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Theater review: NCT's 'Sherlock Holmes' is an Ingenious Adventure

09/16/2012 by [Evans Donnell](#) ([Edit](#))

The game is indeed afoot in *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*. Arthur Conan Doyle's legendary consulting detective, his loyal companion Dr. Watson and others provide spirited fun along the way in Nashville Children's Theatre's ingenious production.

Prolific and highly acclaimed playwright Steven Dietz (Tennessee Repertory Theatre's 2011-12 [Ingram New Works Fellow](#)) adapted Doyle and William Gillette's 1899 play *Sherlock Holmes* into a new work that won a 2007 Edgar Allen Poe Award. The storyline is primarily based on two of Doyle's tales ("A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Final Problem") with a love interest and some other flourishes thrown in.

Yes, Gillette, Dietz and others have taken liberties with Doyle's stories and characters over the years; the latest variation is a new TV series with a female Watson called *Elementary* that premieres Sept. 27 on CBS. The creator of 221B Baker Street's famous resident appropriately didn't view his work as holy writ, however; as NCT Producing Director Scot Copeland notes in the program, when Gillette inquired about marrying Holmes in his play, Doyle replied that Gillette could do what he liked, marriage, murder or otherwise.

Holmes (David Compton) already has feelings for opera singer Irene Adler (Marin Miller) when Dr. Watson (Matthew Carlton) introduces us to the story of his friend's apparent final days. Holmes is hot on the trail of the "Napoleon of Crime" Professor Moriarty (Bobby Wyckoff) when a masked royal (Christopher R.C. Bosen) asks for his help retrieving a photograph taken when Adler and he were lovers.

Trying to get that photo leads Holmes and Watson into Adler and Moriarty's orbit in unexpected and decidedly dangerous ways, particularly with such nefarious characters as James Larrabee (Steven Berryessa), his sister Madge (Jamie Farmer) and the henchman Sid Prince (Samuel Whited III) lurking about. In the battle of wits who will win? And who will live to tell the tale?



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RANDOM STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Notes on Becoming an Independent Theater Artist

By [Clyde Fitch Report](#)



Compton does a fine job balancing the analytical and romantic sides of Dietz's take on Holmes. He's got the detective's supremely confident air, but there's also a charisma that makes Adler's attraction to him more believable than it might otherwise be.

Carlton, who makes his NCT debut along with Bosen and Berryessa, grounds his

Watson in respect for Holmes that thankfully is not slavish. He clearly understands that a former Army physician who has seen men die in combat is courageous and world-wise; it's nice to see Watson strongly portrayed as a sensible and sensitive man and not as a slow-witted sidekick.

Miller's Adler is a match for Holmes in mind, body and spirit. She infuses her character with the right mix of poise and passion, making the sparks that fly between the detective and Adler feel real.

Berryessa, Bosen, Farmer and Whited certainly acquit themselves well in this show, but I want to spend some time writing about the work of the remaining cast member: Wyckoff's wide range, considerable experience and abundance of talent are on devilishly delightful display in this show.

Moriarty has often been portrayed as an old, stooping man who bears more resemblance to Ebenezer Scrooge than he should. Wyckoff's ramrod-straight-posture makes him every inch the equal of Compton's role in terms of physical presence so the battle between the two characters – which are already acknowledged as perfectly-matched intellectuals on opposite sides of the criminal divide – is even more suspenseful and exciting.

There's also a grace to the cat-like movements made by Wyckoff, who manages in one scene to slip behind Miller's Adler and place his stiletto on her throat so quickly and smoothly that it's positively (and appropriately) chilling. Add a menacingly mellifluous baritone delivery of his lines and you have a performance that raises the stakes for this largely light-on-its-feet look at Holmes and his world.

Scott Boyd's inventive scenic design is dominated by the inner workings of a fine timepiece – decoratively rendered gears appear front, left, right, center and back on the Hill Theatre stage – that underscore the trademark precision, accuracy and (often) mechanical bearing of the lead character. Colin Peterson's video projections – his terrific

Can an actor call himself a professional if he rarely works? That's the question Dr. Scott Walters is asking. Walters, an Associate Professor of Drama at the University of North Carolina at Asheville is working to discover a different business model for the arts. He says it's the next logical step in his work for [...]

Beloved Musical 'Always... Patsy Cline' Now in Roxy Run

By [ArtsNash](#)

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. – The sultry sounds of one of the most acclaimed vocalists of the 20th century are now filling the Roxy Regional Theatre through March 2 in the beloved musical Ted Swindley musical Always...Patsy Cline. Taking the stage in tribute to the country music legend who died tragically in a plane crash at the [...]

Oscar Experience Returns to the Belcourt Theatre Feb. 24

By [ArtsNash](#)

Only 10 days remain until the Belcourt Theatre holds its annual Academy Awards® viewing party and fundraiser. The 12th such gathering, Oscar® Experience: Nashville, is Sunday, Feb. 24. This popular event — one of the Belcourt's largest annual fundraising efforts — offers a great way for film fans to experience Hollywood's largest awards show. It features [...]

Nashville Symphony, musicians reach tentative contract agreement

By [John Pitcher](#)

After months of negotiations, the Nashville Symphony and Nashville Musicians Association have reached a tentative agreement on a new musicians' contract. Union negotiators provided musicians with an outline of the new collective bargaining agreement during a meeting Friday morning. Details of the agreement are being withheld pending ratification by the musicians. "The new agreement is [...]

Animation in Nashville: Bigfott Studios at Belcourt This Saturday

By [Evans Donnell](#)

For many decades American animation studios were Hollywood workshops where such artistic luminaries as Disney's Nine Old Men and the no-less-legendary

rendering of a certain waterfall well-known to Holmes fans is one example – make the set truly come alive.

Patricia Taber's Victorian costumes are excellent to the last stitch; her sense of colors and textures that will enhance and reveal each character more clearly are as ever on the mark. Bill Rios' sound design, particularly as the play reaches its climax, is thrilling; and Scott Leathers' lights give foggy London its atmospheric due.

Sherlock Holmes; The Final Adventure is NCT's first two-hour play presentation, and it's also the first time a Theatre For Young Audiences company has done this show. After 81 years NCT is still taking artistic chances and rewarding Nashville audiences with the wonderful results. That makes it elementary to say the 2012-13 season opener is definitely worth a personal investigation by theatergoers.

Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure runs at Nashville Children's Theatre (25 Middleton St.) through Oct. 7. An "After-words" Q&A follows the 2 p.m. matinee on Sept. 22 and the 2 p.m. show on Sept. 29 will include open captioning. The times for weekday and weekend shows vary and are available at the theater's website. Tickets: (\$19; \$12 for youths up to age 17 and seniors age 65 and older; \$11 per person in groups of 10 or more) and more information are available by calling (615) 252-4675 or visiting www.nashvillechildrenstheatre.org. The age recommendation for this show is 10 and up.



*Photo by Colin Peterson of Matthew Carlton as Dr. Watson and David Compton as Sherlock Holmes courtesy Nashville Children's Theatre.

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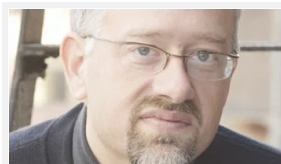
'Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure' Kicks Off 81st NCT Season
08/22/2012

In "Theater"



Theater review: TWTP's 'Shooting Star' a Sweet Grown-Up Pleasure
10/08/2012

In "Theater"



Tony and Pulitzer Winner Doug Wright is the Next Ingram Fellow
06/30/2013

In "Theater"

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About Evans Donnell

Evans Donnell is the chief theater, film and opera critic as well as co-founder of ArtsNash. He wrote reviews and features about theater, opera and classical music for *The Tennessean* from 2002 to 2011. He was the theater, film and opera critic for

figures at Warner Bros. Cartoons created magic. Modern technology has changed the industry in more than just its methods: whether it's computer-based, free-hand, 2D, 3D or a mixture of styles, lively and engaging animation [...]

Theater review: Nashville Shakes Conjures a Delightful 'Dream'

By [Evans Donnell](#)

Happily where Nashville Shakespeare Festival's present-day rendition of A Midsummer Night's Dream is concerned it is not past the wit of man to say what dream it was. The dream was, and is, delightful. Director Denice Hicks and her merry band of colleagues have mixed the Bard's Athens with today's Athens of the South to create [...]

Pictorial: 'Secret Handshake' Films at Lipscomb University

By [Rick Malkin](#)

The Secret Handshake is filming in and around Nashville. Lipscomb University is one of the movie's locations, and ArtsNash as well as other press representatives (like Super Talk 99.7 WTN's Phil Valentine, who is in the film) were invited to meet cast and crew and catch a glimpse of them working on the new feature. Kevin [...]

Belcourt Theatre Has 'Oscar Picks' on its Award Season Lineup

By [ArtsNash](#)

With awards season in full swing the Belcourt Theatre will soon present Oscar Picks. It's an assortment of 2013 Academy Award-nominated films as well as selected Best Picture Winners from past years. Oscar Picks runs from Jan. 25-Feb. 23 and includes many of this year's nominated films in various categories: Best Picture nominees Beasts of [...]

The Frist Zoomed Beyond Cars in 2013

By [Joe Nolan](#)

Now that local publications have begun summing up 2013 with best-of-the-year honors, I wanted to mention a couple of shows that slipped through this calendar-tallying season. While the Frist won tons of attention – and visitors – for its summertime celebration Sensuous Steel: Art Deco Automobiles, two of their earlier shows grabbed my gaze and [...]



ArtNowNashville.com from 2011 to 2012. Donnell has also contributed to *The Sondheim Review*, *Back Stage*, *The City Paper* (Nashville), the *Nashville Banner*, *The* (Bowling Green, Ky.) *Daily News* and several other publications since beginning his professional journalism career in 1985 with *The Lebanon* (Tenn.) *Democrat*. He was selected as a fellow for the 2004 National Critics Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and for National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) arts journalism institutes for theater and musical theater at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism in 2006 and classical music and opera at the Columbia University School of Journalism in 2009. He has also been an actor (member of Actors Equity Association and SAG-AFTRA), founding and running AthensSouth Theatre from 1996 to 2001 and appearing in Milos Forman's "The People vs Larry Flynt" among other credits. Donnell is a member of the American Theatre Critics Association (www.americantheatrecritics.org).

Comments



carolponderandrobekiefer says:
09/16/2012 at 3:22 PM (Edit)

I can't WAIT to see the show! Thanks for this great look into it, Evans. Cheers.

Music Review: Laubrock and Rainey headline Indeterminacies' last concert

By **Kyle J. Baker**

Indeterminacies is one of the most vital events in our city's artistic and musical landscape. Unique to Nashville, this true salon is held at Zeitgeist as a labor of love (and ideas) by Lesley Beeman and Lain York (with curatorial support by Rodger Coleman). In other cities, salons like this are sponsored by local universities or contemporary [...]

Robertson Academy's Nelda Lee Sturgeon TPAC Teacher of the Year

By **ArtsNash**

Nelda Lee Sturgeon, a Prekindergarten Teacher at Robertson Academy, has been named the 2014 Teacher of the Year by the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Chosen for her standards of excellence in arts education, Sturgeon received the award on April 24 when she attended the concert Give Yourself a High Five at TPAC with her students. [...]

NSO awarded grants

By **ArtsNash**

The Nashville Symphony Orchestra has been awarded grants from the Metro Nashville Arts Commission, the Tennessee Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts. These funds will be used to sustain its commitment to enriching the community through music and arts education and to commissioning and recording new American repertoire. The Symphony, one of [...]

Lakewood Theatre Sets Off 'Miss Firecracker Contest'

By **ArtsNash**

Lakewood Theatre Company will present its production of *The Miss Firecracker Contest* from July 20 to Aug. 5. *The Miss Firecracker Contest* – written by playwright Beth Henley, author of the acclaimed *Crimes of the Heart* – centers around Carnelle Scott, a Southern girl trying to salvage her tarnished reputation as "Miss Hot Tamale" by [...]

NSO celebrates its own independence day with '1812 Overture'

By **John Pitcher**

Orchestras often play Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture this time of year. The composer's unapologetically patriotic potboiler, with its blazing brass and percussive cannonade, is the composition of choice to accompany Fourth of July fireworks. On Friday night, Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero led the Nashville Symphony Orchestra in a performance of that repertory staple at the Schermerhorn [...]

Classical review: Jarman and Reed give women their due in so many words

By [John Pitcher](#)

Soprano Amy Jarman devoted her entire program Tuesday night at the Blair School of Music to songs featuring the poetry and prose of women. It seemed like a fitting gesture. March, after all, is National Women's History Month. The program, expertly accompanied by pianist Jerome Reed, featured the writings of six notable women, spanning chronologically from Goethe's [...]

'Violet', A Musical Journey of Discovery, at STC Now through May 4

By [ArtsNash](#)

The Nashville premiere of the critically-acclaimed musical Violet hits the Street Theatre Company stage tonight. Set in 1964 in the Deep South during the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, the show (with a book by Brian Crawley, music by Jeanine Tesori and lyrics by Crawley) follows the enlightenment of a bitter young woman accidentally scarred by [...]

Theater Preview: Nashville Stagecraft Renovates Bard's 'Lear'

By [Logan L. Masterson](#)

"If wolves outside your gate had howled for entry against that tempest you would have said, 'Good Doorman, let them in.'" – Gloucester from William Shakespeare's King Lear On a sunny spring morning the energetic and erudite members of Nashville Stagecraft's production of The Mad King Lear that opens today (March 27) sit with ArtsNash [...]

'Muscle Shoals' Among 15 October Offerings at Belcourt Theatre

By [ArtsNash](#)

The Belcourt Theatre has a selection of 15 highly acclaimed documentaries for its annual Doctober event that begins Friday. With diverse topics that include hip-hop, mountain climbing, religious freedom, social activism and more, Doctober represents a thoughtful selection of provocative filmmaking. Highlights include the Sundance Film Festival hit CUTIE AND THE BOXER, a touching meditation on the [...]

David Alford Receives APSU's George Mabry Award on March 17

By [ArtsNash](#)

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. – On Wednesday evenings, you might know him as Bucky Dawes, manager of the fictional country music star Rayna James on the ABC drama Nashville. When Nicole Kidman's new psychological thriller Stoker hits theaters (including the Belcourt Theatre on March 22), he'll be the minister dressed in black with a white collar. If [...]

'Once', 'Kinky Boots' & 'Newsies' in '14-'15 Broadway@TPAC Season

By [Evans Donnell](#)

'Book of Mormon' Among Special Presentations in Strong Slate The Tennessee Performing Arts Center today announced its upcoming 2014-15 HCA/TriStar Health Broadway at TPAC series as well as special engagements that comprise one of its strongest slates ever. CEO Kathleen O'Brien unveiled the seven-show season package that features four productions in their first year on tour, [...]
