

Friends University Theatre

CALAMITY TOWN

a Play by Joseph Goodrich, based on the novel CALAMITY TOWN by Ellery Queen

JANUARY 27-30, 2022

Sebits Auditorium ~ Riney Fine Arts Ctr.

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“CALAMITY TOWN”

a Play by Joseph Goodrich

adapted from the novel ‘Calamity Town’ by Ellery Queen

*(CALAMITY TOWN by Ellery Queen is used with express permission of
The Frederick Dannay Literary Property Trust, The Manfred B. Lee Family Literary Property Trust,
and their representatives, and Jabberwocky Literary Agency, Inc.)*

TIME & PLACE:

Summer, 1940 to Spring, 1941; Wrightsville, a small town in New England

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

VOICES 1-3 (narrators & townsfolk) — **Kelley McDonald, Bellaly Escalante, Kathleen Rutler**
ELLERY QUEEN (mystery writer, aka “Ellery Smith”) — **Brandon Rose**
NORA WRIGHT HAIGHT (middle daughter, engaged to Jim) — **Sydney Wilson**
LOLA WRIGHT (oldest daughter) — **Andrea Powers**
PATTY WRIGHT (youngest daughter) — **Emma Burnett**
JOHN F. WRIGHT (father & bank president) — **Evan Watkins**
HERMIONE WRIGHT (wife & mother) — **Skylar Nicholas**
CARTER BRADFORD (local county prosecutor) — **Michael Taylor**
JIM HAIGHT (former bank cashier, fiance’ of Nora) — **Lorenz Looney**
ROSEMARY HAIGHT (Jim’s mysterious sister) — **Bellaly Escalante**
ROBERTA ROBERTS (syndicated newspaper author) — **Kelley McDonald**
ELI MARTIN (local defense counsel) — **Jyavon Hill**
J.C. PETTIGREW (local real-estate agent) — **Kathleen Rutler**
CHIEF DAKIN (Chief of Police) — **Michael Taylor**
DR. MILO WILLOUGHBY (local practitioner) — **Michael Taylor**
MYRON GARBACK (pharmacy proprietor) — **Evan Watkins**
EMMELINE DUPRE (local dance & drama teacher) — **Kathleen Rutler**
JP SAMPSON (pawn shop proprietor) — **Evan Watkins**
LYSANDER NEWBOLD (presiding county judge) — (his honor)

SCENE BREAKDOWN:

ACT ONE —

SCENE ONE - TRAVELING FROM NYC - PROLOGUE

VOICES 1-3

Ellery Queen

SCENE TWO - PETTIGREW’S OFFICE

VOICE 2 Lola & Patty

Ellery John & Hermy

Pettigrew Patty & Carter

Nora

SCENE THREE - CALAMITY HOUSE INTERIOR

Ellery Patty Lola

SCENE FOUR - OUTSIDE WRIGHT'S HOUSE

Ellery

Jim

VOICES 1-3

Nora

SCENE FIVE - WRIGHT'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

Hermey

SCENE SIX - WRIGHT'S HOUSE - LATER

Jim

Patty

Nora

Carter

John F.

Ellery

Hermey

Townspeople

SCENE SEVEN - INSIDE PATTY'S HOUSE - HALLOWEEN NIGHT

Ellery

Nora

Patty

Jim

SCENE EIGHT - PATTY'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

Ellery

Patty

SCENE NINE - PATTY'S LAWN - FOLLOWING

Ellery

Patty

Carter

SCENE TEN - WRIGHT'S FRONT PORCH - THE NEXT DAY

John F.

Hermey

Jim

Ellery

Nora

SCENE ELEVEN - JIM'S SISTER ARRIVES - A FEW DAYS LATER

VOICES 1-3

SCENE TWELVE - ROSEMARY'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

Patty

John F.

Ellery

Jim

Rosemary

Hermey

Nora

SCENE THIRTEEN - WRIGHT'S LIVING ROOM - NEW YEAR'S EVE

Ellery

Hermey

Jim

Rosemary

Patty

Nora

John F.

SCENE FOURTEEN - THE WRIGHT PARLOR - FOLLOWING

Ellery

Dakin

Jim

SCENE FIFTEEN - WRIGHT'S LIVING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Patty Nora
Ellery Carter

—*INTERMISSION*—

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE - BEFORE THE TRIAL - LATER

Ellery John F.
VOICES 1-3 Hermy
Roberta Patty
Jim Lola

SCENE TWO - WRIGHT'S LIVING ROOM - FOLLOWING

John F. Patty
Hermy Ellery
Lola

SCENE THREE - WRIGHT'S HOME - LATER

Nora
Ellery
Patty

SCENE FOUR - CARTER'S OFFICE - SOMETIME LATER

Patty
Carter

SCENE FIVE - CARTER'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

Patty
Ellery

SCENE SIX - INSIDE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - THE TRIAL

Ellery John F. Carter
Roberta Hermy VOICES 1-3
Jim Lola Garback, Emmeline,
Eli Patty Sampson & Newbold

SCENE SEVEN - NEWS ABOUT THE TRIAL - FOLLOWING

VOICES 1-3

SCENE EIGHT - INSIDE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - TRIAL CONTINUES

Carter Patty
Ellery John F.
Eli Hermy

SCENE NINE - WRIGHT'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

Hermy Eli
Patty Nora
John F.

SCENE TEN - ELLERY'S GUEST ROOM - LATER

Lola
Ellery

SCENE ELEVEN - INSIDE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - APRIL

Ellery Carter Patty
Eli Nora

SCENE TWELVE - COUNTY COURTHOUSE - TRIAL CONCLUDES

VOICES 1-3 John F.
Hermy Nora
Lola Roberta
Patty Newbold

SCENE THIRTEEN - HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - FOLLOWING

VOICES 1-3 John F.
Ellery Hermy
Patty Lola
Dr. Willoughby

SCENE FOURTEEN - A FUNERAL & AFTER - DAYS LATER

Ellery Roberta
John F. Jim

SCENE FIFTEEN - WRIGHT'S PORCH - LATER

Carter
Ellery
Patty

SCENE SIXTEEN - JIM & NORA'S LIVING ROOM (FLASHBACK)

John F. Rosemary
Hermy Ellery
Jim Patty
Nora Carter

SCENE SEVENTEEN - OUTSIDE WRIGHT'S HOUSE - EPILOGUE

Ellery
VOICES 1-3

-THE END-

CREATIVE PERSONNEL:

DIRECTOR & DESIGNER _____ ***Kurt L. Priebe***
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER _____ ***Jacob Carraher***
SOUND _____ ***Robert Hett***
SCENIC CONSTRUCTION, PAINTING & PROPERTIES _____ ***Kurt L. Priebe***
Construction & Painting Assistance _____ ***Bellaly Escalante, Emma Burnett,***
Kathleen Rutler, Jyavon Hill
Costume & Properties Assistance _____ ***Bellaly Escalante, Andrea Powers,***
Evan Watkins
MAKEUP & HAIRSTYLES _____ ***Cast & THEA 255 Students***
POSTER DESIGN & ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY _____ ***Kurt L. Priebe***
PUBLICITY & PROMOTION _____ ***Alyssa Whalen***

SPECIAL THANKS:

Dr. Matthew Schloneger	Vertigo Theatre - Alberta	Joseph Goodrich
Dr. Rayvon Moore	Jabberwocky Literary Agency, Inc.	Dr. Terry Lindvall
Dr. Charles Parker	Theatrical Services, Inc.	Gordon & Diane Kling
Robyn Mabe	Costume Holiday House	Kathleen Dooley-Lenart
Alyssa Whalen	Star Lumber	Rebekah Priebe

DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

Eighty years ago this coming year, two cousins would pen what some called their best work to date. After a three-year pause in 1942 and as World War II had started, their noted author and amateur sleuth Ellery Queen vacations to a small New England village to find inspiration for his next mystery novel. Nestled in the nostalgic but welcoming Mahoganies nearby, there he encounters an idyllic town full of inviting and moral folks who share a hidden, suspenseful story of their very own. Beneath this calm and inviting veneer, lies a disturbing secret and a potential killer in their midst, ready to strike again over the coming holiday. Ellery must rightly deduce fact vs. fiction, separate friend vs. foe before the festivities turn fatal and the townsfolk feign or face a tragic fate. Follow Ellery Queen as he uncovers and unravels both the suspected local legend and the unlikely murderer in CALAMITY TOWN.

Premiering at *Calgary's Vertigo Theatre* in 2016, New York author and playwright Joseph Goodrich has crafted a theatrical adaptation which he describes as "*Our Town with murder*". The New York Times labeled the novel "*the best mystery produced by Ellery Queen*" while the Boston Globe offered critical praise in stating that "*[Ellery Queen] has never written a better book, and very few people have written as good a detective novel*". (Mr. Goodrich's play *PANIC*, was awarded the *Mystery Writer of America's Edgar Award for Best Play* in 2008).

From 1929 to 1971, Frederick Dannay and Manfred B. Lee would collaborate to create over 30 popular novels and collections. *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, was named after the writing duo's central character and namesake detective, and featured more than forty Nobel and Pulitzer prize winners in its pages beginning in 1941. During the 1930's through much of the 1940's many considered Ellery Queen as one of the best known American fictional detectives. A vintage radio program aired on national airwaves from 1939 to 1948, with several feature films that followed featuring the famous sleuth. Ellery Queen also appeared in short comics or graphic novels beginning in 1940, while NBC-TV produced a series based upon the works of Ellery Queen in the 1970's. The *Mystery Writers of America* established an award in 1983, to honor writers and creative talents in mystery publishing in honor of Mr. Queen. A new television series is projected to begin production soon with a possible female leading character.

Introduced to the works of Ellery Queen as a teenager, I came to know this everyman detective through the NBC television series and have loved a good mystery story, novel, or film every since. I have been blessed to have directed and produced several mysteries for the stage and when I learned of this recent adaptation, I contacted Mr. Goodrich, whom was kind and gracious to share a copy for consideration. We both would be delighted if the play should lead you to read the original novel, as I and the cast have done in preparation for this production.

It is with great pleasure that we present this special premiere and hope you enjoy!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Old Maid & the Thief & Fables - Spring Operas — Feb. 26 & 27, 2022 - Sebets Auditorium

Student-Directed One-Act Plays — April 1 & 2, 2022 - Studio Theatre

Theory of Relativity - Music Theatre Workshop — April 29 & May 1st, 2022 - Studio Theatre

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