

# ACT 1

Theatre



# AD LIB

Newsletter May 1, 2016



The cast of  
Treasure Island  
practice their  
sword-fighting  
technique  
in advance  
of their first  
performance  
on May 27.



Photo by CLIFF ROWE

## Cast swashes a few buckles and shouts a hearty ahrrrrrr!

By Cliff Rowe

I've been to *Treasure Island*, as I suspect you – all of you – have, too. Whether in the pages of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic book or on the screen in one of its movie adaptations. We've all been there.

Were we to pool memories of our visits, we might find commonalities. Long John Silver, certainly, and Jim Hawkins. How about Captain Flint...or Blind Pew?

The parrot.

There would be the tropical West Indies island itself. Treasure and a map for locating it. Scheming and skullduggery.

Humanity and inhumanity.

And from it all you and I would come up with clear mental pictures of what we had encountered and why it was important to us.

Now we have the opportunity to visit it all again in a stage adaption of the sto-

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### TREASURE ISLAND

Adaptation by Ken Ludwig  
Produced with special permission from  
Samuel French

Based on the masterful adventure novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* is a stunning yarn of piracy on the tropical seas.

An unforgettable tale of treachery and mayhem circa 1775 featuring legendary swash-bucklers including dangerous Billy Bones; sinister, two-timing Israel Hands; brassy, woman pirate Anne Bonney; and the hideous form of evil incarnate, Blind Pew.

At the center of it all are: Jim Hawkins, a 14-year-old who longs for adventure; and the infamous Long John Silver, a complex study of good and evil, perhaps the most famous hero/villain of all time.

Silver is an unscrupulous, buccaneer/rogue whose greedy quest for gold, coupled with his affection for Jim, cannot help but win the heart of every soul who has ever longed for romance, treasure and adventure.

#### Show Dates and Times

Friday, May 27 • Saturday, May 28 - 7pm  
Sunday, May 29 - 2pm  
Friday, June 3 • Saturday, June 4 - 7pm  
Sunday, June 5 - 2pm

#### Ticket Prices

Advanced Purchase	At-the-Door
General - \$15	General - \$20
Disabled - \$10	Disabled - \$15
Students - \$10	Students - \$15
Military - \$10	Military - \$15

#### Where to Buy

[www.Act1TheatreProductions.com](http://www.Act1TheatreProductions.com)

# TREASURE ISLAND

From Page 1

ry written by Ken Ludwig and directed by Avelon Ragoonanan, who previously has done choreography, costuming and set design for ACT 1.

A native of Trinidad, Ragoonanan's life has embraced two cultures that come together in his staging of this play.

His introduction to drama was through the Caribbean street theater of Carnival and expands now to the stage of ACT 1. The path that Ragoonanan has followed from Trinidad to Sumner, via Pacific Lutheran University, has influenced both the substance and style of his *Treasure Island*.

Check out the set.

Ragoonanan's design takes those in the audience at one point or another from a British tavern to a steamship to an island and into a stockade and jungle occupying it, all without leaving their seats.

He defined all its variety and expansiveness in a model, as he does with all his set designs, and then oversaw its construction. In its life-size form it transforms the ACT 1 Theatre stage into a multi-dimensional backdrop for the telling of Stevenson's complex story.

As a director, he not only builds, but he teaches, something he also did as a young man in Trinidad, working with up to 45 people in a cast.

His ACT 1 Theater cast of non-seafaring locals, ranging in age from teens to adults, portrays the horde of treasure-seeking pirates of similar ages. They are blended into a savory, spicy spread of human relationships ranging from the sharing of wisdom to the delivery of wounds from swords, knives and lead bullets. He finds that most of his actors here have more life experiences, but less theater knowledge.

To nurture that knowledge, particularly that of the younger actors, he assigns research to them from early rehearsals that introduces them to the play's vocabulary, geography and history and their



Photo by CLIFF ROWE

**Avelon Ragoonanan**

respective roles in delivering it.

As teacher, he guides. He doesn't dictate.

The actors share their newly acquired knowledge through their characters, developing and contributing their own insights as they go.

For instance they discover the significance of two of the pirates' names – Justice and Death. They speak the language of the script, but act out the emotion of the story being voiced.

They may speak of anger, but the audience is expected to recognize the tension of the anger in a clenched fist or slash of a sword, as well as in shouted words.

As each character in the play has his or her own personality, Avelon said, so does each actor, and he encourages them to shape and discover those personalities themselves as much as possible.

"If an actor is getting too far removed from the story, I will step in," he said.

So the learning proceeds, individually in all cases and collectively in many as relationships are tested and proven within the play as well as within the cast.

Finally, Ragoonanan sees the ultimate experience of discovery occurring within the audience, their imaginations fed by the playwright, director and actors.

This mental map leads to that island's treasure onstage at ACT 1 Theatre.

# Time's up, we gotta move

## To our loyal patrons:

I write with three things in mind:

**First**, incredible gratitude. YOU are the reason that we are here. Because of you, we continue to be able to produce excellent local theater, work with countless volunteer artists each season and offer classes and workshops at minimal to no cost. We are so thankful and truly moved, not only for your fiscal support but for the letters and messages of encouragement.

**Secondly**, I want to let you know it's official: We have received notice that Tarragon Properties has not renewed our lease and will soon be renovating the property where our studio sits. We have less than 30 days to move from our site.

We have submitted a letter of intent on some parcels in Sumner, and are waiting to hear from the seller. We want to remain in east Pierce County, within easy walking/biking/driving distance for youth, and we want to be able to expand our programming.

If that opportunity does not come through we will be packing our set pieces and scenery into shipping containers, moving our office and costumes to a rental space in Auburn and producing each show next season in a different location. Stay tuned.

**Lastly**, I thank all of you who are donating to sustain ACT 1. As a 100 percent volunteer organization we finally have the leadership on our board and from our grant writer Crissi Mora to help us build the beginnings of a strategic and necessary foundation. If you have not signed up to donate monthly support to ACT 1, please go to our new website at [www.ACT1Theatre.org](http://www.ACT1Theatre.org) and follow the steps to do so. If you are unable to donate an amount every month a one-time gift is always appreciated!

Gratefully, **Petra Karr**, artistic director

# Our Lady of Bits and Bytes

Virginia Winger pursues a mission to connect with ACT 1 Theatre patrons

By Cliff Rowe

Virginia Winger has been involved with ACT 1 Theatre for 22 years, first as a church lady in *Hotel McGregor* when the troupe was still Ascension Productions and performing out of Creator Lutheran Church in Bonney Lake.

She picked up with ACT 1 as the Mother Superior in the play *Nunsense* and now serves as computer guru with the theater's communication team.

In between, she's sewn costumes, house managed, stage managed and continued to act on occasion.

Most recently she performed in *The Fantasticks*.

"I don't audition," she said, but if someone offered a part, she might take it.

She's done all this as one of the many volunteers who perform on- and off-stage at ACT 1.

Among her present responsibilities are email correspondence with ACT 1 Theatre patrons and working with theater playbills.

For Winger this giving of her time and talent is a matter of faith in part, of passion in another.

She cited her Christian upbringing as



Photo by GENE ACHZIGER

*Virginia Winger has been an integral part of the ACT 1 Theatre success now for 22 years, volunteering for both on- and off-stage assignments. In 2012 she starred as Mother Superior in the theater troupe's production of Nunsense.*

influential in instilling in her the notion that people giving of themselves is "what makes the world go around. So many things wouldn't be done if there weren't volunteers."

As a former high-school and college track athlete, Winger is sought out now to help officiate at high-school track and field meetings, but she said that involvement is more of a duty.

In contrast she has found a passion in theater that she is eager to share. As ACT 1 began planning and developing a new website, she "gave it a push," nudging and pushing it toward activation.

She said she seldom gets involved in anything where she doesn't make sure things get done.

She has found a similar drive among many others, whether in her early work at Creator Lutheran Church or in her present theater work.

She said she's particularly encouraged by the fact that she sees no decline in a willingness to be involved among youth who will be asked to push and nudge society in the future.

Re-awaken your  
imagination



**ACT 1**  
Theatre

**Studio of Theatrical Arts**

5814-152<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Ct. E., Suite 104\*  
Sumner, WA 98390

\*Next to Fred Meyer Gardening Center

**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](http://www.ACT1Theatre.org)



# Salute to the Bard kicks off 2016-17 season

## Midsummer Night's Dream

This year marks the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death and the whole world will take note. In commemoration, we are kicking off our season with a familiar favorite.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare's most popular comedy, was written around 1594 or 1595. It portrays the adventures of four young lovers and a group of amateur actors and their interactions with woodland fairies and a duke and duchess.

Taking place in a mythical Athens and an enchanted forest, there is a handsome fairy king, a misguided parent, star-crossed lovers, a weaver who's transformed into a half-donkey, wood sprites and elves.

This work is widely performed around the world, and no wonder — it's about the world's most popular pastime, falling in love.

But as Puck knows, falling in love can make fools of us all.

**Oct. 14, 15, 16 • 21, 22, 23 • 28, 29, 30**

\*Costume contests for audience members on Friday and Saturday of final weekend

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## Another Night Before Christmas

(a musical)

Karol, a disillusioned social worker, is strutting home one cold December night when she encounters an old man sitting on a park bench. Mistaking him to be homeless, she offers the stranger some food — a seemingly innocent gesture, until he turns up in her apartment claiming to be Santa.

Thanks to a malfunctioning security system, Karol finds herself trapped with "Mr. Claus" and forced to confront her feelings about Christmas once and for all in this touching musical battle between cynicism and belief.

**Dec. 2, 3, 4 • 9, 10, 11 • 16, 17, 18**

## ACT 1 APPEARANCES THIS SUMMER

**July 1 — Music Off Main** at Heritage Park in Sumner at 6:30 p.m.  
Enjoy our old-fashioned USO show.

**July 16-17 — Rhubarb Days.** Join the fun as we loose the Rhubarbarian Tribe onto the streets of downtown Sumner. Mayhem guaranteed.

**July 23 — 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.

## The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

(a musical)

An eclectic group of mid-pubescent vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime.

While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home life, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words hoping to never hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life un-affirming ding of the bell that signals a spelling mistake.

Six spellers enter; one speller leaves!

At least the losers get a juice box.

A riotous ride complete with audience participation.

**Feb. 3, 4, 5 • 10, 11, 12 • 17, 18, 19**

(Valentine's Day special on Feb. 11 will feature special treats for the audience such as wine, chocolate, and/or roses for a bit more ambience.)

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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 labrador 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. (Sylvia is played by an upright adult in a dog costume)

**April 22, 23, 24 • 29, 30**

**May 1 • May 6, 7, 8**

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## The Women of Lockerbie

In these times of terrorism and cultural divisiveness there is play that eloquently explores fear, terror and humanities reactions to it.

In this play, a mother from New Jersey roams the hills of Lockerbie, Scotland looking for any remembrance of her son lost seven years ago in the bombing of Pan Am 103. She meets the women of Lockerbie, who are fighting the U.S. government to obtain the clothing of the victims found in the plane's wreckage.

The women, determined to convert an act of hatred into an act of love, want to wash the clothes of the dead and return them to the victim's families.

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.

**May 27, 28, 29 • June 3, 4, 5**