

PATRICK WEBB PHOTO

Daric Moore, left, plays a serial killer, Toni Ihander portrays the mother of one of his victims, and Rhonda Alderman, right, plays a psychiatrist who investigates the criminal mindset in "Frozen," an adult drama opening at KALA this week.

A CHILLING EXPERIENCE

Adult-themed 'Frozen,' opening at KALA Jan. 19, highlights responses to the worst crimes

ABOUT THE PLAY

The role of "Ralph," the serial killer in Bryony Lavery's play, "Frozen," was based, in part, on a book about the eight-year manhunt for Robert Black, a Scotsman convicted in 1990 of the murder of four girls. It was the first major British police investigation to use a computer system whose acronym spells "Holmes." Black, who died in prison in 2016, was suspected in at least four other deaths. British detectives were aided by American criminal profiling expertise. When "Frozen" was staged on Broadway in 2004, Brian F. O'Byrne earned the Tony Award for best actor.

By PATRICK WEBB
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Can serial killers ever be forgiven? That is the core question asked by the cast of "Frozen," a play opening in Astoria this week.

The work by British dramatist Bryony Lavery is fictitious but based, in part, on a study of a notorious British serial killer who was convicted in 1990 of the deaths of four girls.

The production, which is a staged reading rather than a fully produced play, will be performed at KALA (1017 Marine Drive) in downtown Astoria. It opens Friday, Jan. 19, and will be performed Saturday, Jan. 20, Thursday, Jan. 25, and Friday, Jan. 26. The Jan. 25 performance will be followed by an actors' "talk-back" session. All readings take place at 7:30 p.m.

The director, Susi Brown, said this is an adults-only play with disturbing content. It is unrelated to the 2013 animated Disney children's movie of the same title.

Daric Moore depicts the serial killer,

Toni Ihander plays the mother of one of his victims, and Rhonda Alderman portrays an American forensic psychiatrist who travels to Great Britain to interview the killer while researching a paper titled, "Serial Killing: A Forgivable Act."

Brown chose to stage the play after several actors visited her Astoria studio last summer to read from a pile of scripts. The trio read "Frozen" without any preparation. "The three in the show brought it to life," she said. "They lifted those words right off the page."

The director said she likes working on theater pieces with substance. She said "Frozen" will challenge audiences to ponder the core issues of crime/punishment and the nature of sin.

"It begs the question about serial killers — can we forgive them or not? It's pursued very interestingly. It is a beautiful piece of art created out of horrific circumstances," she said.

IF YOU GO

"FROZEN"

A staged reading of a play by Bryony Lavery.

Presented by KALA and the former Pier Pressure Productions.

KALA, 1017 Marine Drive, Astoria.

7:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 19, Saturday, Jan. 20, Thursday, Jan. 25 and Friday, Jan. 26. The Jan. 25 performance will be followed by an actors' "talk-back" session.

Suitable for adults.

Tickets \$15, at the door.

Produced by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

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