

Spoon River Anthology

A Staged Reading



Welcome to the Department of Theatre & Dance 2023-2024 Season!

The UWSP Department of Theatre & Dance is fully accredited by the
National Association of Schools of Theatre and the
National Association of Schools of Dance.

2023-2024 Theatre & Dance Faculty and Staff

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School of Performing Arts



Indigenous Peoples Land Acknowledgement

The Department of Theatre and Dance would like to recognize that the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point occupies the unceded lands of the Ho Chunk and Menominee people.

Please take a moment to acknowledge and honor this ancestral Ho Chunk and Menominee land, and the sacred lands of all indigenous peoples.

Director's Note

*"You're haunted, you're hunted, wherever you roam.
Spoon River, Spoon River is calling you home."*

I first encountered Edgar Lee Masters' 1915 poetry cycle as a high school student in the mid-1960s. Even without understanding many of its nuances – it was a Catholic boys' school – I was captivated by the testimony of the residents of the graveyard on the hill: tales of joy and pain, aspiration and foolishness, persecution and tenderness, marital strife unresolved by death, and a transcendent understanding of life.

Several of their stories, I repeated over the years: Knowlton Hoheimer ("the first fruits of the battle of Missionary Ridge") was an early audition piece when I was a young actor. Lucius Atherton (a "toothless, discarded, rural Don Juan") and Wendell P. Bloyd (who "said God lied to Adam") have been my favorite selections for public readings. And I've three times invoked Fiddler Jones (who spread joy with "not a single regret") when called upon to eulogize departed friends.

Around the time I met those characters, actor Charles Aidman rearranged a selection of the Spoon River poems, adding song lyrics to create a theatrical evening that was a 1963 Broadway success and has been performed ever since. I caught up with it exactly a year ago when the Zoom play-reading group I joined during Covid chose to do Aidman's script, and I was asked to cast it for our October gathering. Immersed in those characters and songs to distribute them among my online colleagues, it struck me how marvelous an opportunity they would present for our young performers at UWSP.

There are two casts for this four-show production, anchored by seniors Mic Frommelt, Sydney Possinger, and Haley Schenk, and our music director Anthony Soto, who set Aidman's songs to original music. Eighteen other actors are divided into two companies, each actor performing eight very different roles. The goal was to give each actor characters or songs that are in their wheelhouse – the kind of parts they'd normally play – along with other opportunities to stretch and test their talents in a variety of ways.

I am so very grateful to them for the results. With help from my wonderful assistant directors Emily Ruth and Kole Mallien, the company has created two distinct theatrical occasions, each one deeper, richer, more resonant and more entertaining than I had imagined. I admire them all, as I'm sure you will... once you've experienced Spoon River.

Jim O'Connell
Associate Professor of Arts Management

Dramaturg's Note

Spoon River Anthology by Edgar Lee Masters tells the stories of the citizens of Spoon River, Illinois. The original poetry collection, published in its entirety in 1915, consists of 245 free verse epitaphs written as monologues. Each poem acts as both a portrait of the person it is remembering, and a single brushstroke in the larger painting of the town itself. At the time of its publication, Spoon River Anthology was considered controversial for the way it challenged the notion of the idyllic American small-town. With its stories of infidelity, secrecy, and violence, Spoon River showcased small-town life, warts and all.

When writing Spoon River, Masters drew inspiration from the world around him, freely incorporating experiences from his childhood in Lewistown as well as his grandmother's stories of life in Petersburg. While the town itself is not real, many of the stories are. He even incorporated some real people, including Anne Rutledge (Abraham Lincoln's first love) and William H. Herndon (Lincoln's law partner and biographer).

The adaptation that you are about to see, conceived by Charles Aidman in 1963, does not do much to alter the material other than grouping thematically similar pieces and adding music. As you watch, I encourage you to note which of the epitaphs mention experiences shared between characters or references to other members of the community, as well as how each character chooses to tell their story. From beyond the grave, each person is able to speak candidly about how they led their lives.

Despite being over 100 years old, Masters' poetry still stirs something in me. I hope that it will stir something in you, too.

Emily Ruth
Dramaturg
Assistant Director
BFA Acting Student

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Department of Theatre & Dance
Presents

SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

BY CHARLES AIDMAN

**CONCEIVED FROM EDGAR LEE
MASTERS' SPOON RIVER
ANTHOLOGY**

Director

Jim O'Connell*

**Dramaturg &
Assistant Director**

Emily Ruth

Original Music by

Anthony Soto

Music Director

Anthony Soto

**Stage Manager &
Assistant Director**

Kole Mallien

**UWSP Faculty & Staff*

"Spoon River Anthology" is presented by arrangement with Concord
Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

2023-24 Season Production Staff

Technical Director.....Ann Warren*

Stage Manager/Assistant Director.....Kole Mallien

Dramaturg/Assistant Director.....Emily Ruth

Costume/Hair/Makeup Mentor.....Emily Bustamante*

Costume Shop Assistants.....Sam Baxter, Erin Bohn, Madelyn Coles,
Tierney Detter, Sarah Dickinson, Clara Douglas,
Evaya Gonzalez, Nessa Grant, Steph Hogan, Riley Johnson,
Mckenna Johnston, Natalie Leittermann, Ellie McGillivray,
Sophie Pitsch, Martha Ruona, Emily Ruth, Natalie Shrock,
Aidan Sterberg, Kelli Wonsmos

Light Shop Assistants.....Elliot Cross, Isabel Bauer, Jenny Beck,
Luke Calaway, Zoey Davis, Logan Godfrey,
Emily Hoepfner, Ryan Matz, Kimberly Schipper

Scenic/Paint/Props Mentor/Prop Shop Manager.....Sarah E. Ross*

Scene Shop Assistants.....Serena Alexander, Paul Been,
Cali Grant, Mark Radtke, Ike Smith

Paint/Prop Shop Assistants.....Hannah Holterman, Charlie Kauth,
Katie Kloth, Nolan Limones, Emily Molloy,
Pauline Nikolov, Cody Smogoleski, Maddie Wallace

House Manager.....Ellie Paynter

Theatre & Dance Student Office Assistants.....Erin Clementich
Ryan Niedenthal, Megan Shields

****UWSP Faculty & Staff***

Spoon River Anthology

ODD CAST

Performing Sept. 21 & 23

Haley Schenk
Sydney Possinger
Mic Frommelt
Anthony Soto
Rachel McCulloch
Maxine Danni
Morgan Stock
Monica Kuhn
Becca Guth
Cody Smogoleski
Hayden Hoffman
Nikolai Kramer
Ryan Matz

EVEN CAST

Performing Sept 22 & 24

Haley Schenk
Sydney Possinger
Mic Frommelt
Anthony Soto
Katie Kloth
Hannah Holterman
Sanibel Harper
Olivia Rosenberg
Vanessa Guillen
Sam Thompson
Tann Groholski
Jacob Massart
Trevor Bohringer

Meet the Company

Bohringer, Trevor (*Cast, He/Him*) Sophomore Musical Theatre major from New London, WI.

Danni, Maxine (*Cast, She/Her*) Junior Musical Theatre major from Naples, FL.

Frommelt, Mic (*Cast, He/They*) Senior Acting major from Platteville, WI.

Groholski, Tann (*Cast, He/They*) Junior Acting Major from Hortonville, WI.

Guillen, Vanessa (*Cast, She/They*) Senior Musical Theatre major, Race & Ethnicity Studies minor from Kewaunee, WI. Recipient of the Stages to Equity Scholarship.

Guth, Becca (*Cast, She/Her*) Sophomore Jazz Studies major from Waukesha, WI.

Harper, Sanibel (*Cast, She/Her*) Sophomore Acting major from Green Bay, WI. Recipient of the Anne Gilfry Schierl Fine Arts Award.

Hoffman, Hayden (*Cast, He/Him*) Senior Musical Theatre major from Sister Bay, WI. Recipient of the Miller Family Music Education Scholarship.

Holterman, Hannah (*Cast, She/Her*) Sophomore Musical Theatre major from Waupaca, WI. Recipient of the Theatre & Dance Scholarship, the Elda Bark Walker Scholarship, and the Arts Bash Scholarship.

Kloth, Katie (*Cast, She/They*) Sophomore Acting Major from Wausau, WI.

Kramer, Nikolai (*Cast, He/Him*) Sophomore Acting major from Green Bay, WI.

Kuhn, Monica (*Cast, She/Her*) Junior Acting major and Psychology and Arts Management minor from Oak Creek, WI. Recipient of the Presidential Gold Scholarship.

Mallien, Kole (*Stage Manager, Assistant Director, He/Him*) Senior Acting major from Sturgeon Bay, WI.

Massart, Jacob (*He/They*) Sophomore Musical Theatre major and Dance minor from Green Bay, WI.

Meet the Company

Matz, Ryan (*Cast, He/Him*) Sophomore Acting major from Reedsburg, WI.

McCulloch, Rachel (*Cast, She/Her*) Junior Drama major and Arts Management and Media Studies minor from Gurnee, IL..

Possinger, Sydney (*Cast, She/Her*) Senior Acting major and Arts Management minor from Redmond, Washington. Recipient of the 2022 Baruch Bridgeman Award.

Rosenberg, Olivia (*Cast, She/Her*) Sophomore Musical Theatre and Dance major from Lake Mills, WI.

Ruth, Emily (*Dramaturg, Assistant Director, They/She*) Senior Acting major and Arts Management and Music minors from Eleva, WI. Recipient of the Anne Gilfry Schierl Fine Arts Award in Acting, the Arts Bash Scholarship, and the COFAC Excellence Award.

Schenk, Haley (*Cast, She/They*) Senior Acting major and Criminal Justice, Sociology, and Women's and Gender Studies minors from Arena, WI.

Smogolesky, Cody (*Cast, He/They*) Sophomore Musical Theatre major from Two Rivers, WI.

Soto, Anthony (*Cast, Composer, Music Director, They/He*) Junior Musical Theatre major and Arts Management minor from Naples, FL. Recipient of the Destination Wisconsin Scholarship.

Stock, Morgan (*Cast, She/Her*) Sophomore Acting major from Manitowoc, WI.

Thompson, Sam (*Cast, He/Him*) Sophomore Musical Theatre major from Cambridge, WI.

CONTRIBUTE TO BACKSTAGE

The Department of Theatre & Dance welcomes financial support for educational and artistic activities through a variety of programs, including existing scholarships and endowments, special projects support, bequests and planned gifts. For more information about contributing to the Department of Theatre & Dance, please contact Jennifer Tubbs, Major Gifts Officer, at jtubbs@uwsp.edu or 715-846-3056. You may also donate online at <https://give.uwsp.edu/give-backstage> or by scanning the QR code found on the bottom of this page.

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Department of Theatre & Dance School of Performing Arts University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

The mission of the [Department of Theatre and Dance](#) is to serve:

- Its majors and minors through curricular offerings and performance/production activities that heighten intellectual, artistic, cultural, and humane sensitivities.
- The general student population through curricular offerings and stage productions that engender an appreciation and understanding of the performing arts and their contribution to the cultural and aesthetic enrichment of life.
- The university community and general central Wisconsin population through the production of quality stage performances.

STAGES TO EQUITY SCHOLARSHIP

In an ongoing effort to broaden and enrich our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity practices in the Department of Theatre & Dance, we've established the new *Stages to Equity Scholarship*. This award supports students who come from historically under-represented populations within the theatre, dance, and arts management student body at UW-Stevens Point. This academic year, we hope to grow the Stages to Equity endowment to support two annual scholarships for our students. We hope you might consider a gift to the endowment today! Scan the QR code with your mobile device, or visit give.uwsp.edu/stages-to-equity. If you are interested in receiving more information about the scholarship, you can reach out to Professor Tyler Marchant at tmarchan@uwsp.edu or at 715.252.8012 and he will be happy to assist you.



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