

ACT 1

Theatre



AD LIB

Newsletter November 1, 2016

Music of *Another Night* just may move audience to tears

By Cliff Rowe

When Molly Barnes first heard the music from *Another Night Before Christmas*, tears came to her eyes.

“It’s such a sweet story,” she said, and the musical’s score reflects that story.

After three weeks of rehearsing, as musical director she no longer cries, but she said she believes those in the audience of the ACT1 Theatre production of the play next month may.

It’s that kind of holiday tale, one that begins with a winter night’s encounter at a park bench between a young social worker and an elderly man she sees as of need of her help.

She offers him food, but he finagles his way into her apartment, claiming to be Santa.

She has the best of intentions, but then the two of them wind up locked in her apartment due to a flawed security system.

The battle is on between cynicism and belief against a backdrop of words and music rich in humor, sincerity, doubt and surprise.

Barnes, a 2015 graduate of Pacific Lutheran University with a degree in music performance, is making her first professional-directing debut. Not that she’s a novice. She spent years of directing a Ballard church choir and, most recently, directing music in both student theater and opera at PLU.

From behind the piano keyboard, Barnes is directing Kaira Hensler, a PLU senior and frequent performer with ACT1 Theater, as the social worker, and Robbie Hill, another ACT1 Theatre veteran as ... who? Santa or just “The Guy?”

Joining Barnes in the pit will be two other recent college



Photo by CLIFF ROWE

Molly Barnes accompanies Kaira Hensler in rehearsal for *Another Christmas Carol*.

graduates, Tom Horn on drums and Aron Roberts on guitar.

In transporting music from the play’s book to the stage, Barnes said she and Petra Karr, ACT1’s artistic director, emphasized music that

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Give the gift of theater

As 2016 comes to an end, nonprofits are asking for end-of-year donations that offer patrons a final tax deduction for 2016.

I listen to the other pleas, and wonder how, with passion and conviction, to make ACT 1's stand out. Ultimately, I hope it's the stories I can share that will move you to support our work.

By donating one time, or by creating a monthly donation plan on our website, you are providing the gift of theater to the community, not just for the audiences who can experience a diverse season of excellent theater, but for the actors and artists as well.

We have had single parents tell us that our theater provided a safe and constructive place for their child at night while they worked. The youth weren't home alone, were engaged with people (not on a computer or play station for endless hours) and were building their self-confidence and self-esteem through involvement in artistic collaboration and production.

We have artists who trek all the way down from Seattle to work on at least one show a season who tell us that they love ACT 1 because we are professional both on and off stage. We welcome anyone to audition and consider all for casting. We work with more than 200 artists and actors in creating each season.

What else will your gift of theater provide?

Your gift allows us to:

- Offer gas stipends to actors and directors from Seattle and Olympia to expand the range and experience of our artists
- Keep our ticket prices low and affordable for more
- Enable artists to teach costume construction, and how to dye, distress and texture fabric to create an effect
- Provide scholarships for youth to study theater history, Spanish language and improv
- Pay the music conductors who teach our instrumental and vocal programs and provide direction during musical offerings
- Buy the paint, lumber, hardware, lights, sound equipment and make up
- Pay the rent, utilities and insurance at our warehouse where we have storage and construction space and some of our rehearsals
- Pay our lease at Puyallup's historic Liberty Theatre for our performances, and help cover office costs in Auburn
- Bring excellent and accessible theater to the Pierce County community that reawakens the imagination

This year give the gift of theater. Be a part of bringing art to life.

Mission statement

Dedicated to enriching communities through quality theater and professional and artistic development.

MOLLY BARNES

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best tells the story and is most likely to deliver the humor that underlies its poignancy.

Barnes said what they have come up with as a challenging array of music that will test singers, musicians and director.

The two actors "have the hardest part," Barnes said. "There are so many switches and changes. Just a lot to learn."

Another test for all lies in the setting for this season's second performance on the stage of the Liberty Theater in Puyallup. While the house is a larger venue than ACT1 Theatre's former black box theater surroundings in Sumner over the past five years, the Liberty stage area is smaller.

On the other hand, the shift from a strictly student production to a student/adult blend won't be as difficult for Barnes as one might suspect.

In the years she was with the Ballard First Lutheran Church choir as singer and then director, she matured under the tutelage of many in the choir.

"A lot of them helped raise me," she said.

As Barnes has learned, even with maturity can come tears as well as laughter. As she discovered from the start, *Another Night Before Christmas* has ample helpings of both.

Re-awaken your
imagination



ACT 1 Theatre

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