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**HERITAGE THEATRE FESTIVAL TO PRESENT
*KEN LUDWIG'S BASKERVILLE: A SHERLOCK HOLMES MYSTERY***

OPENING JULY 22 AT THE RUTH CAPLIN THEATRE

**Madcap Mystery Features Five Actors Playing Nearly 40 Characters And Combines Comic Mayhem
With Edge-Of-Your-Seat Thrills To Tell Tale of One of Sherlock Holmes Most Dangerous Cases**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – DATE, 2017 – The game is definitely afoot this summer at Heritage Theatre Festival thanks to its upcoming production of *Ken Ludwig's Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* – opening July 22 in the Ruth Caplin Theatre.

Ken Ludwig's Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery, directed by Colleen Kelly and Marianne Kubik, will be presented in the Ruth Caplin Theatre from July 22-29. Tickets are \$25 if purchased before July 22 and \$30 if purchased on or after that date. Student/Child tickets are available for \$15 regardless of when purchased. Tickets for this and all 2017 Heritage Theatre Festival shows are available at the UVA Arts Box Office (located in the lobby of the Drama Building), online at www.heritagetheatrefestival.org or by phone at 434-924-3376.

The world's most famous detective and his trusty sidekick Watson face down their most notorious case of all in this madcap retelling of the ultimate Victorian whodunit from the "mastermind of mayhem" Ken Ludwig. A stunningly nimble cast of five takes on nearly 40 characters, coming on and off stage almost as quickly as the twists and turns of this delightfully complex plot, as Holmes and Watson race against time to crack the mystery of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* before a family curse dooms its newest heir. The intrepid investigators' search for the (anything but elementary) truth comes complete with a dizzying web of clues, outlandish accents, disguises, and deceit. Does a wild hellhound prowl the moors of Devonshire? Can our heroes discover the truth in time? Can costume changes really be that fast? These and many more questions are just waiting to be answered!

Co-director Marianne Kubik said she was drawn to the story by its deft mixing of comedy and drama. "Ken Ludwig puts the entire *Hound of the Baskervilles* plot into this story," she said. "But the unique thing that really starts to move it into the more madcap comic realm is that he has taken five actors and dispersed them across 38 roles. Two of these actors spend the entire play as Holmes and Watson. So there is a lot of energy and excitement in seeing these remaining three actors playing these multiple roles, often in the same scene. Then you add the fact that this is set in Victorian times and features period costumes and you have full costume changes that are happening sometimes in 20 or 30 seconds."

Those changes, Kelly said are nothing new to Heritage Costume Designer Dorothy Smith, a veteran of the "Tuna" plays that proved a hit with Heritage audiences and featured only two actors in a similar number of roles.

The pace and complexity is hardly conveyed by sets and costumes alone, Kelly said, but falls largely on the show's cast. "In addition to costume changes, our actors are often doing scene shifts," she said. "They may carry a chair into a scene, or they may suddenly grab a door and walk through it. They are really creating the environment or the audience." These added responsibilities plus a summer season rehearsal schedule made casting particularly important, she said. "Both Marianne and I wanted to work with actors we knew and trusted, people we knew we could start with on day one, since we didn't have the time to figure out how to work together."

The cast includes UVA Drama MFA students Michael Miranda and Sam Reeder and Drama faculty member Denise Stewart, a Heritage audience favorite from roles in shows including *Shear Madness*. Playing the roles of Holmes and Watson are Mark Jeter and Jeremy West. "Not only do I know them and have worked with them," Kelly said, "but they have also worked together before and really understand how each other works."

Another element that is helping to set the many scenes is an original soundscape for the show created by Sound Designer and UVA Drama Department faculty member Michael Rasbury. "Michael has composed an underscore of music for the entire show," Kubik said. "So you have chase music for a chase scene, for instance, and danger music when the hounds are imminent." The soundscape is complemented by a visual landscape created by Lighting Designer R. Lee Kennedy and Set Designer Batul Rizvi. "The challenge from the beginning was how do we create this world in which the actors can tell this story, from the danger of the hounds and the moors to the creepiness of Baskerville?"

Despite the many moving parts and the extensive preparation that goes into a production like this, the goal, Kubik said, has remained simple. "What we want to do with this show is to thrill the audience. That could be the thrill of suspense, of danger, or of comedy. Because this is definitely a comedy, but it is also Sherlock Holmes, so there is plenty of real suspense there as well. I think there are plenty of thrills to go around."

The 2017 Heritage Theatre Festival will continue with the classic Stephen Sondheim musical *Company*, featuring all-time classic Broadway hits like "Being Alive" (July 28-August 4 in the Culbreth Theatre). Putting an exclamation point on the season's proceedings this summer will be International Clown Hall of Fame member Barry Lubin, the face of the Big Apple Circus, who will bring his iconic and irrepressible character "Grandma" for performances in the Ruth Caplin Theatre on August 4 and 5.

Parking for Heritage Theatre Festival performances is available at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, conveniently located alongside the theaters.

To access photos of this production, visit <https://virginia.box.com/s/1v4j3s5d96il5go6doebxzj1egblji7i>