

Sherlockian Theatrical Society



A non-Judgmental Play Appreciation Society

Number 67

Apr. 04, 2026

"The Hound of the Baskervilles"

By James Lavender

Manassas, VA

The Aquila Theatre's touring production of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" was scheduled at Hylton Performing Arts Centre in Manassas, Va., on Jan. 25, 2026, a date that turned out to be in the midst of a blizzard, and the performance had to be postponed. Fortunately, the company was able to return on Apr. 4, 2026, and Uncritic 003 attended and thoroughly enjoyed the show, and would happily recommend the show to everyone. Except that the performance was the second-to-last in the tour.

Written by James Lavender, the play's premise is that Sherlock Holmes has been invited by a mysterious donor to perform a recreation of one of his most famous cases at the Dartmoor Village Theatre and Tea Room. Holmes and Watson star in the production, and are joined by Mrs. Hudson and actor Sir Grover Drakes-Billetts. There are only four actors (Laura Whittenberger as Holmes, Joel Trinidad as Watson, Maggie McMeans as Mrs. Hudson, and Alexander Sculli as Sir Grover), and they manage, and manage well, to play all of the characters, assisted at times by the audience.

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There was a pre-performance discussion with Professor Art Taylor, who teaches a course on Sherlock Holmes at George Mason University (with which the Hylton is affiliated) and Desiree Sanchez Meineck, who is the play's director. Aquila has a long history of touring productions (and presented "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., in 2016) , and there's more information about Aquila at their web-site <https://www.aquilatheatre.com/>.

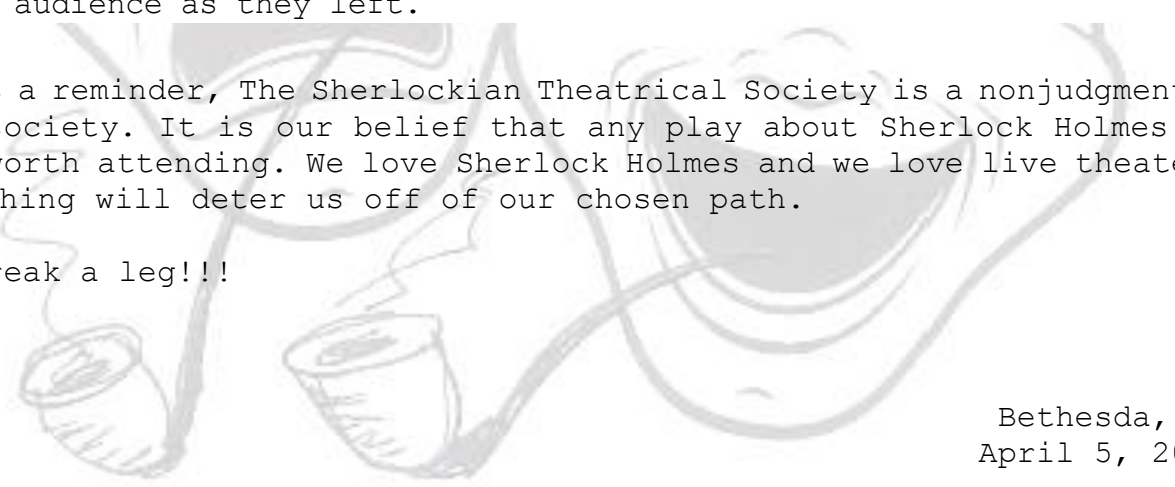
The play is an imaginative comedy, performed on an almost-bare stage with very few props, and with a wide variety of costumes (matching the wide variety of accents and voices) and plenty of action and acrobatics (including one actor's performance as a rock). The audience is indeed involved. One member, for example, is selected and persuaded to play the hound, and the entire audience at one point plays the hedgerows that prevent the villain's escape.

The Hylton's Merchant Hall is a full-scale theater, with professional sound and lighting, and more than 1,100 seats, and a sizeable and appreciative audience. There was lots of appreciative laughter at the antics of the company, and it was particularly interesting to see that the company's production was both sign interpreted (by two people) and captioned (on two screens at the left and right).

And there was a bonus: the performance scheduled in January was to be part of the Hylton's Education Initiative, which provides students with free books that complement select featured performances, so the Hylton had 800 copies of a Signet Classics 2001 paperback edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (with an afterword by Anne Perry), handed out to the audience as they left.

As a reminder, The Sherlockian Theatrical Society is a nonjudgmental society. It is our belief that any play about Sherlock Holmes is worth attending. We love Sherlock Holmes and we love live theater, so nothing will deter us off of our chosen path.

Break a leg!!!



Bethesda, MD
April 5, 2026