

ACT 1
Theatre



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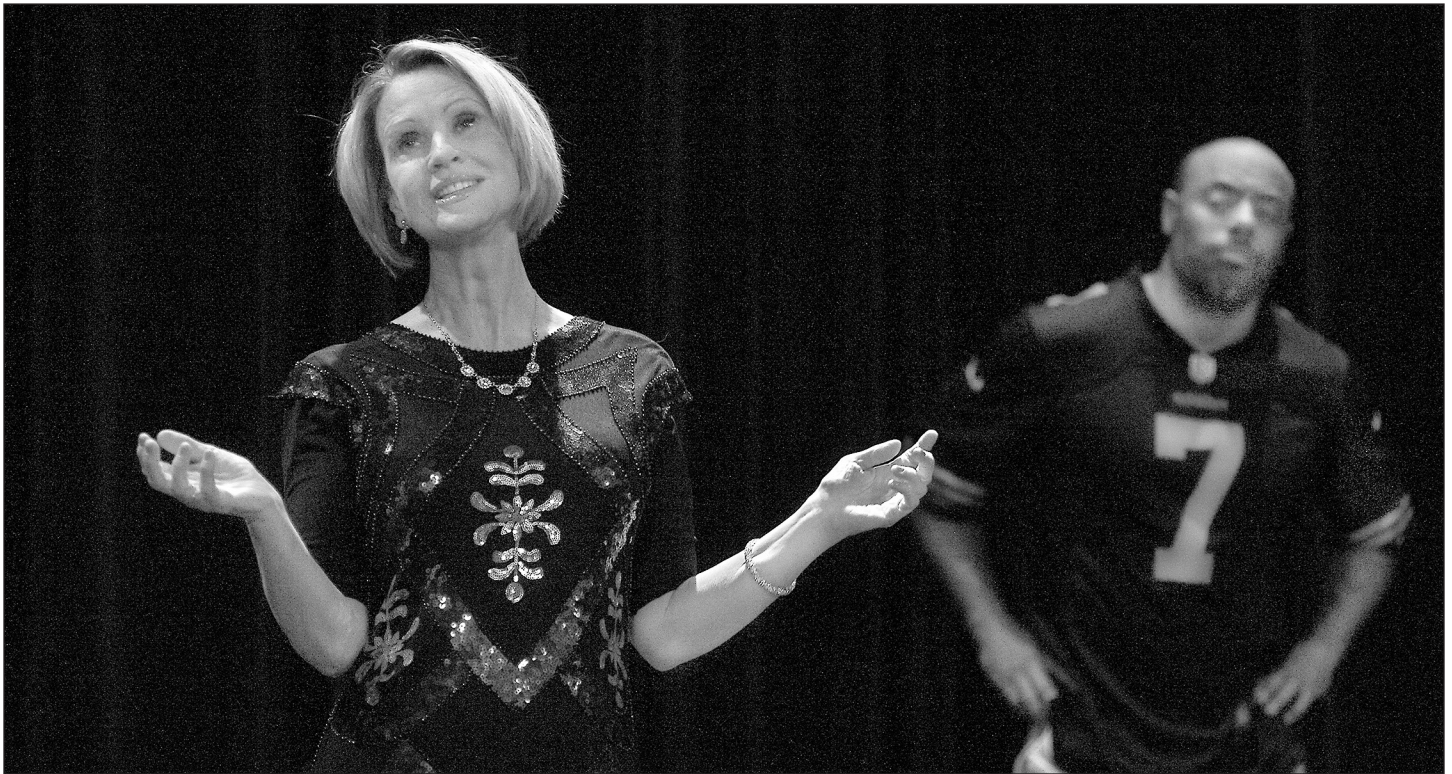


Photo by SCOTT HANSEN

Debbie Kilgren and Anthony Gaynes rehearse a scene from the new ACT 1 Theatre production of Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike.

Broken mugs

Facing up to what to life's missed opportunities

Adult siblings Vanya and Sonia reside in their old family home, mourning their lost dreams and missed opportunities. When their often-wrong, fortune-telling maid warns of impending dangers, and their movie star sister, Masha, arrives unexpectedly with young, sexy, boy toy named Spike, the family is launched into a rollicking weekend of one-

upmanship, exposed nerves, and a lot of broken mugs.

With wit and absurdity, Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia*

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Out of character

**Abel Kellam
trades onstage
zaniness for
calm, cool and
orderly**

By **Cliff Rowe and Petra Karr**

Put Abel Kellam on stage and chaos ensues. His improvisations can turn a funeral scene into a gut-buster.

Which makes his current duties at ACT1 Theatre Productions so ironic. He's the house manager for the troupe and in charge of seeing that things are in ORDER.

Order, as in "making sure there is toilet paper in the bathrooms, that the popcorn is hot and fresh, that people are able to select a seat that meets their needs. Maybe they need wheelchair accessibility or just want to sit in the audience on the side they will best see their family member on stage. We check on all the other volunteers (ushers, box office, concessions) and make sure they have what they need as well."

We, in this case, includes his wife Jessica, who shares the house manager responsibilities.



Photo by GENE ACHZIGER

Abel Kellam is a riot onstage, but in his house manager role he's all business.

"If I am doing my job right, I'm putting fires out so quickly that the audience isn't even be aware there were fires," Kellam said.

And he fully grasps the importance of the role because, as in a business, he is the "first point of contact." Having been involved in sales of one form or another most of his life, he understands the necessity of keeping the customers/patrons of the theater happy.

And keeping ACT 1's patrons happy has been Kellam's goal for nine years now, ever since that day back in 2009 when he ran into artistic director Petra Karr at a Sumner High

School marching band event. He found out ACT 1 was in production of *Forever Plaid*, one of his favorite shows.

He volunteered to be the announcer and help run the fog machine backstage. And in the process, he got hooked and has been involved with ACT 1 Theatre ever since as an actor, stage combat choreographer, improv performer, and this season as the house manager.

Kellam says his work with ACT 1 fulfills one of his passions.

"I love volunteering with ACT 1

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VANYA

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and Masha and Spike blends An-ton Chekhov's famous feeling of utter weariness with the modern-day toils and troubles of celebrity, social networking, and age into a laugh-out-loud comedy that will tickle your funny bone and stimulate your mind.

ACT 1 Artistic Director Petra Karr brings this production to the stage April 6-7 and April 13-14 in Puyallup's historic Liberty Theater.

The play is loosely based on Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, from 1904. It was the Russian playwright's last effort and is widely regarded as a classic of 20th-century theater. The play has been translated and adapted into many languages and produced around the world. This is Durang's 2012 adaptation.

"Since choosing this play for our season, I have been looking forward to directing it," Karr said. "Christopher Durang is a brilliant writer. I love his words, and he nails the truth in relationships. We are blessed with a cast who are working diligently to bring these relationships to life. At every rehearsal another layer of the humor in the character's lives is revealed."

Karr said she was originally attracted to the show because it has three scrumptious roles for actors older than 50, which is rare — especially for women.

Avelon Ragoonanan returns as a designer for this show. Karr said Ragoonanan has been an artistic collaborator of epic value.

"His set AND costume designs are inspired," she said.

Tickets are available at the door or online at www.act1theatre.org.

NOW PLAYING

VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE

Critics have praised *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* as a humorous adaptation of Anton Chekhov themes that doesn't require familiarity with Chekhov. In 2013, it won the Tony Award for Best Play.

PRINCIPAL CAST

Vanya Curt Beech

Sonia Debbie Kilgren

Masha Leigh Duncan

Spike Anthony Gaynes

Nina Mataja Davidson

Cassandra Stephanie Carlson

SHOWTIMES

April 6-7 and April 13-14

7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays

2 p.m. (matinee) on Saturdays

TICKETS

Adults - \$20

Students, Military & Seniors - \$15

Available online at:

www.ACT1Theatre.org

CHARACTER

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because I am passionate about theater, and passionate about how Chris and Petra Karr approach theater. Their vision is what has taken ACT 1 where it is and will keep it growing in the future. They truly are all about community, and I love being able to participate in that community," he said.

Kellam also appreciates the outreach to youth in the community.

"Their [ACT 1's] work with youth is amazing — and I have watched many of those youth work and grow in confidence and esteem for years," he said. "Serving as house manager

gives me the opportunity to be involved in a consistent way but not have to commit to rehearsal processes or commitments I can't make because of my job."

It's not an accident that Kellam, with his wonderful speaking voice — he does occasional voice-over animation work — is the "voice" of ACT 1. His welcoming, warm, filled with humor, and authentic vocal abilities serves him well when he asks the audience to consider a donation in support of the theater company.

"Non-profits need the support," he said, laughing. "You HAVE to ask."

It's also a constant necessity as, once again, ACT 1 will spend the

off-season searching for a new home and the support to continue on.

ACT 1 will be moving out of the Liberty Theatre at the end of this season, and that adds a bit of uncertainty to the mix. But with his commitment to the mission, Kellam plans to continue as house manager wherever the troupe lands.

"ACT 1 has grown so much and has such momentum in the community. It will just continue to grow. We've relocated several times — it's not a new concept to us," he said. "As long as we are growing it's exciting to be a part of the process — and it will keep growing."

Order out of chaos, you see.

Contemplating our next big move

ACT1 once again searching for a home

By **Megan Noborikawa**

If you've followed ACT 1 for a while, this may be a familiar story: At the end of the 2017-2018 season, the longtime community theater troupe will again have to find a new home.

The Borovic Family sold the Liberty Theater in the latter half of last year. The 2017-2018 season had already been planned at that point and although originally ACT 1 was told that it could stay, it has since learned that extended only to the end of the season.

"We hoped this would be our long-term home," Artistic Director Petra Karr said of the Liberty Theater.

ACT 1 moved to the Liberty The-

ater two seasons ago. The industrial-garage-turned-black-box-theater that they had been working out of was renovated and so ACT 1 and others had to go. That space became apartments.

"We thought [the Liberty] was a cool space," Karr said.

Indeed, it offered an easier location for actors and patrons, had larger seating and a marquee.

Instead, ACT 1 will be once again wandering the valley, in search of a new theater space to call home.

The search will remain in the Puyallup and Sumner area, as the troupe seeks to stay close to the youth who are a vital part of ACT 1.

It will be a challenge to carry an audience to a new space, but loyal friends and patrons have been on this quest before.

"My faith and the faith of my amazing husband keep me moving forward — I believe ACT 1 has a following and makes our communities better," Karr said.



ACT 1 Theatre

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253-447-4139

Theater:

Our performances
are held in the historic

Liberty Theater

116 W Main Ave
Puyallup, WA 98371

**ACT 1 Theatre is a 501(c)3
organization, and all
donations are tax deductible**



Donations are always
welcome.

Please visit us on
Facebook or at

www.ACT1Theatre.org

OUR 2017-18 FINALE

Urinetown

Winner of three Tony Awards, three Outer Critics Circle Awards, two Lucille Lortel Awards and two Obie Awards, *Urinetown* is a hilarious musical satire of the legal system, capitalism, social irresponsibility, populism, bureaucracy, corporate mismanagement, municipal politics and musical theater itself!

In a Gotham-like city, a terrible water shortage, caused by a 20-year drought,

has led to a government-enforced ban on private toilets.

The citizens must use public amenities, regulated by a single malevolent company that profits by charging admission for one of humanity's most basic needs.

Amongst the people, a hero decides that he's had enough and plans a revolution to lead them all to freedom!

**June 1 (7pm) • June 2 (2 & 7pm)
June 8 (7pm) • June 9 (2 & 7pm)**

The fate of local theater is in your hands

We need your help.

Please help us sustain
quality live community
theater in the Puyallup Valley.

Consider sending a
donation of any amount to:

ACT 1 Theatre

P.O. Box 1531
Sumner, WA 98390
or click:

DONATE NOW at
www.ACT1Theatre.org