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## AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE ANNOUNCES 47<sup>th</sup> SEASON

Theater Names Nine Titles to Run June – November in Hill and Touchstone Theatres

**SPRING GREEN, WIS.** — Following a celebrated 2025 summer season, American Players Theatre (APT) has announced its 47th season, running June through November 2026.

Performances on APT's flagship outdoor stage, the Hill Theatre, begin with Shakespeare's beloved comedy *As You Like It* directed by Core Company member Laura Rook. Next, Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker* returns to the Hill after 20 years, directed by Brian Cowing.

APT Artistic Director Brenda DeVita will direct a new adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* written by Core Company member Nate Burger. In August, Shakespeare's early comedy *The Two "Gentlemen" of Verona* takes the stage, adapted and directed by Aaron Posner. The Hill season concludes with *Sueño*, José Rivera's reimagined take on a 17th-century classic, takes the stage under the direction of Marcela Lorca.

The Touchstone Theatre lineup brings a dynamic mix of stories to the stage. The season opens with *Casey and Diana* by Nick Green, directed by Michael Herwitz. Next is Eugène Ionesco's absurdist farce *The Chairs*, directed by Vanessa Stalling (*Constellations*, 2024) and featuring Core Company members Colleen Madden and James Ridge. Nathan Alan Davis's lyrical look at lineage, *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea*, directed by Tyrone Phillips, follows, opening in August. The season concludes in late fall 2026 with Jen Silverman's acclaimed *Witch*, directed by Kiera Fromm in the Touchstone.

**When talking about the theater's 47<sup>th</sup> Season, Artistic Director Brenda DeVita said,** "It seems like every year there are threads in the season that I am completely unconscious of when I'm putting it together, because I'm truly never thinking about a theme. But as we revisit these plays, and get ready to produce them, it occurs to me that it is a season full of existential questions, and a season full of searching. Searching for meaning, and for love, and for identity. And everyone experiences those journeys, right? They can be funny, and absurd, sometimes devastating. We often get our hearts broken while we're out trying to find ourselves. But the end of the story isn't the whole story. Every drama has moments of laughter, and something to hope for. And every comedy has a kernel of angst, or even danger. That balance is what makes those stories rich and real, and why they continue to be worth exploring.

“Because it always comes back to the art. It comes back to the passion of the artists that are involved. We always have Shakespeares in our season; we find something new and surprising every time we produce Shakespeare. But we also look for those lesser-known projects that are exciting for the actors and artists to create, and exciting for our audience to experience. So we’ve got *As You Like It* and Wilder’s *Matchmaker*, which are charming, delightful, beloved plays. And we’ve got these gorgeous and poetic stories like *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* by Nathan Alan Davis, who wrote *Nat Turner in Jerusalem*, which we produced in 2024, and *Sueño*, José Rivera’s adaptation of *Life is a Dream* which is poetic, and a little bawdy; it reminds me a bit of *The Virgin Queen* from last year. And a very spare and funny new adaptation of Chekhov’s *Uncle Vanya*, by Nate Burger, that I’m directing; and Aaron Posner’s adaptation of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* that really focuses in on what’s good and beautiful about that play. And every one of those stories is a search for answers to those big questions. Whether they answer them or not really doesn’t matter. What matters is the exploration and the joy and the community that those stories provide while we contemplate the questions. Artistically, I think 2025 has been one of APT’s best seasons, from top to bottom. And I think we have the right artists and plays to continue that streak into 2026. We’re already digging in on these stories. I can’t wait to share them – summer will be back before we know it.”

A schedule for the 2026 season will be available starting in January, with tickets going on sale to returning patrons in March. Find more information at [americanplayers.org](http://americanplayers.org).

### **The 2026 Plays**

#### **In the Hill Theatre**

##### **As You Like It**

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Laura Rook

Rosalind and Celia are best friends and cousins. But when Celia’s father, the Duke, begins to see Rosalind as a threat to his daughter’s future prosperity, the two women prepare disguises (with Rosalind pretending to be a boy named Ganymede) and escape to the Forest of Arden. Meanwhile, Orlando, a young gentleman who had previously fallen for Rosalind, is also forced to flee to that very same forest. There, he meets “Ganymede,” who promises to teach him how to woo Rosalind. All that plus a band of merry forest-dwelling misfits make for a great Shakespearean comedy.

##### **The Matchmaker**

By Thornton Wilder

Directed by Brian Cowing

Prepare to be dazzled by Wilder’s sparkling farce about love and class. At the heart of the story, the resourceful Dolly Levi, a professional meddler with a knack for arranging other people’s lives (and she may just uncover a few surprises for herself while she’s at it). When Dolly is called upon to find a wife for infamous curmudgeon Horace Vandergelder - hilarity ensues. Fueled by chaos and mistaken identity, with twists and turns a plenty, *The Matchmaker* celebrates the delightful messiness of human connection and the notion that everyone deserves a little adventure.

### **Uncle Vanya**

By Anton Chekhov

Adapted by Nate Burger

Directed by Brenda DeVita

A crisp, entertaining new adaptation of Chekhov's timeless story about longing, regret and missed opportunities. On a quiet country estate, Vanya and his niece Sonya have worked the land for years to support Sonya's father Serebryakov, a self-important professor who now resides at the estate with his free-spirited new wife, Yelena. Tensions simmer and desires ignite among the denizens of this little plot of land, as they debate and needle; dream and love beneath the shadow of impending change.

Contains adult themes and language.

### **The Two "Gentlemen" of Verona**

By William Shakespeare

Adapted & Directed by Aaron Posner

Renowned playwright Aaron Posner breathes new life into one of Shakespeare's earliest comedies. Proteus and Valentine are childhood friends, but the time has come for them to set out to explore their future prospects. Proteus follows his heart toward Julia, while Valentine follows his to Milan to seek his fortunes. But when Proteus is forced by his father to follow Valentine to Milan, they both fall in love with Silvia. Promises will be broken and relationships tested, but with a little help from the ladies, a couple clowns, a charming dog and a group of outlaws, most may yet be put to rights. A lively coming-of-age story last seen at APT over a decade ago.

### **Sueño**

Translated & Adapted by José Rivera

From the play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca

Directed by Marcela Lorca

A theatrical exploration of fate vs free will, Prince Segismundo is imprisoned from birth, based on a prophesy that claimed he grow into a tyrant. But as time passes, his father, King Basilio, has regrets. So he decides to release Segismundo to test if he's really all that bad. And if it turns out he is? They'll just return him to his prison and tell him his freedom was all a dream. Throw in a damsel in disguise, a salty servant and power-hungry couple with relationship issues, and you get a funny, absurd and strangely beautiful take on a 17<sup>th</sup> century classic.

Contains adult themes and language.

## In the Touchstone Theatre

### **Casey and Diana**

By Nick Green

Directed by Michael Herwitz

In 1991, as the AIDS epidemic devastates the gay community and stokes global stigma, a Toronto hospice prepares for a remarkable visitor: Princess Diana. Her arrival offering a glimmer of hope for understanding and compassion. As patients and caregivers prepare for the big day, they share stories, fears, and moments of joy—reminding each other of their strength and humanity in the face of loss. A tender, unflinching drama about resilience, dignity and the small acts of grace that hold the power to change lives.

Contains adult themes and language.

### **The Chairs**

By Eugène Ionesco

Directed by Vanessa Stalling

It's been a few years since APT has had an absurdist on stage (*Exit the King*, 2018), and Ionesco is among the best of the genre. An elderly couple waits in a remote house for an Orator to lead a grand, scientific lecture. As the guests begin to "arrive," the couple scrambles to seat them all while holding increasingly surreal conversations. A "tragic farce" - clownish, quirky and existential – just the way we like our Theatre of the absurd. Featuring Colleen Madden and James Ridge, and directed by Vanessa Stalling (*Constellations*, 2024).

Contains adult themes and language.

### **Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea**

By Nathan Alan Davis

Directed by Tyrone Phillips

Dontrell is a teenager with a bright future and an ancestry haunted by water. As he prepares to leave for college, he's pulled inevitably toward his family's mysterious history, and an ancestor lost at sea long ago. Driven by dreams, Dontrell searches for connection to his past as his family attempts to anchor him in the present. A lyrical, funny and theatrical exploration of love, legacy and self-discovery.

Contains adult themes and language.

### *Opening in October*

#### **Witch**

By Jen Silverman

Directed by Keira Fromm

The Devil is making the rounds in Edmonton, trading favors for souls. And business is booming. Everybody wants something – love, power or just a little validation – and they're willing to pay dearly. But Scratch may have met his match in Elizabeth, a woman living on the outskirts of town who people believe to be a witch. As they play a flirty cat and mouse game, events in the village take on a life of their own. Jen Silverman's (*The Moors*, 2022) wickedly entertaining retelling of the story of The Witch of Edmonton, hitting the Touchstone just in time for spooky season.

Contains adult themes and language

## **Still To Come in 2025**

### **The 39 Steps**

By Patrick Barlow

Directed by John Taylor Phillips

Playing through November 30 in the Touchstone Theatre

**Note: Tickets are largely sold out to *The 39 Steps*. APT added five performances earlier in the season due to audience demand and is presently unable to add more. Contact the Box Office for more information.**

Richard Hannay's adult life has taken a decided turn for the boring, when one night he decides to go to the theater. There he meets a mysterious woman (and a couple of clowns) during a performance by Mr. Memory. When shots are fired, Hannay finds himself hurtling toward a hilarious adventure built from a foundation of all the most famous noir, and into a delightful parody of the genre itself. A theatrical and hilarious send up of Hitchcockian thrillers, with four actors playing every character – a special event perfect for fall in the Touchstone Theatre.

Featuring: Nate Burger, Casey Hoekstra, Laura Rook & Marcus Truschinski.

## **About the Theatre**

American Players Theatre (APT) is a professional repertory theater devoted to great and future classics. Founded in 1979, APT continues to be one of the most popular and critically acclaimed outdoor classical theaters in the nation (2025 recipient of *Newsweek's* Best Outdoor Theater Performance.)

APT is located in Spring Green, Wis., on 110 acres of hilly woods and meadows above the Wisconsin River. The outdoor amphitheater sits within a natural hallow atop an oak-wooded hill surrounded by prairie. Under the dome of sky, world class artists perform for a house of up to 1,075. In 2009, APT opened an indoor space, the Touchstone Theatre, offering a different, more intimate play-going experience for 201 audience members.

To learn more, visit [americanplayers.org](http://americanplayers.org)

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