

ACT 1

Theatre



AD LIB

Newsletter April 1, 2017



Photo by SCOTT HANSEN

The cast of *Sylvia* includes, from left: Leigh Duncan as Phyllis, Julie Smith as Kate, Heath Martin as Greg, and Mataja Davidson as Sylvia. Not Pictured: Trevor Williams.

A doggone love story to leave audiences howling

By Cliff Rowe

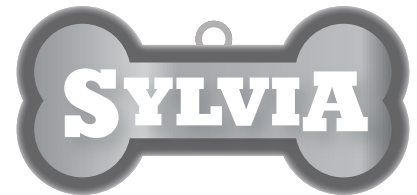
Human relationships are the stuff of which drama is made.

Sylvia, the next production at ACT 1 Theatre, reminds us that the animals among us can contribute to those relationships.

As the title character in this play, *Sylvia* — a mixed breed of lab and poodle — comes into the lives of New York couple Greg and Kate, intent on forging new relationships with them and any other living creature who happens by. In the process, she disrupts existing relationships, especially those of her “new people” and their human friends. Battles of

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SYLVIA



Greg and Kate have moved to Manhattan after 22 years of child-raising in the suburbs. Greg's career as a financial trader is winding down, while Kate's career, as a public-school English teacher, is beginning to offer her more opportunities.

Greg brings home a dog he found in the park — or that has found him — bearing only the name *Sylvia* on her name tag.

A street-smart mixture of Lab and Poodle, *Sylvia* becomes a major bone of contention between husband and wife. She offers Greg an escape from the frustrations of his job and the unknowns of middle age.

To Kate, *Sylvia* becomes a rival for affection. And *Sylvia* thinks Kate just doesn't understand the relationship between man and dog.

The marriage is put in serious jeopardy until, after a series of hilarious and touching complications, Greg and Kate learn to compromise, and *Sylvia* becomes a valued part of their lives.

Show Dates and Times

7pm - Friday, April 21 • Saturday, April 22
2pm - Saturday, April 22 - 2pm
7pm - Friday, April 28 • Saturday, April 29
2pm - Saturday, April 29

Ticket Prices

Advanced Purchase
General - \$20
Disabled - \$15
Students - \$15
Military - \$15

At-the-Door
General - \$20
Disabled - \$15
Students - \$15
Military - \$15

Where to Buy

www.Act1TheatreProductions.com

SYLVIA

From Page 1

will, whether over access to the couch or physical involvement with male dogs on walks in the park, draw the lines across which Sylvia and those around her, four-legged and two-legged, joust.

The play, crafted by playwright A.R. Gurney and originally staged in New York City in 1995, abruptly brings together stories of individual needs and the difficult effort to collectively solve them. Empty-nesters Greg and Kate find their respective professions and shared marriage in jeopardy, and Sylvia's newly found affection for Greg only aggravates the latter. Sylvia, having found Greg in a park, is eager to follow him wherever the leash and her instincts take her in fulfilling her new lifestyle.

For Deb De Grosse, director of this production, this plot merely reflects life as she and other pet-owners know it. As a cat-owner, "I have no trouble talking with animals," she says.

De Grosse, directing the play for the first time, found it prompted collaborative efforts among her and the cast members that echoed those of the on-stage story.

The language of the original script, for example, prompted a discussion among them that had been anticipated by the playwright from the beginning. He had recognized that the language of a play set in contemporary New York City might perplex "directors who feel their audiences would be offended by the original text." In response, he suggested a half-dozen specific alternatives in its vocabulary.

De Grosse and her actors, of widely varied ages but closely aligned local ties, weighed their theatrical obligations to the story and their relationships with their audience and followed several of the suggested script changes.

In another situation, they put their heads together and decided a well-timed honking car horn off stage would diminish the potential offensiveness.

Step aside Sylvia, we all know who's still top dog around here

By Cliff Rowe

Hey! Sorry if I startled you. I just need to get something off my furry chest.

I'm speaking here as more than just as an adorable, elderly? (Yeah, elderly) chocolate lab.

You see, I'm also a theater dog.

You folks go to theater by choice. You settle into your seats, gaze on and listen to the drama before you because you want to, and when the curtain closes, you step back into a world of your making.

Me? I pretty much inhabit a world of everyone else's making. As the almost-constant companion of Petra and Chris, who run ACT1 Theatre Productions, I hover off-stage day and night, alert to my every cue.

A door slams, I bark... Hey!

Someone picks up my leash and the tag on the collar jingles... Hey, Hey, Hey!

A cat that hangs around our house sidles toward MY dish on the kitchen floor. Well, what's my line? Hey!

I see it as a role of sorts.

I'm cast as a protector, always.

As a careful observer, often.

As a very vocal critic, occasionally.

For all who hang around ACT 1 The-

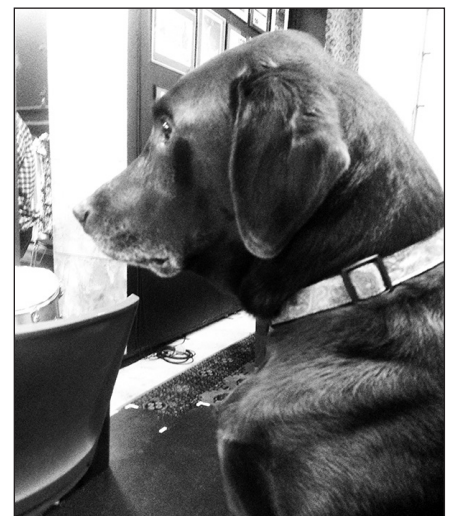


Photo by CLIFF ROWE

Charlie

atre, I'm an eager, ready friend when things are going well. When they aren't, I'm a willing recipient of a pat on the

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For De Grosse, involvement with drama such as this and the actors who produce it, has sustained her enthusiasm for theater that began at Pacific Lutheran University. She graduated in 1981 with a bachelor of Fine Arts degree in communication and education.

Following graduation, she moved in 1983 to Bend, Ore., where, in addition to teaching drama at Mountain View High School, she joined and ultimately became a board member of

the Cascade Theatre Co.

Last year family matters brought her back to the Pierce County area where she joined ACT 1 Theatre and, in addition to directing Sylvia, is president of the theater's board of directors.

Whether on stage or in a classroom, De Grosse says teaching drama has enabled her "to practice and show my art as well as to live indoors and buy shoes."

Sylvia would note the relationship . . . and approve.

Community theater is in your hands

Live theater is a necessary part of any community. It enriches our lives, our area, our children and this area's livability.

In its first season in downtown Puyallup, ACT 1 Theatre Productions is winning its way into the heart and soul of the Puyallup Valley arts community. In addition to its outstanding performances featuring local talent, part of ACT 1's mission and vision includes education. Through classes for children and outreach to local schools, ACT 1 is providing opportunity for new artists to perform and new works to be produced.

But all of this comes at a cost.

ACT 1 is a non-profit and ticket sales account for less than half of the total cost of doing business. Our top ticket price is \$20 and it barely begins to offset our ex-

penses. If a ticket represented a realistic amount necessary to meet the total cost of a production, the price would severely limit the number of people who could afford to attend.

This means ACT 1 must walk a tight line between keeping prices low enough to attract large audiences and high enough to pay the bills. Therefore, we must rely on supporters of a vibrant arts community to help subsidize our outstanding performances and to help cover a recent forced move to a different rehearsal and construction/storage space.

ACT 1 is seeking sustaining donations to help cover its \$3,100 a month warehouse rental bill. This is where scenery is stored, sets are constructed, actors rehearse, and where classes, music lessons and improv performances are held.

Puyallup had its first taste of quality community theater when ACT 1 relocated to the historic Liberty Theater as its

performance home. Audience members new to ACT 1 are returning and bringing new patrons.

But we still 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 ACT1Theatre.org.

CHARLIE

From Page 2

or a scratch behind the ear.

I've had little reason to complain, I must admit. Until now that is.

Human drama of a startling variety has passed through my life, as I'm sure you would expect.

I've observed the deliberations of *Twelve Angry Men* as they rehearsed their jury-room deliberations.

I've had opportunities to daydream over the set of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I've kept a wary eye on the ram-bunctious comings and goings of unpredictable pirates running around on *Treasure Island*.

So much comedy. Tragedy. Melodrama.

It's been pretty exciting for the most part. Until now, like I said.

I've been sharing my space in recent

days with a cast that includes — of all things — a DOG! And not what I would call a "normal" dog.

This Sylvia creature, she's a self-centered fluff ball. A shallow, pampered, demanding creature.

Frankly, I see her as a foul-mouthed b-i-t-_- Whoops, I'm told I can't use that word, even when it's biologically correct.

Well, you may see where I'm going with this.

It seems some people around this latest ACT 1 production are discovering more substance and sympathy in her. But I doubt that I will.

I just expect to lift my head from my paws as she makes her final exit and voice a deep, plaintive sigh that you'll hear in the back row. Then I'll turn to meeting all the folks with whom I'll be sharing the next performance.

Hey!

Re-awaken your
imagination



ACT 1 Theatre

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253-447-4139

Warehouse and studio:

13708 24th St. E. Suite B-101
Sumner, WA 98390

Theater:

Our performances
are held at 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

Mayhem, love, greed, rivalry and relief: We've got it all in our upcoming season

The Adventures of Rocketman and Beano

Give your family the holiday gift of laughter with *The Adventures of Rocketman and Beano*. Witness the world premiere adaptation of a classic comic book, created and performed by Tom Spangenberg and Christine Longe.

This piece, fresh from the Fringe Festival in Seattle, features original music and epic failures in the fight against fascism.

The characters command and confound the stage like none before them; think Batman and Robin meets Lucy and Desi. Will good prevail, or will evil have the last laugh?

Cheer on these superheroes (super-idiot?) In their personal quest to uphold legacy and make history as a dynamic duo!

Dec. 1-2 and Dec. 8-9

Romeo and Juliet

When the children of two rival families fall in love, they must keep their new and budding romance a secret.

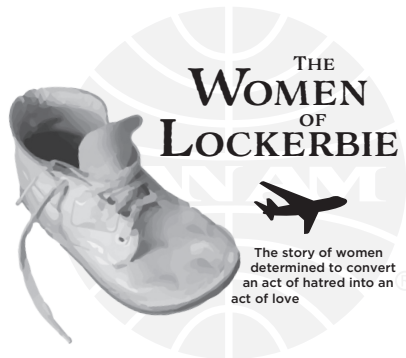
In this re-imagining of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's classic love story, the conventions of time and sequence have been manipulated to reposition the original dialog and plot lines to highlight new connections and themes for a modern audience. You will experience this love story as you have never before.

Jan. 12-13 and Jan. 19-20

Peter and the Starcatcher

Tony-winning *Peter and the Starcatcher* upends the century-old story of

COMING NEXT



May 26-27 and June 2-3

In these times of terrorism and cultural divisiveness there is a play that eloquently explores fear, terror, and humanity's reactions to it. Inspired by a true story and written in the structure of a Greek tragedy, this is a poetic drama about the triumph of love over hate.

ACT 1 APPEARANCES THIS SUMMER

July 22 — Waterland Parade in Des Moines' Marina District at 6 p.m. We're pooling our resources with the Mount Rainier Pool for a great time.

how a miserable orphan comes to be The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up (a.k.a. Peter Pan).

A wildly theatrical adaptation of Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's best-selling novels, the play was conceived for the stage by directors Roger Rees and Alex Timbers; written by Rick Elice; with music by Wayne Barker.

From marauding pirates and jungle tyrants to unwilling comrades and unlikely heroes, *Peter and the Starcatcher* playfully explores the depths of greed and despair...

and the bonds of friendship, duty and love.

Feb. 9-10 and Feb. 16-17

Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike

The 2014 Tony Awards winner for Best Play, *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike* is a brilliant comedy written by Christopher Durang.

The story revolves around the relationships of three middle-aged single siblings, two of whom live together, and takes place during a visit by the third, Masha, who supports them.

They discuss their lives and loves, argue, and Masha threatens to sell the house.

April 6-7 and April 13-14

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 1-2 and June 8-9