

Absurdist tragicomedy 'Waiting for Godot' to be performed at the PAC

ASTORIA — “Waiting for Godot,” the play that spawned the “theater of the absurd” movement, is being staged in Astoria.

Partners for the PAC will stage the production 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29 and Saturday, Jan. 30; 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 31; and 7 p.m. Feb. 5 and 6.

Tickets are \$15, cash or check, at the door of the Clatsop Community College Performing Arts Center at 16th Street and Franklin Avenue in Astoria.

Samuel Beckett wrote the play in the aftermath of World War II. It was first performed in Paris in 1953. The play follows two men as they dally by the side of a road, expecting the imminent arrival of another man. They’ve asked this man for nothing very definite, but eagerly anticipate his appear-



Submitted photo

William Ham, left, appears as Vladimir, and Slab Slabinski is Estragon in a new Partners for the PAC production of “Waiting for Godot,” which will be staged at the Clatsop Community College Performing Arts Center.

ance. And though they admit that they do not know him — and won’t even recognize him when they see him — they wait for Godot.

The production is directed by Karen Bain of Astoria and features longtime North Coast actors William Ham and Slab Slabinski as the two men, Vladimir and Estragon. Bill Honl plays a mysterious visitor, Pozzo, and Parker Fergus plays a boy messenger.

In May 2015, Bain was part of the Directors Lab West, a gathering of international theater directors invited to Los Angeles for a 10-day intensive lab exploring aspects of stage directing. Beckett’s play was the focus.

“I studied the script deeply and fell in love with the text,” she said. “I was drawn to the humanity in the absurdity and the comedy in the rhythms. As a director, it’s a huge challenge. It was exciting to find a script that had no easy answers. I knew I had to put this play on the stage to understand it.”

Ham calls it “one of the saddest comedies and funniest tragedies written in the

modern era” and invites audiences to make up their own minds what it is all about.

The play was voted the most significant English-language play of the 20th century in a poll of 800 playwrights, actors, directors and journalists conducted the Royal National Theatre in London. Productions have been staged worldwide during the past 60 years in locations as diverse as prisons, war-torn Sarajevo, New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and in apartheid South Africa.

Reviewers of early productions called it, “a witty and poetic conundrum” (The Guardian), “humorous and deeply human” (The Press), “entertainment of a high order” (The New York Times) and “something that will securely lodge in a corner of your mind for as long as you live” (The Sunday Times).

The play’s two main characters appear to have lost everything, but they hang on to hope, just as they hang on to each other. As one says, “Right here, in this place, at this time, we are all mankind, whether we like it or not.”



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Nature Matters presents an evening of conversation about observation, citizen science and phenology — the study of cyclic and seasonal change — on Jan. 21.

Learn about citizen science at Nature Matters National park climate change intern to talk about Project Budburst

ASTORIA — The explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were some of America’s first scientific observers, making notes and sketches about plants and animals to share with Thomas Jefferson and an emerging nation. Today, scientific observation continues to play a critical role in monitoring animal and plant species, particularly in the face of climate change and its impacts. National programs such as Project Budburst serve to connect citizen scientists with opportunities to help monitor changes in plants and animals in their communities.

At the next Nature Matters event, set for 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, hear from Nancy Fernandez, a climate change intern with Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and San Juan Island National Historical Park, as she talks about Budburst at the Parks, an opportunity for the public to learn about tracking changes to 10 significant plants at each park. At her talk, Fernandez, a 2015 graduate of the National Park Service Academy, will delve into the history of plant phenology as seen through the eyes of Lewis and Clark and give practical information about how to get involved with Project Budburst locally and regionally.

The Nature Matters presentation takes place at the Fort George Lovell Showroom, located at 426 14th St. The event is free, open to the public, and doors will open at 6 p.m.

Fernandez was born in Santa Cruz County, California. After moving various times throughout her childhood, she finally arrived in the Central Valley where she would later attend and graduate from California State University, Stanislaus, with a degree in anthropology.

Her interest in ancient knowledge, and the people and cultures shaped by it, were her first introduction to environmental stewardship. It wasn’t until her last year in college when she was given the opportunity through the Student Conservation Association that she fully immersed herself in community outreach, education and youth leadership. Since her initial involvement with the SCA she finds more pleasure in hiking, photographing the outdoors and philosophizing.

In summer 2015, she came to Lewis and Clark National Historical Park as part of the NPS Academy, a program within the SCA. As a Healthy Parks intern, Fernandez created a map and brochure of parks within

Astoria as part of a bigger campaign to get the people of Clatsop County more active. She also got involved with the local Hispanic community, allowing her to connect with the youth, a few of whom were able to attend summer camp for the first time. Her other projects included assistance with a new museum exhibit on the history of Chinese cannery workers of the lower Columbia.

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and San Juan Island National Historical Park are two of the nation’s 409 sites celebrating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016. In preparation for the next 100 years, service-wide goals include creating the next generation of stewards, engaging communities and building resiliency into natural and cultural landscapes.

Nature Matters, a conversation about the intersection of nature and culture, takes place on the third Thursday of each month from October through May. Nature Matters is hosted by Lewis and Clark National Historical Park in partnership with the North Coast Watershed Association, the Lewis & Clark National Park Association, and the Fort George Brewery.

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