

# BROADWAY ROSE THEATRE COMPANY

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For Immediate Release

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***Broadway Rose Theatre Company Presents the World Premiere  
of the Musical Thriller "Ripper"***



Photo by Craig MitchellDyer

Tigard, OR – Broadway Rose Theatre Company continues its summer lineup with the world premiere of the musical thriller *Ripper* by Duane Nelsen. With direction by Abe Reybold and music direction by Alan D. Lytle, *Ripper* will be performed at the Deb Fennell Auditorium. Preview performance is August 3 with opening night on Thursday, August 4, and performances continue through August 21, 2011. Evening performances are Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Matinees are at 2 p.m. on Sundays, on Saturday, August 13, and on Saturday, August 20. The Deb Fennell Auditorium is located at 9000 SW Durham

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Road in Tigard. Tickets prices are \$28 to \$35 for adults, with \$20 tickets available for ages 6 – 25. For a full listing of show performances or to order tickets visit [www.broadwayrose.org](http://www.broadwayrose.org) or call the box office at 503.620.5262.

The PennyWise Music Hall is home to an illusionist who saws women in half while real murders are taking place on the streets outside. Reporter Chester Talbot sets out to unravel the mystery, but what he sees may not be what it seems. A truly original take on a well-known story that still provides suspense, surprises, and a refreshing approach.

Author and composer Duane Nelsen loosely based his script on the story of Jack the Ripper. The five women featured in the story (Kate, Liz, Polly, Annie, and Mary) were actual victims of the Ripper, but they did not know one another as they do in this production. They all work together at the PennyWise Music Hall (a fictional locale) in London's East End, where the proprietress of the establishment is both a madam and a magician. Much of the story takes place in the Hall and the element of illusion sets the theme for the show. Nelson defines the style of the show as a musical thriller. "The theme speaks to how people survive in a climate of fear, knowing that what we see may not be what it seems," says Nelsen.

The cast includes Isaac Lamb as reporter Chester Talbot, Bruce Blanchard as John Pizer, Amy Jo Halliday as Mrs. Ratkin, Audrey Voon as Mary, Josh Stenseth as Eddie, Rebecca Teran as Kate, Olivia Shimkus as Long Liz, and Gary Norman as Sergeant Neill.

Set and lighting design is by Gene Dent, with costume design by Shana Targosz, prop design by Deb Dahling, and sound design by Dan Hallberg.

### **Development History**

The development process of a new musical takes many years. For *Ripper* author and composer Duane Nelsen, the journey began in 1997.

At the time, Duane was a television jingle writer in Chicago and owned a recording studio, so he decided to record a concept album of his first draft of *Ripper*. The recording got the attention of Apple Tree Theatre in Highland Park, Illinois, which produced the first public reading of *Ripper* in 1999. The show's next presentation wasn't until 2004, when it was seen at the STAGES Festival at Theater Building Chicago. From there, an off-Broadway producer optioned the show, and on March 19, 2007, the first commercial reading of *Ripper* was held at New World Stages in New York City, starring Annie Golden and Colin Donnell. The National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT), the preeminent musical theater organization in the country, noticed the show and invited Duane to submit it to their new works festival, where Broadway Rose General Manager Dan Murphy serves on the selection committee. *Ripper* was one of eight new works selected from more than 150 to participate in the 21st Annual Festival of New Musicals in October of 2009. Following the festival, Broadway Rose picked up the show and began planning for the world premiere production at the Deb Fennell Auditorium in Tigard, Oregon, in August of 2011.

The very visual show, which had been seen only in readings and festivals without the benefit of costumes or sets or an orchestra, was finally getting a full production, but Duane knew there was still work to be done on the script. Luckily, in September 2010, the Dramatists Guild expanded its New York-based Fellows Program to Chicago in the form of a Writer's Intensive program. Duane was chosen to participate and got to hone *Ripper* one-on-one with some of the finest musical writers in the country, including Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty (*Ragtime*) and Mark Hollmann (*Urinetown*).

Duane presented a finished working script to Broadway Rose Artistic Director Sharon Maroney in January 2011. Sharon hired the artistic team for the Broadway Rose production, including director Abe Reybold. The entire team began collaborating with Duane and bringing their own creativity to the project. After initially communicating through email and phone calls, Duane visited Broadway Rose for the first time in March to participate in casting and in-person production meetings. Afterward, he returned to Chicago to finish orchestrating the score for the 11-piece Broadway Rose orchestra to be led by music director Alan D. Lytle.

### **A Note from the Author**

In the autumn of 1888, five East End London prostitutes were murdered in the span of about 10 weeks. The killer was never found. More than a hundred years later, the mystery of Jack the Ripper's identity lingers in our consciousness not because we don't know who he is but because he could be anyone.

Neighbors, friends, and lovers are all suspects. Some are driven to find the truth. Others stop at nothing to obscure the facts and manipulate the situation to their own advantage. The many ways that people survive in a climate of fear—for better or for worse—is what drives the show and gives it modern relevance.

From the reporter who covers the story and the magician who runs the brothel to the police and, of course, the prostitutes, an intricate plot unfolds that interweaves magic and mayhem, the lively nightlife of the music halls, and the ever-present danger of a killer lurking in the shadows.

Producing a new musical as large as *Ripper* requires a courageous producer and an adventurous audience. I'm thrilled to be premiering this new show at Broadway Rose, and I hope you enjoy your journey into the darkest corners of Victorian London. But beware: what you see may not be what it seems!

—Duane Nelsen, author/composer

### **Ticket Information**

Preview performance is August 3 with opening night on Thursday, August 4, and performances continue through August 21, 2011. Evening performances are Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Matinees are at 2 p.m. on Sundays, on Saturday, August 13,

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Broadway Rose's Title Sponsor is **Platt Electric Supply**. Production Sponsor for *Ripper* is **Portland Spirit** and the Print Media Sponsor is **The Oregonian**. The production is supported in part by an award from the **National Endowment of the Arts** and the **Kinsman Foundation**. Broadway Rose's 2011 season is funded in part by the **Regional Arts & Culture Council** and **Work for Art** as well as the **Oregon Arts Commission**.

**BROADWAY ROSE THEATRE COMPANY**, a not-for-profit arts organization, has been successfully producing musical theater in Tigard since 1992 under the artistic direction of Sharon Maroney. As the only professional musical theater company in Washington County, Broadway Rose plays an important role in enriching the community's cultural arts. Committed to increasing opportunities for Oregonians to participate in the arts and working to retain Portland's talent pool and attract new talent to the area, Broadway Rose is resolved to keep live theater affordable and make its productions accessible to all ages and members of the community. The Broadway Rose Theatre was selected as one of the "100 Best Nonprofits to Work For in Oregon" by Oregon Business Magazine in 2009 and 2010, and it was selected as the 2009 "Business of the Year" by the Tigard Chamber of Commerce.

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