

Pier Pressure quenches thirst for theater in Astoria

By **JONATHAN WILLIAMS**
COAST WEEKEND EDITOR



When I interviewed co-founders of Pier Pressure Productions Susi Brown and Daric Moore before the grand opening production featuring Alan Ayckbourn's "Henceforward," the duo were on the cusp of seeing a year's worth of hard work pay off.

And pay off it did.

The new black box theater, located at 1015 Commercial St. in Astoria, is cozy with a snack bar and fresh coat of black paint. The theater is a product of commu-

nity support and action. There were many work parties and fundraisers held to make opening night of "Henceforward" possible.

Pier Pressure is filling a gap in theater for Astoria by providing different productions from the Astor Street Opry and Liberty Theatre.

It is also giving community members a chance to be on stage. This is a hallmark of what good community theater does. Everyday people can learn how to act, do stage managing, lighting, sound and even direct a show.

The theater also adds to the night life of downtown Astoria, giving businesses and restaurants a chance to cater to a later evening crowd.

The black box theater itself provides nearly endless opportunities for productions and events as the stage and seating can be moved around.

And Pier Pressure's inaugural show, featuring William Ham, Moore, Cherise Clarke, Ann Branson, Gigi Chadwick and Dawson Yukon Shadd, shows off the talents of local actors.

The show, which focuses on a down on his luck composer named Jerome Watkins who lives in a tin shell bunker underneath the Tube in London (a terrific set designed

by Mick and Jerry Alderman), is a comedy and drama that unfolds slowly as Jerome, who lives with a robot nanny, tries to hire an escort to pretend to be his partner so his daughter can live with him and he can compose again. Jerome records everything, both through audio and video, and this proves to be a decisive conflict throughout the play.

If you haven't already seen this play, you have a few more chances left to see it. It plays this weekend and next, Friday-Sunday, at 7:15 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased in advance at libertyastoria.org.

our coast weekend

ON THE COVER



From left, Rosalie Ennis, Barbi England and Katherine Lacaze sit on stage at the Coaster Theatre during a dress rehearsal of the 'Savannah Sipping Society.' PHOTO BY HAILEY HOFFMAN/THE ASTORIAN

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TO SUBMIT AN ITEM

Phone: 503.325.3211 Ext. 217 or 800.781.3211

Fax: 503.325.6573

E-mail: editor@coastweekend.com

Address: P.O.Box 210 • 949 Exchange St. Astoria, OR 97103

STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS

COAST WEEKEND EDITOR

JONATHAN WILLIAMS

CALENDAR COORDINATOR

BREE ELLIOTT

CONTRIBUTORS

RYAN HUME

KATHERINE LACAZE

NANCY MCCARTHY

BARBARA LLOYD MCMICHAEL

MALIA RIGGS

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