to have directed a lot of so-called 'serious' plays, ones that tackle hard issues and ultimately make an audience think, hopefully discussing afterwards how those issues were presented and were perhaps unresolved at the end (kind of how life is, you know?).

But it struck me that all of us have had a tough bunch of years recently; the news can just wear you out. And because of that, I thought that we could all use a laugh (maybe a lot of laughs). So I asked Mariemont Players to let me direct Neil Simon's only farce, a truly ridiculous play whose only purpose is to put a smile on your face. This play doesn't have any deep meaning; the characters' backstories aren't very important; in a lot of ways, it's the least 'serious' play I've ever seen.

And that's it: *Rumors* is an excuse for all of us to have a good time in January and to walk out of the theater feeling that way. I'm fortunate to have gathered an excellent, funny group of actors to bring this to you. Many thanks to Vicki Rafferty, Steve Winslow, Jef Brown, Peggy Stouffer (and her crew), Doug Berlon, Dan Dermody, Bill Pauly (and his crew), Nancy Glier, Pam Nagy, Mary Edwards and all the ushers, board operators and volunteers who helped put this on the stage. I hope you enjoy watching it and find it as funny as we did.

Ed Cohen

January, 2024



Hearing Loops allow people who wear hearing aids to directly receive the sound from the stage microphones in their own hearing aids. If your hearing aids have a wireless receiver called a T-coil or telecoil, just switch it on. Talk to your audiologist to see if your instruments are so equipped and how to activate it. Many hearing devices can have either a T (no background noise pickup) or MT program (blended microphone and T-coil program).

If your hearing aid doesn't have a telecoil, you may borrow a separate loop receiver with a headset, available in the first floor lobby. Ask an usher if you would like to use one.

For questions about your hearing aids and telecoils talk to your audiologist.

To learn more about hearing loops visit:
hearingloop.org or brownudioservices.com

THE CAST

Chris Gorman.....	Katey Blood
Ken Gorman	Ryan Bowron
Claire Ganz	Kathie Labanz
Lenny Ganz	Eric Day
Ernie Cusack	Forrest Fairley
Cookie Cusack	Arlene Balczo
Glenn Cooper	Aaron Whitehead
Cassie Cooper	Kate Mock Elliott
Officer Welch	Arny Stoller
Officer Pudney	Steve Balczo

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Ed Cohen
Producer	Vicki Rafferty
Stage Manager	Steve Winslow
Set Design	Dan Dermody
Set Decor	Nancy Glier, Pam Nagy, Mary Edwards
Decor Photographs	Tina Gutierrez
Costume Design	Peggy Stouffer, Carolyn Martinez
Costume Assistant	Anne Connor-Stanforth
Hair/Makeup	Helen Chandler-Meyer
Properties	Vicki Rafferty
Light Design	jef brown
Sound Design	Doug Berlon, Ed Cohen
Master Carpenter	Bill Pauly
Set Construction Crew	Bill Pauly, Art Kibby, Tim Carney, Fred Murrell, Dan Newyear
Painting Crew	Nancy Glier, Pam Nagy, Mary Edwards, Paul Kreft
Light & Sound Execution	Tasha Boeckmann, Nate Huitger
Lobby Display	Vicki Rafferty
Photography	Kristy Rucker
Original Show Art	Teresa John
Program/Online Program	Vicki Rafferty
Publicity	Jackie Miesle, Kristen Vincenty, Linda Callahan
Box Office Manager	Aaron Courtland Soper
Facilities	Steve Farley
Website	Jackie Miesle

About the Cast



Arlene Balczo (Cookie Cusack) - Arlene is a retired high school Drama teacher now working as a talent for Heyman Talent Agency and as a Standardized Patient for UC Medical School. She's directed over 60 shows as well as choreographed, produced and acted. Arlene has served on committees for ACT Cincinnati, including 1st VP, 2nd VP, Secretary and Adjudicator and is now Scholarship Chair. Besides theater, Arlene loves spending time with her family, long-distance running, and cheering on her beloved Reds and Bengals. She hopes you enjoy the show.



Steve Balczo (Officer Pudney - Steve thanks Ed Cohen and Mariemont Players for giving him his first opportunity to be in a play and to do so with his wife. Steve is a retired U.S. Marine and now, as his second career, works as a Supply Chain Solution Engineer for Oracle. He also spends a lot of time working with the men at City Gospel Mission and, in his limited free time, loves to golf, watch the Bengals, and ride his motorcycle.



Katey Blood (Chris Gorman) - Katey is excited to be back onstage with Mariemont Players under the direction of Ed Cohen and alongside some of her favorite actors. Other Mariemont credits include: *The Wisdom of Eve*, *A Doll's House*, *The Blue Moon Dancing*, *Same Time Next Year*, *Honk*, and *Never the Sinner*. Katey enjoys staying active. She is a high school teacher, serves on the Footlighters board, and enjoys CrossFit. Katey would like to thank Ed for the opportunity, her fellow actors for the laughs, the production team and Mariemont Players for their commitment to excellence in community theatre.



Ryan Bowron (Ken Gorman) - Ryan is excited to be working with Ed Cohen and this talented cast on this goofy farce that he hopes will brighten up your gloomy January. Past appearances at MPI have been in *The Book of Will* (Ben Jonson), *The Gods of Comedy* (Ralph), *Ada and the Engine* (Lord Lovelace), *The Outsider* (Dave Riley), and *Is He Dead?* (Chicago). He has also appeared in recent productions at the Cincinnati Fringe Festival (*Far Away From Home*) and the Village Players (*Airness*). Much thanks to family and friends for their continued love and support!



Eric Day (Lennie Ganz) - Eric was last seen on our stage as Dionysus in *The Gods of Comedy*, and he was offstage this past September as the assistant producer for *Steel Magnolias*. He has also performed in the pit playing drums and percussion for numerous community theater groups and high schools in Greater Cincinnati. He would like to thank his wife, Jennifer, and his children and stepchildren for their love and support.



Kate Mock Elliott (Cassie Cooper) - Kate Mock Elliott is pleased to be returning to the Mariemont stage, where she last performed in a youth production of *Pippin*. She was recently seen in CMT's *Ragtime* as Mother; as a Sexy, Sexy Mattress for Cincy Fringe; and as Mabel Walker Willebrandt in *Remus: A New Musical*. Other roles include Claire in *Proof*, Elizabeth in *Young Frankenstein*, Maggie in *42nd Street*, and *Peter Pan*. You can catch her in a few commercials and occasionally performing standup comedy. Eternal love to family and Bean and Bug, eternal lovin' to Spencer.



Forrest Fairley (Ernie Cusack) - A veteran of Cincinnati theatre, Forrest makes his return to the Walton Creek stage with *Rumors*. His credits include *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, *Camping with Henry and Tom*, *Man of LaMancha*, and more. Directing included *Lend Me A Tenor*; and around town recently he has been seen in *Hunchback*, *Bright Star*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Company* and the *Female Odd Couple* directed by his stage wife this evening, Arlene Balzco. His next walk across the boards will be in the March production of *Breaking the Code*, also directed by Ed Cohen, at Falcon Players.



Kathie Labanz (Claire Ganz) - Thirty years ago, Kathie played Chris in Mariemont's first production of *Rumors*. Twenty years ago she played Claire alongside Eric Day as Lenny in the Village Players production of *Rumors*, directed by Ed Cohen. Over the years Kathie has appeared with many groups around the city. Her most recent roles have included Daisy in *Driving Miss Daisy* at the Covedale Theatre, Eleanor in *The Lion in Winter* with ClearStage, and Clairee in *Steel Magnolias* with Briaebi Productions.



Arny Stoller (Officer Welch) - Arny was last seen on the Mariemont Stage in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*. He was also in *Broadway Bound*, *The Cemetery Club*, *All the Way*, *The Silver Whistle*, *Who Am I This Time?*, *12 Angry Jurors*, *Is Life Worth Living?*, *Seeing Stars In Dixie*, *Barefoot In The Park*, *Blue Moon Dancing*, *Over the River and Through the Woods*, *The Foreigner*, and others. Arny has also been in local productions of *Geezers*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *Flamingo Court*, *The Elephant Man*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Our Town*, *Proof*, *The Retreat From Moscow* and many others. Arny and wife Stephanie own and operate Covap Inc., a bulk mail service company.



Aaron Whitehead (Glenn Cooper) - Aaron is thrilled to be appearing again on the Mariemont stage, and for the first time, in a farce! Aaron previously appeared in Mariemont productions of *August: Osage County* and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged)*. In addition, Aaron has directed productions of *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* and *Dearly Departed*, and will be directing again in the spring of 2025. Aaron would like to thank his brother Branan; they learned a lot about farce together acting out scenes from Scapino as children.

With the continued presence of Covid in our lives, Mariemont Players has instituted an understudy program. The understudy committee is building and maintaining a list of actors/actresses willing to step into a show in an emergency. Early in the rehearsal process each director will choose actors from the list who might be appropriate for the major roles in their show. We are hopeful that this added measure will safeguard our performances and greatly lower the chances of MPI needing to cancel shows during a run. It has already been used successfully on several occasions.

If an understudy needs to go on you will see them with a script in hand, but be assured that they have attended rehearsals to familiarize themselves with the show's concept, blocking, and pacing so that, if called upon, they are confident and able to perform with little notice.

Understudies



Natasha Boeckmann (Understudy, Light/Sound Execution) - Natasha is thrilled to be back working with Mariemont Players and supporting this amazing cast. Previous Mariemont credits on stage include *Cry It Out*, *Gods of Comedy*, *Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *The Outsider*, *More Fun Than Bowling* and *Ravenscroft*. When she's not on stage at MPI, you can find her either in the attic running lights/sound or in the lobby as an usher. She loves MPI so much, that she's joined the board where she is a Member-at-Large and Artistic Committee chair.



Fred Murrell (Understudy) - Fred is a member of the MPI Board and appeared on stage here last as Beverly Weston in *August: Osage County*. He is also involved backstage in various roles from producer to usher. With any luck you won't see him on stage tonight, if you do, that means a cast member is ill. However, you can see him as Hercule Poirot in Footlighters production of *Murder on the Orient Express* in February!

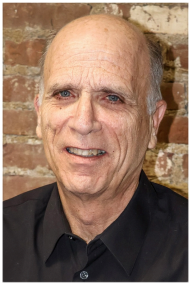
About the Production Team



Ed Cohen (Director, Sound Design) - At Mariemont, Ed has directed *Of Mice and Men*, *Never the Sinner*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *A Murder of Crows*, *The Blue Moon Dancing* and *All the Way*. Elsewhere, he has directed for CCM, NKU, Xavier and Miami, as well as The Covedale, Carnegie, Falcon Theatre, New Edgecliff, New Stage Collective and Winterfest, among many others. Ed has taught Directing and Playscripts Analysis at NKU. He received the Roger Grooms Award and The Art Rouse Award from Act Cincinnati, as well as The Enquirer's 'Trailblazer' award with his wife, Dee Anne Bryll.



Vicki Rafferty (Producer, Props, Programs, Lobby Display) - Vicki is happy to be working with Ed and Steve again. She has worked with many theaters in the area including Stagecrafters, The Drama Workshop, The Village Players, Wyoming/CenterStage Players, Tri-County Players and Beechmont Players. She started working with MPI in 2007 on *Natural Causes* and has produced, done props and set decor for many productions since then, most recently for *Steel Magnolias*. Vicki is a Mario Pitocco Award recipient for excellence in technical theatre and also an OCTA Spirit of Community Theatre Award recipient.



Steve Winslow (Stage Manager) - Steve is pleased to be working with Ed Cohen and Vicki Rafferty again. He last worked with Ed for *All the Way* as stage manager - a great experience. Vicki's dedication to properties, to house managing, and to producing is boundless. For *Outside Mullingar*, she re-painted the stage floors after every performance to remove the scrapes made by the wheels of a moving part of the set. And we all are thankful to Bill Pauley, Tim Carney, Fred Murrell, Art Kibby, and Dan Newyear for their skill in constructing a splendid set for the show.



Dan Dermody (Set Design) - Dan has designed numerous sets for several community theaters, colleges and high schools in the Greater Cincinnati area for many years now. With a Master of Fine Arts degree from Ohio University in set design, costume design and lighting, he is also the recipient of several awards for his designs. In the real world Dan is owner of Dermody Design Group, a construction management, space planning & design/build company for both residential and commercial projects.



Nancy Glier (Set Decor) - Nancy has a BA in Theatre Arts and Art History from Denison and an MA in Art History from UC. She had been active in community theatre, performing many roles at Village Players and Mariemont Players. She became inactive for decades, focusing on family and career as chief operations/finance officer at non-profit institutions, including Contemporary Arts Center, Art Academy and FotoFocus. This production has brought her back to community theatre and renewed her admiration of the dedication of the cast and crew. Love to Paul, Kristen and Bella.



Pam Nagy (Set Decor) - Pam's interest in community theatre and especially Mariemont Players goes back to the early 1990s when husband Dan Dermody completed his first set design for our stage. During a long career doing commercial interior design, project management and sales for office and restaurant clients, Pam was able to enjoy scores of shows as an audience member and appreciates the many good friends she's made here. Working on the *Rumors* set is her first time getting her hands dirty (pun intended) to create a little magic behind the curtain.



Tina Gutierrez (Decor Fine Art Photography) - Tina is a Fine Arts Photographer whose work depicts classical balance and beauty in the human form. She has lectured extensively at universities, has a broad commercial clientele and is widely exhibited. She is also a musician focusing on the Renaissance/Baroque Period.

Websites are <https://tinagutierrezartsphotography.com> and <https://tinagutierrez.photoshelter.com>
Contact Tina at tango@fuse.net for smaller prints or Mariemont's Eisele Gallery for large limited editions.

Thank you Tina for sharing your works of art with us!





Peggy Stouffer (Costume Design) - Peggy is having a blast costuming this funny production with Carolyn Martinez. They are having fun working with this very talented cast and crew. So, Ed...thank you. Peggy gives a special shout out to their hard working assistant, Anne, and an ex-Marine named Steve. A few of Peggy's favorite costume productions are: *Mamma Mia*, *Miss Saigon*, *Cats*, *Sugar*, *Out of Sterno*, *Who Am I This Time?*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Mame*. Thanks for supporting live theatre. Enjoy the show.



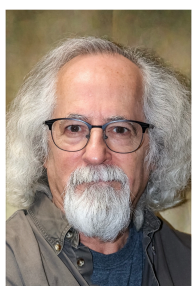
Carolyn Martinez (Costume Design) - To Carolyn, costuming a play is about being creative, making the actors feel fab and adding to the essence of the play. It's also about paybacks. Peggy helped me out with Footlighters' *Something Rotten*. So here we are having fun working together again. And now, Peggy owes me.



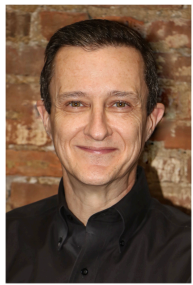
Anne Connor-Stanforth (Costume Assistant) - Anne is joining the Mariemont Players after years of driving by and thinking, "huh, wonder what goes on in there?" She had a great time shopping for this show, and an even better time spending someone else's money. In her spare time she is a mommy to Mara and president of the Glenn Cooper Fan Club.



Helen Chandler-Meyer (Hair & Makeup) -Helen is making her backstage debut with this production of *Rumors*. We welcome her into the community theater family at Mariemont Players. Prior to *Rumors*, she worked with Fairfield High School's Choraliers assisting with hair and makeup under Jeff Clark. By day she works at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and lives in Loveland with her husband, Jay, and 4 wonderful dogs. She wishes everyone to enjoy this wonderful production!



jef brown (Lighting Design) - jef has designed lights for 30+ MPI productions, including *Steel Magnolias*, *Cry It Out*, *Gods of Comedy*, several *Tunas* and most of the shows he's directed here the last 20+ years. In addition, he's directed, acted, designed lights, sets and sound and served as a consultant to many of Cincinnati's theatre groups. jef has been honored by ACT-Cincinnati, Inc. with its Pitocco Award, and by MPI with its Grooms and Hurst Awards. He will direct *Death by Fatal Murder* for BPI in May. jef would like to thank Amy for letting him climb ladders and play with his friends.



Douglas Berlon (Sound Design) - As a Sound Designer, Douglas has been tickling eardrums and making audiences guffaw in delight for decades. He is pleased to work with this talented cast and production team.



Bill Pauly (Master Carpenter) - Bill started constructing sets for Mariemont Players back in November of 2012. He enjoys seeing the sets come alive to enhance the experience of the audience as they watch the performance. Bill finds it a joy building each set with their unique designs and challenges - including a 10th century castle, a dog park, a cemetery, the home of a six foot invisible rabbit and a beauty shop. Along with a talented crew of helpers, Bill has been recognized by both MPI and ACT. He wants to thank MPI, the patrons and his wife for the opportunity to be part of this production.



Nate Huitger (Light/Sound Execution) - Nate is thrilled to be working behind the scenes on this wonderfully hysterical farce. He has enjoyed working both on and off-stage with MPI previously, along with many other companies around Greater Cincinnati. Enjoy! N&N 8314



Aaron Courtland Soper (Box Office Manager) - After Aaron relocated to Cincinnati in 2020 during a Global Pandemic, Mariemont Players welcomed this new member to the playhouse family, showcasing the gracious hospitality locals have grown to love about this community theatre for decades. As a seasoned box office manager with a background in the entertainment industry, a talented creative professional in Visual Arts and as an emerging professional in Intimacy Coaching & Choreography, Aaron has great enthusiasm for assisting Mariemont Players patrons, season after season with having the best experience each and every time they visit our theatre and join us for one of our 6 productions per year. "Time flies when you're having fun and I believe I found the perfect community theatre to call home."



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As of 1/9/2024

Photos by Kristy Rucker



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Mariemont Players' Audience Services

For Your Comfort and Safety

- **Restrooms:** An handicap-accessible restroom on the first floor lobby level, and two additional restrooms in the basement.
- **Refreshments:** Available prior to show and during intermission in the first floor Hurst lobby.
- **Elevator:** Accessible from parking lot, lobby and auditorium. Ask an usher for assistance.
- **Emergency Exits:** Located at the left and right of the front aisle and at the left and right sides of the stage.
- **AED (Automated External Defibrillator):** Located on the top landing just outside the auditorium, designed to be used by anyone in a case of sudden cardiac arrest.
- **Hearing Loop:** For the hearing-impaired patron with a T-coil equipped hearing aid. If your hearing aid is equipped with a wireless receiver called a T-coil or telecoil, just switch it on. If your hearing aid doesn't have a telecoil, you may borrow a separate loop receiver with a headset, available in the first floor lobby will call area.

Good Neighbor Policies

- Latecomers cannot be admitted until a suitable break.
- PLEASE be sure all cell phones, pagers and personal alarms are TURNED OFF, not just placed on silent or vibrate.
- Be considerate of those around you. Talking and rustling papers distract the performers and other audience members.
- Food and drinks are not allowed in the auditorium, except water bottles. Please dispose of all refreshments before entering the theater.
- Walton Creek Theater is a smoke-free building. There are smoking receptacles outside.
- Publisher's copyright strictly forbids photography, video or audio recording of any kind during the performance.

Group Rates

MPI offers special rates to groups of 10 or more for certain performances.

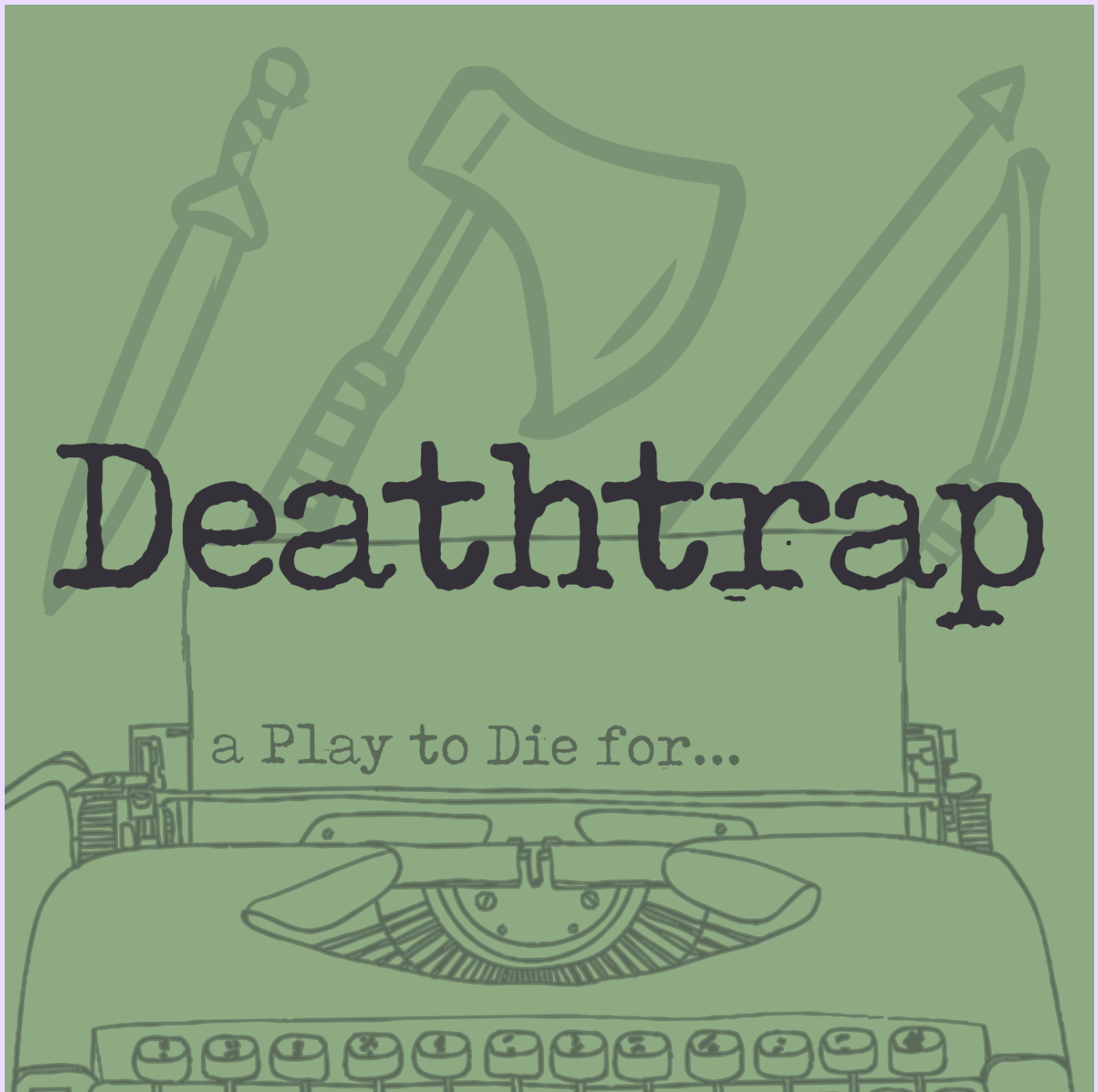
Please call our Box Office at 513 501-1718 for more information.

Contact Us

Mariemont Players
4101 Walton Creek Road
Cincinnati, OH 45227
Box Office #: 513 501-1718
www.mariemontplayers.com



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By Ira Levin

Directed by Jerry Wiesenbahn

Comedy/Thriller

Comfortably ensconced in his charming Connecticut home, Sidney Bruhl, a successful writer of Broadway thrillers, is struggling to overcome a dry spell that has resulted in a string of failures and a shortage of funds. A possible break in his fortunes occurs when he receives a script from a student in the seminar he has been conducting—a thriller that Sidney recognizes immediately as a potential Broadway smash. Sidney's plan, devised with his wife's help, is to offer collaboration to the student for co-credit. Or is it?

March 11 - 28, 2024