

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDIA CONTACT
Alan Berks, 612-423-6335
alan@wlproductions.org



WONDERLUST PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

The Labyrinth and The Minotaur: The Incarceration Play Project

Performances May 13 – May 22 at Mixed Blood Theatre

A one-of-a-kind epic, new play that shows the world of Incarceration in a new light.

Minneapolis, MN – Wonderlust Productions announces two weekends of performances of *The Labyrinth and the Minotaur: The Incarceration Play Project* at Mixed Blood Theatre May 13-22

This **world premiere new play**, performed by a mix of people with experience in the incarceration system and professional artists, is based on the true stories Wonderlust gathered from more than 230 diverse stakeholders in the Minnesota Corrections system—from inmates and their families, to corrections officers, prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, policy makers, and many others.

“For many people, their knowledge of the criminal justice system ends with a courtroom, and the last time they think about a convicted defendant is when she is led out a side door in handcuffs,” said Alan Berks, the play’s primary writer and Wonderlust Co-Artistic Director. “We take the audience through that door and immerse them in what happens as they wind their way through our labyrinthine system.”

The Labyrinth and The Minotaur dramatically reimagines the ancient myth of Theseus and his quest to kill the Minotaur, a half-man, half-beast trapped in a maze. The play layers stories from people who have spent their lives working and living inside a modern-day labyrinth—the Minnesota incarceration system, a place where lawyers, officers, educators, nurses and people who have broken laws and their families are trapped in a civilization all its own.

“We all need to face questions around who we punish, how we punish them, and why, as well as how we practice rehabilitation, reintegration, and healing,” Berks said. “Like the ancient stories, this modern myth offers an unforgettable saga on timeless questions.”

To guarantee a cross-section of voices from within the system are represented, Wonderlust visited the women’s prison in Shakopee, the men’s facility in Stillwater, Ramsey County Workhouse, and the juvenile facility, Boy’s Totem Town (closed in 2020). Wonderlust also held story circles with the Ramsey County Public Defenders, Prosecutors, and the employees at the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Corrections Officers at Oak Park Heights, as well as many

community support groups like Power of People (POP) Institute, MN Prison Doula Project, Voices for Racial Justice, Legal Rights Center, and criminal justice reform groups like Second Chance Coalition, We Are All Criminals, and many more.

Wonderlust has been working with the incarceration community and developing the Incarceration Play Project since 2018.

The Labyrinth and The Minotaur is written by **Alan Berks** with contributions from **Carlyle Brown**, based on the words of the incarceration community of Minnesota, directed by **Leah Cooper**, with choreography and puppetry by **Masanari Kawahara**, featuring original music by **Becky Dale** and **Queen Drea Reynolds** in collaboration with the Voices of Hope inmate choir at Shakopee Correctional Facility, sound design by **Peter Morrow**, props by **Masanari Kawahara**, costume design by **Andrea Gross**, lighting design by **Mike Grogan**, and set design and technical direction by **Zeb Hults**.

Founded in 2014, Wonderlust Productions brings together members of communities whose stories are often ignored or misunderstood and collaborates with them from the beginning of the idea until the final performance, to create a truly inclusive interaction that values both authenticity and artistry as catalyst to education, entertainment, conversation, and transformation.

The Labyrinth and the Minotaur runs from May 13-22 at Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis. Advance tickets available at wlproductions.org.

FACT SHEET:

Who: Wonderlust Productions

What: The Labyrinth and The Minotaur: The Incarceration Play Project

When: Friday, May 13 through Sunday, May 22.
Thursday, Friday & Saturdays @ 7:30
Sundays @ 3 pm

Where: Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S 4th St, Minneapolis, MN 55454

Cost: Tickets = \$5-50 (Suggested ticket price is \$25. \$50 subsidizes a ticket for members of the community.) Significant group discounts available. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. Contact info@wlproductions.org

Advanced tickets available at wlproductions.org soon.

Accommodations are provided for patrons with limited mobility. All are welcome.

ASL interpreted, Audio described and captioned performances TBA.

ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY:

- The United States has 5% of the world's population, but 25% of the world's prisoners.
- As of February 2016, the prison population had risen by 150% in the past 25 years.
- The United States is the world's leader in incarceration with 2.2 million people currently in the nation's prisons and jails — a 500% increase over the last forty years.
- Native Americans are imprisoned at a rate over 12 times, African Americans over 10 times, and Hispanics 4 ½ times as much as Whites in Minnesota.
- 77% of female prisoners in Minnesota are mothers to young children
- 1 in 6 Minnesota youth has a parent incarcerated.

ABOUT WONDERLUST PRODUCTIONS:

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*“Pure genius the way they wove such an intricate play together around the true stories and facts they had to work with.”—Community Member, **Veteran’s Play Project***

In Wonderlust’s short history, we’ve reached almost 15,000 people in plays, web series, story circles, creative workshops, events and educational residencies at the University of St. Thomas

and Normandale Community College. Through the pandemic, Wonderlust continued to innovate with *Contact Tracing*, an intimate online storytelling/ritual for addressing ambiguous loss and *Hopscotch: Pop-Up Plays About the Future* that employed 26 actors, writers, and musicians to present short play visions of the future in St. Paul parks in September 2021.

*“Like being a caveman around the fire, I appreciated the honest way you told these stories. . . This was the ultimate message of acceptance and a wildly successful piece of theater.” — ACTF Evaluator, **Look Again: The Normandale Play Project** (Spring 2019)*

In January 2018, the production of *Our House: The Capitol Play Project* performed for overflow audiences who were taken on a journey in and around the newly-restored Minnesota State Capitol:

*“I was in awe of the Capitol event. I didn't know what to expect, but I can tell you it totally surpassed what I might have imagined. I also learned a lot and feel more connected to the MN process and the beautiful restored Capitol, of which I knew nothing.” — Audience Member, **Our House: The Capitol Play Project***

In December 2016, Wonderlust's production of *In My Heart: The Adoption Play Project* sold out its entire run at Mixed Blood Theatre. In 2021, that play became a graphic novel (available for purchase online and at Next Chapter and Magers and Quinn).

*“The very many different stories, reasons and rationales truly burst the stereotypical notions of adoption.” — Audience Member, **In My Heart: Adoption Play Project.***

Wonderlust brings together Minnesota's talented theater community and it's rich diversity of citizens to create new epic art that forges new ways of seeing our common experiences, to transform the past into a better future.

*“During the many moments when content resonated with audience, and also with the cast members, it was very powerful.” — Audience Member, **Adoption Play Project***

Minnesota theater leaders Leah Cooper and Alan Berks combined their experience to create this community-driven ensemble. In 2015/2016, Wonderlust partnered with Park Square Theatre and the University of St. Thomas to co-produce *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello in a unique adaptation that included the voices of St. Thomas students. In 2013, Wonderlust (as Footprints Collective) co-produced the *Veterans' Play Project* with Mixed Blood Theatre.

For more information, please visit www.wonderlustproductions.org
Visit our unique community-driven web series: <http://www.overachieverswebseries.com>

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