MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD
A NERO WOLFE MYSTERY

By Joseph Goodrich; Directed by Peter Moore
Adapted from the Novel by Rex Stout

JUN 16 – JUL 30
Proscenium Stage

World Premiere Commission

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Welcome to a production that has many “owners.” Some are obvious: playwright Joseph Goodrich, Rebecca Stout Bradbury and the Rex Stout estate who literally own the rights to the original novel, director Peter Moore and his amazing team of designers, cast and crew.

This play is also the fourth undertaking of our wildly enthusiastic Mystery Writers Producers’ Club who have owned it since the beginning. Started by like-minded mystery/theatre fans, club members contribute funds and journey through the production process together. This year it has grown to 40 households!

Over dinners, cocktail parties, play reading and rehearsals, they have helped bring this play to life. It was their idea that the original businessman who starts the action to find a missing son should be a woman. They sat in on early readings to identify the red herrings that didn’t work and applaud the turns of phrase that did.

You become an owner by investing your energy in this performance. While we always appreciate those who can make a tax-deductible contribution to further our mission, you become a Park Square “owner” when you invest your time, recommend a play or send us your passionate criticism.

Many thanks to all of our owners in the house today! To the newcomers: we are owned by this community, which means you (yes you).

Gratefully,

Richard Cook, Artistic Director
651.767.8482 | cook@parksquaretheatre.org

C. Michael-jon Pease, Executive Director, CFRE
651.767.8497 | pease@parksquaretheatre.org

OUR MISSION is to enrich our community by producing and presenting exceptional live theatre that touches the heart, engages the mind and delights the spirit.
JOSEPH GOODRICH is a playwright whose work has been produced across the United States, in Canada and Australia, and published by Samuel French, Playscripts, the Padua Hills Press, and Applause Books, among others. Canada’s Vertu Theatre produced the world premiere of his adaptation of Ellery Queen’s novel Calamity Town, which received the 2016 Calgary Theater Critics’ Award for Best New Script. In 2014, The Red Box was commissioned by Park Square Theatre and marked the stage debut of Nero Wolfe. Panic received the 2008 Edgar Award for Best Play and was produced at Park Square in 2011.

He is the editor of Blood Relations: The Selected Letters of Ellery Queen, 1947-1950, which was nominated for Anthony and Agatha awards. His fiction has appeared in Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine, Alfred Hitchcock’s Mystery Magazine, Noir Riot, and in two Mystery Writers of America anthologies: The Mystery Box, edited by Brad Meltzer, and The Rich and the Dead, edited by Nelson DeMille. His nonfiction has appeared in AHMM, Mystery Scene and Crimespree. In 2018, Perfect Crime Books will publish This Business of Revenge, a collection of short stories. He is an alumnus of New Dramatists and a former Calderwood Fellow at the MacDowell Colony. Born in Minnesota, he survived four years in Los Angeles, and now lives in New York City.

This show was made possible in part by Park Square Theatre’s MYSTERY WRITERS PRODUCERS’ CLUB:

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The Mystery Writers Producers’ Club is a fun and devoted group of Park Square Theatre donors who help support our Mystery Show each year and stay connected to the production year round. Find out how you can help produce next year’s production of Ken Ludwig’s Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery. Also, learn about our Premiere Club (Next Production: Cardboard Piano) and Future Audiences Club (Next Production: Hamlet).

Contact Mackenzie Pitterle at 651.767.1440.

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MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD
A NERO WOLFE MYSTERY

By Joseph Goodrich; Adapted from the Novel by Rex Stout

Director .................................................. Peter Moore
Assistant Director ................................. Sophie Peyton
Scenic Designer ............................... Rick Polenek
Costume Designer ......................... Sara Wilcox
Light Designer .............................. Michael P. Kittel
Sound Designer ............................ Anita Kelling
Properties Designer .................. Robert “Bobbie” Smith
Fight Choreographer ...... Brandon Ewald
Choreographer .............................. Austene Van
Stage Manager ............................... Laura Topham*
Assistant Stage Manager ........... Charles Fraser*
Assistant Stage Manager .......... Samantha Diekman

CAST

Nero Wolfe .............................................. E.J. Subkoviak*
Archie Goodwin ................................. Derek Dirlam
Inspector Cramer ............................ Michael Paul Levin*
Fritz/Tom Irwin ................................. Jim Pounds
Dol Bonner/Suki Molloy ............... Am’Ber Montgomery
Peter Hays/Johnny Keems .......... Brandon Ewald
Mrs. Herrold/Franny Irwin/Mrs. Arbuthnot..... Austene Van*
Delia Brandt/Rita Arkoff ................ Marisa B. Tejeda
Pat Degan/Morgue Attendant ......... Don Maloney
Albert Breyer/Ralph Arkoff .......... Paul Reyburn
Albert Breyer/Ralph Arkoff Understudy .............. Brian P. Joyce

On Wednesday evenings, the role of Albert Breyer/Ralph Arkoff will be played by Understudy Brian P. Joyce

TIME PERIOD/SETTING: May 22-28, 1956 The office of Nero Wolfe’s Brownstone at 918 W. 35th Street, and other locations on the Island of Manhattan.

PERFORMANCE TIME: The performance will run approximately 2 hours, 5 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.

Copies of the novels and stories of Rex Stout are available from Bantam Books.

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

As a courtesy to our actors and those around you, please DEACTIVATE all PHONES and ELECTRONIC DEVICES.
Rex Stout was among a handful of authors in the pre-World War II era to document the grimy underbelly of the American dream, and his six dozen works are cited along with Dashiell Hammett’s and Raymond Chandler’s as among the most influential of the century. The “pulp” genre had inauspicious beginnings in the nineteenth century, as writers in newly urbanized environments poured out sordid crime stories printed on cheap paper (thus the name). The form demonstrated (and exacerbated) a tenacious anxiety that cities were havens of evil filled with dens of iniquity run by vile sinners. (It would come to be known as “hardboiled,” like an egg cooked so long it’s tough on the outside and good luck getting in.)

The genre has been criticized in recent years for its celebration of half-drunk, perpetually penniless carousing bachelors. (From Chandler’s The Long Goodbye: “Alcohol is like love. The first kiss is magic, the second is intimate, the third is routine. After that you take the girl’s clothes off.”) Such casual misogyny has given rise to queer readings – Freud would have much to say about so many men and oh so many guns. Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin are markedly kinder (and more sober) than Hammett’s Continental Op and Chandler’s Philip Marlowe, but the duo still revel in the muck of humanity. Like other gumshoes, Wolfe and Goodwin will find trouble when trouble doesn’t find them first. (It usually does.)

Perhaps the most distinctive (and parodied) aspect of hardboiled fiction is its language: euphemisms, sharp turns in logic, extended metaphors that can be sharp or languorous but always precise. From Chandler: “He snorted and hit me in the solar plexus.” From Hammett: “I haven’t laughed so much over anything since the hogs ate my kid brother.” And, of course, Nero Wolfe: “I have no talents. I have genius or nothing.” Such conflations and contradictions suggest a world collapsing, a blurring of good and evil, the rise of an anti-hero – and not a small amount of delight in the mounting rubble.

The genre’s glee with the unseemly parts of human nature – boundless greed, lust, and corruption – would be quickly tempered. The cloying normalcy of I Love Lucy, Leave It to Beaver, and The Andy Griffith Show was a salve after the devastation of the Depression and World War II. By the 1960s, readers had turned away from one of America’s most dominant literary genres as political turmoil demanded more urgent forms. But sleuths are still sleuthing – and not just Garrison Keillor’s Guy Noir. Robert Mosley’s Easy Rawlins and Michael Connelly’s Harry Bosch tangle with evil with the kind of lazy indignation that kept Philip Marlowe soaked in gin. Sue Grafton’s alphabet soup and Gillian Flynn’s recent novels have enhanced the form with women crime-solvers who’d rather be home alone, and probably in the dark. They’re all (mostly) welcome reminders that we still need unlikely heroes. Or, as Nero tells Archie in The Red Box, “I cannot remake the universe, and must therefore put up with this one.”

—Matt DiCintio

Matt DiCintio holds a PhD in Drama from Tufts. He works at Boston University and teaches at Emerson College.
 official selection **Training** B.A., Theatre Arts, Bethel College **Upcoming Projects** Theatre in the Round (as Director): Agatha Christie’s *And Then There Were None*

**MICHAEL PAUL LEVIN***
Inspector Cramer

**Park Square** The Diary of Anne Frank, Of Mice and Men, The Red Box, Laughter on the 23rd Floor, August: Osage County, The Sisters Rosensweig, The Soul of Gershwin

**Representative Theatre** Illusion Theater: Bill W. & Dr. Bob; Actor’s Theater of MN: Sleuth; History Theatre: The Immigrant; St. Croix Valley: My Fair Lady; Mixed Blood Theatre: The Boys Next Door; Paul Bunyan Playhouse: I Ought to Be in Pictures TV/Film Thin Ice, Hiding Victoria, I Am Not A Serial Killer, In an Instant, The Jingle Dress, Don’t Blow It Training American Academy of Dramatic Arts, West

**Accolades/Other** Morrow-Heus Screenwriting Fellowship, Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre Playwright Award **Upcoming Projects** A Prairie Home Companion

**DON MALONEY**
Pat Degan/Morgue Attendant

**Park Square** Fortinbras, Arsenic and Old Lace

**Representative Theatre** Theatre in the Round: A View From the Bridge, Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me; Lyric Arts: The Odd Couple, Anatomy of Gray; Theatre Pro Rata: A Lie of the Mind, Bedroom Farce; The Eclectic Theatre (Los Angeles): Salsa Saved the Girls; The Actor’s Project (L.A.): Biloxi Blues, Ten November; Candlefish Theatre (L.A.): Moonchildren TV Crossing Jordan (NBC); American Family (PBS), The Shield (FOX/FX) First Monday (Paramount/CBS), ER (WB/NBC), Profiler (NBC/MTM)

**Film** Walking The Walk, Slightly Thicker Than Water, The Doorway, Iron Will Training B.F.A., at University of Minnesota, Duluth

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**DEREK DIRLAM**
Archie Goodwin

**Park Square** Debut

**Representative Theatre** Theatre in the Round: A View From the Bridge; Lex-Ham Community Theater: Antony and Cleopatra; Conundrum Collective: A Study In Emerald; Mission Theater: Much Ado About Nothing; Brazen Theater: Boys in the Band; Applause Community Theater: An Inconvenient Squirrel; Historic Mounds Theater: Guards! Guards!; MN Shakespeare Company: A Midsummer Night’s Dream; nimbus: Beautiful Things; Duck Soup Players: Moon Over Transylvania **Training** B.F.A., Theatre Arts, University of North Dakota **Other** Director of Conundrum Collective

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**BRANDON EWALD**
Peter Hays/Johnny Keems

**Park Square** Debut

**Representative Theatre** Jungle Theater: Hamlet; Mu Performing Arts:


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**BRIAN P. JOYCE**
Albert Breyer/Ralph Arkoff

**Park Square** 18 productions including Tiger at the Gate, Medea, Candida, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, King Lear **Representative Theatre** Theatre in the Round, Lakeshore Players, Shakespeare and Company, Red Eye Theater, Theatre Coup d’Etat, New Native Theatre, Theatre Unbound **Film** Grandpa Walt in Catching Faith (Netflix); Dad’s voice in Shinaab, a 2017 Sundance film festival
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Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program

JIM POUNDS
Fritz/Tom Irwin
Park Square The Red Box, Saint
Joan, Mary Stuart, Julius Caesar
Representative Theatre Walking
Shadow Theatre Company: Gross
Indecency: The Trial of Oscar Wilde; Theater Latté Da: Company;
Bloomington Civic Theatre: My Fair Lady;
Acts Theater of Minnesota: A Thousand Clowns;
Torch Theater: Fezziwig’s Feast; Gremlin Theatre: The
Homecoming Other Media Director for The College
of St. Scholastica at the St. Paul campus

PAUL REYBURN
Albert Breyer/Ralph Arkoff
Park Square Debut
Representative Theatre Daleko
Arts: Urinetown; Paul Bunyan
Playhouse: Gypsy, The Full Monty
Laughter on the 23rd Floor, Chicago, She Loves Me;
Directing: Theatre in the Round: 110 in the Shade;
Lakeshore Players: Big River, The Mystery of Edwin
Drood, The Happy Elf, A Funny Thing Happened on
the Way to the Forum Film Invincible Force, Drop
Dead Fred Training B.A., Theater (Acting, Directing),
Moorhead State University Upcoming Projects
Artistry: The Music Man

E.J. SUBKOVIAK*
Nero Wolfe
Park Square Great Expectations,
Sherlock Holmes and the Ice
Palace Murders, The Red Box,
Of Mice and Men, King Lear,
Oliver Twist, The Last Seder, Sherlock Holmes:
The Final Adventure, You Can’t Take It With You
Representative Theatre Jungle Theater: On Golden
Pond; History Theatre: The Highwaymen; Actors
Theater of Minnesota: We Gotta Bingo; Hey City
Theater: Tony ‘n’ Tina’s Wedding Training B.S.,
Theater Arts, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Upcoming Projects Park Square: Of Mice and Men

MARISA B. TEJEDA
Delia Brandt/Rita Arkoff
Park Square Debut
Representative Theatre Guthrie Theater: A
Christmas Carol, The
Sunshine Boys; Shakespeare Theatre of
New Jersey: The Learned Ladies; South
Dakota Shakespeare Festival: The Winter’s
Tale; Artistry: Hairspray; Mission Theatre
Company: Much Ado About Nothing, Titus
Andronicus; Paul Bunyan Playhouse: Vanya
and Sonia and Masha and Spike; CLIMB
Theatre: Touring Company Member 2016-
2017 Training B.A, Theatre Arts, Concordia
University 2016; Acting Apprentice,
Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey
2015 Upcoming Projects GIRL Theatre’s
Production at MN Fringe Festival 2017

AUSTENE VAN*
Mrs. Herrold/Franny Irwin/
Mrs. Arbuthnot
Park Square As Actor:
To Kill a Mockingbird; As
Director: Hot Chocolate,
Gee’s Bend, Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar
and Grill Representative Theatre As Actor:
Penumbra Theatre (Company Member): The
Owl Answers, Detroit ‘67, Ain’t Misbehavin’,
Seven Guitars; Theater Latté Da: Aida; Ten
Thousand Things: A Street Car Named
Desire; Jungle Theater: In the Next Room;
Guthrie Theater: Trouble in Mind, Disgraced;
IRT/Cleveland Playhouse: Radio Golf;
Children’s Theatre Company: Shrek the
Musical, Once on This Island; Ordway: Singin’
in the Rain; As Director: Ten Thousand
Things: Intimate Apparel; Theatre in the
Round: Six Degrees of Separation; Rarig
Center: Joan: Voices in the Fire; History
Theatre: Lonely Soldier Monologues, A Civil
War Christmas; Ordway: Blues in the Night;
Capri: Ain’t Misbehavin’; Penumbra Theatre:
Black Nativity Other Artistic Director of
New Dawn Theatre Productions Upcoming
Projects As Director: Skylight Music Theatre:
Hot Mikado; Ordway: Annie
ARTISTIC STAFF

PETER MOORE
Director
Park Square
18 productions including Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders, The Red Box, King Lear, The Soul of Gershwin, Becky’s New Car, Spider’s Web, Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure Representative Theatre Guthrie Theater, Coconut Grove Playhouse - Miami, Virginia Stage Co. - Norfolk, Winter Garden Theater -Toronto, Parker Playhouse - Ft. Lauderdale, York Theater (Off-Broadway), University of Minnesota, Playwright’s Center TV/Film (as Director) Autistic License; (as Stunt Coordinator) Wilson (with Woody Harrelson), Thin Ice (with Greg Kinnear), Factotum (with Matt Dillon), Old Explorers (with James Whitmore), Vampire’s Embrace (with Alyssa Milano), In An Instant (ABC-TV) Training B.A., Penn State University Accolades Best Educational Film, Autistic License, L.A. International Family Film Festival.

BRANDON EWALD
Fight Choreographer
See bio on page 7

CHARLES FRASER* Assistant Stage Manager
Park Square Of Mice and Men, The Language Archive, 33 Variations, To Kill a Mockingbird, King Lear, The Last Seder Representative Theatre Penumbra Theatre: Jitney; History Theatre: Lonely Soldiers; Burning House Group: 3 Parts Dead; Jon Hassler Theater: Seascape; Minnesota Shakespeare Project: King Lear; Mixed Blood Theatre: Jackie Robinson Training B.F.A., University of Mississippi Upcoming Projects Penumbra Theatre: Wedding Band

ANITA KELLING Sound Designer

MICHAEL P. KITTEL Lighting Designer
Park Square Over 120 productions (as Resident Lighting Designer) including The Color Purple, Red, Ragtime, Grey Gardens, Democracy, To Kill a Mockingbird, Rock ‘n’ Roll Representative Theatre Ordway, Frank Theatre, Stages Theatre Company, Steppingstone Theatre, Mu Performing Arts, Bloomington Civic Theatre TV/Film tpt: The St. Olaf Christmas Festival Training University of Wisconsin-River Falls Accolades Ivey Award for The Pillowman (Frank Theatre); Lavender Magazine Best Lighting Design 2008 & 2009

SOPHIE PEYTON Assistant Director
Park Square Debut Representative Theatre History Theatre: The Highwaymen; McCarter Theatre Center: Baby Doll, A Christmas Carol, The Mousetrap; Wilma Theater: The Real Thing; PlayPenn: No Such Thing; Simpatico Theatre Project: Missed Connections; Plays and Players Theater: Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet Training B.A., Theatre Arts with concentration in Directing, Temple University

RICK POLENEK Scenic Designer
Park Square Over 30 productions including Great Expectations, 4000 Miles, The Red Box, King Lear, Ragtime, Spider’s Web, Pacific Overtures, Born Yesterday Representative Theatre Theatre Latté Da: Oliver!, The Light in the Piazza, Evita; History Theatre: Glessheen, Teen Idol, Working Boys Band; Ordway: Skylark Opera; MN Centennial Showboat Training M.F.A., Theatre Arts, University of Minnesota Other Retired faculty in Theatre, Normandale College Upcoming Projects History Theatre: All The Way, Coco’s Diary

ROBERT “BOBBIE” SMITH Properties Designer
LAURA TOPHAM* Stage Manager
Park Square The Realistic Joneses, Calendar Girls, Jacob Marley’s Christmas Carol, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders, The Diary of Anne Frank, 33 Variations, The Red Box, Of Mice and Men, Mary T. & Lizzie K. Representative Theatre Ordway: Flint Hills Children’s Festival; Theater Latté Da: Beautiful Thing Training B.A., Theatre Arts, University of Minnesota

AUSTENE VAN Choreographer
see bio on page 8

SARA WILCOX Costume Designer

Upcoming Projects Old Log Theatre: Jack and the Beanstalk, Life Could Be a Dream

Production Staff & Crew
Assistant Stage Managers: Charles Fraser*, Samantha Diekman
Dresser: Britt Keller
Wardrobe and Wig Maintenance: Mary Farrel
Sound Operator: Charlotte Deranek
Production Director: Rob Jensen
Technical Director: Ian Stoutenburgh
Paint Charge: Mary Montgomery-Jensen, Angelique Powers
Master Carpenter: William Bankhead
Carpenters: Meagan Kedrowski, Brittany Pooladian
Tech Intern: Maya Simon
Wardrobe Supervisor: Aaron Chvatal
Master Electrician: Tony Stoeri
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Dr. Virginia McFerran, Perpich Center for Arts Education
Kristin Nelson, Brooklyn Center High School
Mari O’Meara, Eden Prairie High School
Jennifer Parker, Falcon Ridge Middle School
Maggie Quam, Hmong College Prep Academy
Kate Schilling, Mound Westonka High School
Jack Schlukebier, Central High School, retired
Tanya Sponholz, Prescott High School
Jill Tammen, Hudson High School, retired
Craig Zimanske, Forest Lake Area High School

THEATRE AMBASSADORS
Payton Anderson (Shell Lake High School), Marissa Bergin (Columbia Heights High School), Alex Boss (Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists), Amiri Burns (Harding High School), Arianna Diaz-Celon (SPCPA), Soren Eversoll (Highland Park High School), Schyler Fish (Highland Park High School), Greta Hallberg (Minnehaha Academy), Madisyn Haukland (Coon Rapids High School), Thomas Henry (Trinity School at River Ridge), Julie Pinkerton (Mounds View High School), Jonathan Schmitz (Buffalo High School), Katherine Swartz (Buffalo High School), Emma Symanski (SPCPA), Ava Tesmer (Eagle Ridge Academy), Emily Twardy (Buffalo High School), Claire Umland-Bunker (Highland Park High School), Catherine Vorwald (Twin Cities Academy), Brigham Williams (SPCPA), Kiersten Ziegler (Minnehaha Academy)
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