



COLIN LAW IN OCT'S PRODUCTION OF THE SANTALAND DIARIES

FEAR AND LOATHING IN SANTALAND

OCT mounts a delightful production of David Sedaris' comic holiday masterpiece

David Sedaris is a masterfully droll storyteller, and his one-man play *The Santaland Diaries*, playing now at Oregon Contemporary Theatre, is the perfect pairing for this heightened holiday season.

Let's face it: 2016 has been a smoldering dumpster fire. Prince, Bowie, Rickman — that little election a few weeks ago — even Thanksgiving couldn't go unscathed, as everyone's TV mom, Florence Henderson, was called to the Brady Family Meeting in the Sky. Curse you, year from hell!

We need some laughs.

And we're not looking for a Dickensian drubbing or an existential meditation on George Bailey and Mr. Potter (because Mr. Potter just became president).

No, we want escape. And you'll find plenty of good chuckles, guffaws and belly laughs right now at OCT. *Santaland*, by Sedaris and adapted by Broadway heavyweight Joe Mantello, stars Colin Law as Crumpet the Elf.

Law's Crumpet engages the audience with a cavalcade of personal humiliations: From his first ignoble moments applying to work as an elf at Macy's Herald Square to the final frenzied hours of Christmas Eve, when increasingly disgruntled shoppers queue up to glimpse "Santa," Law brings unwavering energy and spot-on comic timing.

Sedaris' penchant for poking fun at himself (and others) is delicious. And his legendary story — about being young, broke and working as an elf — became an instant classic when it was first published some 20 years ago.

But it's Law that animates this hilarious tale. He is so likeable, so relatable, that by the end of the play we don't just love Crumpet: We *are* Crumpet.

Director Craig Willis creates delightful momentum throughout the story, with lively blocking and quick pacing that highlight the madness of the season.

Crumpet's *Santaland* is a frothy set by scenic designer Amy Dunn, replete with green gumdrop trees and a gingerbread house. Costumes by Kelly L. Keiler add to the schadenfreude. Lighting by Justin Feimster and sound by Gabe Carlin punctuate the rhythm of the story with zaniness and real emotion.

That's the thing. No spoilers, but underneath Sedaris' hilarious commentary there's a genuine holiday story. Take an hour, bring your friends and family, have a laugh and share in this artful tale perfectly presented.

And for the record, my elf name is Cold Sore.

Santaland Diaries (intended for mature audiences age 16 and over) runs through Dec. 11 at Oregon Contemporary Theatre; \$18-\$30, tickets at octheatre.org or 541-465-1506.

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OCT OREGON CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

David Sedaris'
THE SANTALAND DIARIES

Adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello
 Directed by Craig Willis

Starring
Colin Law
 as Crumpet the Elf

The perfect laughter-spiked antidote for holiday blues, this comedy is intended for mature audiences.

November 25 - December 11

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