



*8th Annual*

DURANGO™  
**PLAYFEST**

**June 25-28, 2026**

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## What to Know Before We Begin

Over the past week, Durango PlayFest's four playwrights – working side by side with directors and actors – have immersed themselves in the exhilarating process of bringing new plays to life. Each evening offered another opportunity to revise, refine, and strengthen their work in preparation for today's staged readings. Now, it's your opportunity to help them take their plays to the next level.

### What's a staged reading?

- Minimal staging with no sets and costumes, and very few props.
- Allows the playwright to experience the play – the dialogue, pacing, structure and the audience engagement.
- Actors hold their scripts throughout the performance.
- A staged reading is rehearsed, allowing actors to perform with emotion and intentionality.
- A reader (narrator) reads the stage directions to provide context about what's happening in a scene.

### What's a talkback?

After the reading, the playwright, director and actors will join a moderator on stage for a guided Q&A session with audience members. It's your opportunity to experience a unique and extremely important aspect of play development – feedback! Please stay and be part of the process.



# SCHEDULE OF READINGS

## JUNE 25-28, 2026

All readings will be held at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College

See page 12



**THURSDAY, JUNE 25 • 7:00 PM**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 28 • 3:00 PM**

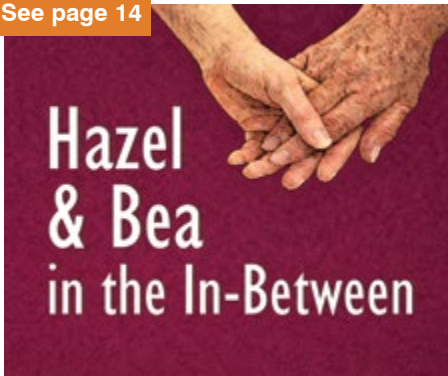
See page 13



**FRIDAY, JUNE 26 • 3:00 PM**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 27 • 7:00 PM**

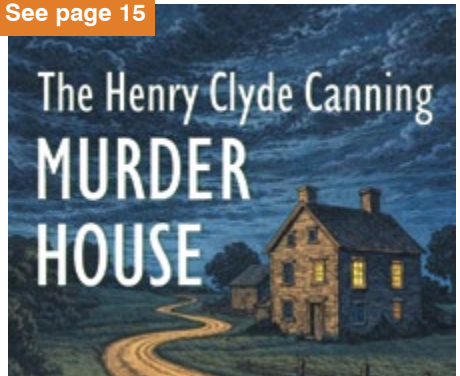
See page 14



**FRIDAY, JUNE 26 • 7:00 PM**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 28 • 11:00 AM**

See page 15



**SATURDAY, JUNE 27 • 3:00 PM**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 28 • 7:00 PM**



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## Felicia Lansbury Meyer

This year, more than ever, I find myself pausing to take in what we've built together at PlayFest. It has grown into something deeply meaningful — a gathering shaped by a loyal, curious audience, devoted volunteers, an engaged board, and a strengthening partnership with Fort Lewis College that supports a vibrant internship program. At the heart of it all is a shared belief in new plays and the care and collaboration they require.



We have become an organization that listens and responds, allowing the work and the people within it to guide what comes next. That sense of movement feels especially present as we step into the Community Concert Hall, a space that opens new possibilities.

This season, five production interns join us, bringing interests that range from Theatre Arts to Ecology and Diversity. Their presence reminds us that new play development is also about cultivating future artists and thinkers.

There is power in gathering to witness live storytelling. Your presence matters. In this festival, you are not just an audience, you are part of the process, helping shape these plays through your attention and openness.

I am grateful for the team that makes this possible, and for all of you who show up to share in it. Thank you for being here.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Felicia" with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

## **inclusivity**

Durango PlayFest is committed to creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for all. We believe that the arts should reflect the richness and complexity of the world, and we are dedicated to ensuring that our productions, programs, and practices are accessible and welcoming to everyone.



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*\*Denotes contributions to the Christina Erteszek Memorial Fund at the Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado.*

*\*\*Denotes contributions to the Bruce Lansbury Tribute Playwriting Fund.*

*This is a list of donations at the time of printing.  
Please see insert for additional donors.*

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**Durango PlayFest is grateful to  
Naomi Marty at Wells Fargo Advisors  
for sponsoring the Powerhouse  
Community Concert Series on June 17,  
which benefited PlayFest programs.**

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Teresa Lashley

Every year since PlayFest's inception has brought both challenges and opportunities—that's the nature of meaningful growth. What began in early 2018 as a spark of an idea has become a thriving nonprofit now celebrating its 8th annual festival. That milestone is no small achievement, and it reflects the vision, hard work, and a few leaps of faith to make it happen.

This past year marked a pivotal stage in our journey. We welcomed three new board members whose talents strengthen and expand our leadership. Our valued partnership with Fort Lewis College was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding, ensuring this essential collaboration continues to flourish. In a bold step forward, we moved our readings to the Community Concert Hall, opening our doors wider than ever before and inviting larger audiences to experience the thrill of new play development.



Growth, of course, requires stability. Like many organizations, we've felt the impact of a challenging economic climate affecting individuals, businesses, and the nonprofit sector — especially the arts. Yet, even in this environment, something remarkable has happened.

We've welcomed new donors, sponsors, and grant partners into the PlayFest family. All of you who purchase tickets, attend readings, and champion our work contribute to our success.

We appreciate all of you! Theatre does not begin with actors or a director. It begins with a playwright. Festivals like ours are shrinking or closing. Thank you for believing in the power of new stories and helping us to provide a collaborative space to bring them to life.

*Teresa*

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# A Deal Picked Just for You

In this absurdist comedy, shut-ins Maggie and Brenda have sworn off the chaos of the outside world and focus their obsessions on Amazon packages, food-delivery, and denial — that is, until a string of uninvited guests upends their fragile bubble. A play about what happens when absurdity becomes the new normal, and why we keep searching for connection anyway.

Playwright and Director ..... John Farmanesh-Bocca  
 Brenda/BreBre ..... Brenda Strong  
 Maggie/Momo ..... Marg Helgenberger  
 Ms. Valerie Potzzo ..... Wendie Malick  
 Kei ..... Ahkei Togun  
 Boy ..... Luca Wiggins  
 Stage Manager ..... Harper Hadley  
 Assistant Stage Manager ..... Caden Martinez  
 Stage Directions Reader ..... Ben Mattson



John Farmanesh-Bocca



Brenda Strong



Marg Helgenberger



Wendie Malick



Ahkei Togun



Luca Wiggins



Harper Hadley



Caden Martinez



Ben Mattson

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Set over the course of a single, suspenseful night in a Queens cemetery, this dark, comedic thriller focuses on two gravediggers and one woman who must confront a web of love, adultery, murder, and the mob. They'll be forced to decide whether it's better to pay for your sins in this life – or the next.

Playwright..... Richard Vetere  
 Director ..... Brendan Burke  
 Ryan ..... Dan Lauria  
 Sean ..... Ray Abruzzo  
 Melissa..... Maja Wampuszyc  
 Stage Manager.....Jill Gold  
 Assistant Stage Manager..... Helene Brimhall  
 Stage Directions Reader .....Mandy Irons



Richard Vetere



Brendan Burke



Dan Lauria



Ray Abruzzo



Maja Wampuszyc



Jill Gold



Helene Brimhall



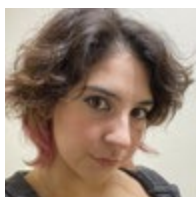
Mandy Irons

# Hazel & Bea in the In-Between



When two elderly women — Hazel, sharp-tongued and fiercely independent, and Bea, warm but forgetful — meet as roommates in a nursing home, they clash over space, noise, and personality. As they reminisce about the lives that they’ve lost, Hazel comes to believe Bea is the Beatrice she loved as a teenager.

Playwright.....Zoe Stanton-Savitz  
 Director.....Nikki DiLoreto  
 Hazel.....Kathleen Noone  
 Bea .....Patty McCormack  
 Nurse Margo.....Tara Demmy  
 Stage Manager.....Jessica McCallum  
 Assistant Stage Manager.....Bailey Lennon  
 Stage Directions Reader.....Cindy Laudadio-Hill



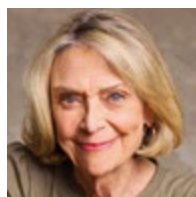
Zoe Stanton-Savitz



Nikki DiLoreto



Kathleen Noone



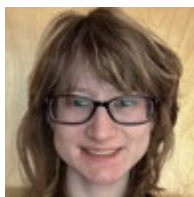
Patty McCormack



Tara Demmy



Jessica McCallum



Bailey Lennon



Cindy Laudadio-Hill

# The Henry Clyde Canning MURDER HOUSE



Years after their father is convicted for the murder of sixteen women, siblings Elise and Harry are forced to confront their own buried secrets when Harry comes home with plans to exploit their infamous past by converting the family homestead into a murder house tourist attraction.

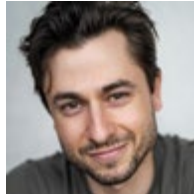
Playwright.....Christian Missonak  
 Director.....Melissa Firlit  
 Harry.....Adam Fontana  
 Elise.....Ivy King  
 Luka.....Jason Lythgoe  
 Vera.....Lennox T. Duong  
 Stage Manager.....Misha Zimmerman  
 Assistant Stage Manager.....Caroline Daly  
 Stage Directions Reader.....Karisa Bruin



Christian Missonak



Melissa Firlit



Adam Fontana



Ivy King



Jason Lythgoe



Lennox T. Duong



Misha Zimmerman



Caroline Daly



Karisa Bruin

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# MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Artistic Director – **Felicia Lansbury Meyer**

Managing Director – **Mandy Mikulencak**

Transportation Coordinator – **Greg Weiss**

Production Intern – **Katie Bos**

Stage Manager, *A Deal Picked Just for You* – **Harper Hadley**

Stage Manager, *Hazel & Bea in the In-Between* – **Jessica McCallum**

Stage Manager, *The German* – **Jill Gold**

Stage Manager, *The Henry Clyde Canning Murder House* – **Misha Zimmerman**

Assistant Stage Manager, *A Deal Picked Just for You* – **Caden Martinez**

Assistant Stage Manager, *Hazel & Bea in the In-Between* – **Bailey Lennon**

Assistant Stage Manager, *The German* – **Helene Brimhall**

Assistant Stage Manager, *The Henry Clyde Canning Murder House* – **Caroline Daly**

Van Driver – **J’Kye Wientjes**

Venue / Ticketing – **Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College**

Rehearsal Space / Vans / Company Lunches – **Fort Lewis College**

Catering – **Zia’s Cantina, Sage Fresh Eats, Et Voila, Nature’s Oasis, Mountain High Catering**

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SDC Contract Affairs Rep – **Andrew Hazer**

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Assistant Director, Production and Operations – **LeAnn Brubaker**

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Ticketing and Patron Services Manager – **Doug Gonzalez**

Audio Engineer – **Logan Roybal**

Audio Engineer – **Teegan Webb**

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Geoff Johnson

Cindy Laudadio-Hill

Jason Lythgoe

Kim Martin

Brad Meyer

Mary Nowotny

Sally Oppenheim

Margaret Patterson

Mike Peterson

Debbie Pfeifer

Christine Phillips

Jamie Pickering

Lisa Prugh

Kim Schwartz

Valerie Smith

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*Please accept our sincere apologies if you  
were inadvertently left off this list.*

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Please see insert for additional grantors.*

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# MEET THE STAFF



## **Felicia Lansbury Meyer – Artistic Director**

Felicia has been with PlayFest since its very beginning in 2018. She has oversight of PlayFest programming, workshops, artist management, and contracts. She also serves as producer of the festival. Felicia is chair of the Fort Lewis College Performing Arts Department where she has been teaching, mentoring students, and directing since 2007. Prior to joining FLC, Felicia worked extensively in theatre and television. She holds an MFA in directing from the American Film Institute and a BFA in theatre arts from New York University.



## **Mandy Mikulencak – Managing Director**

Mandy joined PlayFest in 2020. Her duties include day-to-day management of the nonprofit including budget oversight, grant writing, donor relations, marketing, and strategic planning. She holds a BS in journalism and has worked in a variety of national communications and publishing roles in the nonprofit sector for more than 35 years. She also served as executive director of the Women's Resource Center for four years. She is a published author of historical fiction.

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The infographic features a blue background with a constellation of white stars connected by thin white lines. The text is in white and yellow. The Community Foundation logo is a stylized black star.

## REMEMBERING SELENA



Selena Trujillo, a dear friend of PlayFest and a familiar face in Durango's theatre scene, passed away in March 2026 after a battle with cancer. Selena described herself as a freelance, graphic designing, video-editing, stage-managing, techie geek and digital sorcerer. She was a valued and much-loved stage manager during five PlayFest festivals. She worked with Merely Players in several capacities and in productions at the Durango Arts Center theatre. Selena had also worked as tech crew for the SnowDown Follies from 2013-2018. She most recently served as administrative assistant for the theatre department at Fort Lewis College.

"Selena has been an integral part of the PlayFest family for many years," said Felicia Lansbury Meyer, PlayFest artistic director. "Playwrights, actors, directors and the entire festival community will remember her fondly. Her contributions were many, and her laughter and easy-going nature made festival weeks brighter."

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# PLAYFEST YOUTH PROGRAMS

Durango PlayFest's long-standing **internship program with Fort Lewis College** immerses students in all aspects of festival development including production, stage management, lighting and sound, hospitality, and more. These paid positions provide hands-on experience and mentorship from experienced theatre professionals. Since 2018, more than 60 students have served as interns.

Our **REAL-WORLD THEATRE speaker series for youth** brings young playwrights and actors of diverse backgrounds to Durango to speak to high school and college students. Frank discussions of the challenges and opportunities in the industry – warts and all – inspire students to envision theatre careers they may not have otherwise considered. Read about our past speakers at [www.durangoplayfest.org/youth-programs](http://www.durangoplayfest.org/youth-programs)

**If you'd like to sponsor an intern or support our youth speaker series, please call 970-335-8264 or email [durangoplayfest@gmail.com](mailto:durangoplayfest@gmail.com)**

## Interns 2024



*Read about our  
past speakers*



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

## Outgoing Board Members Bud and Fran Franks



From the very beginning of Durango PlayFest, one extraordinary duo has helped shape the festival with vision, heart, and more than six decades of theatre experience.

Bud and Fran Franks, two of PlayFest's original co-founders, helped transform the dream of a play development festival into a reality in 2018 – and did it in just over seven months. They'd probably be the first to tell you that's not the ideal business model for a start-up, but it's proof of what can happen when passionate people believe deeply in the arts.

Their remarkable careers in theatre brought invaluable credibility and expertise to PlayFest in its earliest days. Together, they have acted, directed, stage managed, choreographed, and championed countless productions and artists. They co-founded the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and helped establish its Festival of New Musicals. As arts consultants, they also developed cultural institutions across the country, including Houston's Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, San Antonio's Tobin Center, and the Briscoe Western Art Museum.

At PlayFest, Bud and Fran stepped in to do absolutely anything that needed to be done. They helped guide strategic planning, budgeting, programming, and advocacy. Bud served as treasurer and chair of the finance committee all eight years. He and Fran were instrumental in play selection and programming. In their "free" time, they served on PlayFest's hospitality/special events committee. Behind the scenes, they rolled up their sleeves. They hauled ice, arranged tables and chairs, handed out programs, took tickets, ran errands, solved last-minute crises, and kept things moving with humor and grace. (One year, Bud held down the side flaps of the festival tent during a windy rainstorm!)

Perhaps most importantly, Bud and Fran have served as keepers of PlayFest's history. They have seen every challenge, every breakthrough, and every milestone along the way. Their wisdom and steady belief in our mission helped guide PlayFest these past eight years.

While this will be their final festival as members of the Board of Directors, we have a feeling that their connection to PlayFest is far from over. After all, true volunteers never really retire.

When you see them this week, please stop to thank them for their service!

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ARTS**

# Turn your passion into performance



At Fort Lewis College, you'll train where the San Juan Mountains meet the desert sky, and where the performing arts are anything but an afterthought.

Small classes, faculty who are still working artists, and a stage that challenges you to lead from day one.

An education grounded in creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration—for careers on stage, behind the scenes, and beyond.

## **Majors offered**

- Music
- Music Business
- Music Education
- Music Performance
- Musical Theatre
- Theatre
- Theatre Education

