

# 'This Girl' takes audience on journey

Fantastical fable is story all can relate to, regardless of age or place in life, guest director from Portland Jen Rowe says

**By Emily Mentzer**  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon University's theater department's production of, "This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing," is a fantastical fable that depicts three sisters and their journeys through life. "It reminds me that life has before and afters," said guest director Jen Rowe. "That every day is a chance to start a new opportunity, a new journey. That we are blessed with joy and fulfillment in our lives."

In the play, the audience is introduced to a family faced with heartache and deep depression when the mother dies suddenly. The father finds solace in a new marriage, but to make the marriage work, he must set his three young daughters free to find their own way.

"There's a way of demonizing the father and say he abandoned his children in the woods," Rowe said. "Then there's a way of saying, although they're young in this story, this father recognizes the resilience in each of them and chooses to let them go and grow up and start their life journeys."

With the news in the world today, Rowe said trusting and letting go of children is a big ask.

Instead of going home, the three sisters, played by Lindsay Spears, Natalie Doerfler and Chynna Shurts, live up to their father's expectations, each experiencing the world on their terms.

The play itself presented many challenges to both Rowe and her cast of 18 student-actors. One reason is because the script has no direction and very little restrictions.

"It's very ensemble," Spears said about the play. "Everybody has such a big part in it. We all come to-

gether to create these crazy images. There's a scene toward the beginning where a lighthouse crashes into the ocean and becomes a submarine.

We all got to come together to create this scene with people rather than with props."

The production is a collaboration between the director, cast and crew, Rowe said.

Dorian Parker, who plays the mother, said Rowe would often ask the cast to take 20 minutes and figure out part of the scene.

"We've done a lot of work as a group together to become really tightknit and a hive-sort of mentality," she said.

The story is about lifting each other up rather than tearing each other down, Doerfler said.

"The entire show is about emotional honesty," said Mindy Mawhirter, who plays the stepmom. "These are real people who have real experiences. Even though they may be fantastical, it's about the real people having real experiences."

Actors encourage people to come with an open mind.

"Any part of this journey can help anyone with their journeys as well," Meghan Doerfler, who plays the sun, said, adding that the story is relatable to an audience of all ages, not one specific age group.

"My boss was asking me if his kids can come," Meghan Doerfler said. "My grandma was like, 'Well, do you think I'll enjoy it?' Yes, 100 percent."

Rowe said that is one thing she enjoys about this fable.

"I think this would be a wonderful show for kids," she said. "As a show producer, this is the only show that hasn't had a recommended age limit of above 16. This is a departure for me, which is



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Gabriel Elmore, with guitar, and Chynna Shurts sing during a rehearsal of "This Girl," which runs through Saturday.

## See the show

**What:** Western Oregon University Theatre Department presents "This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing," by Finegan Kruckemeyer.

**When:** Wednesday (today), Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Matinee performances at 2 p.m. on Thursday and Saturday.

**Where:** Rice Auditorium.

**Admission:** \$14 general; \$10 seniors and faculty; \$8 students.

really exciting for me as a director. It's a script that speaks to me. I feel like it would speak to me at any age."

"This Girl ..." is a limited run, opening Wednesday (today) at 7:30 p.m. and running through Saturday.



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Chynna Shurts, as Beatrix, is reaching the end of her fantastic journey warming the lives of all those around her and learning more about who she is as a woman.

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June 18

**June 4** Polk Flea Market 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. Polk County's oldest and largest market with 183 tables selling antiques, collectibles, tools, etc. 520 S Pacific Hwy W. Rickreall

**June 3** Monmouth Community Breakfast. 8:30 am - 10:30 am. Monmouth Senior Center. 180 S. Warren St.

**June 9** GRADUATION! Central High School, 7 pm. Panther Stadium. CONGRATS GRADS! From the Monmouth Business Association.

**June 10 & 11** Summer Rickreall Gun Show. Buy ♦ Sell ♦ Trade ♦ Guns ♦ Knives ♦ Ammunition ♦ Lots of Collector Items. **Saturday**, June 10th, 9am - 5pm, **Sunday**, June 11th, 9am - 3pm. Adults \$6.00. Kids Under 12 FREE. Parking FREE. Food Available Onsite. Polk County Fairgrounds and Event Center, 520 S. Pacific Hwy. Rickreall.

**June 10** The Smith Fine Arts Series presents: Multiple Grammy Award winning pianist and composer **Danilo Perez** will join forces with WOU's own **Western Hemisphere Orchestra**. Perez's tireless work includes serving as UNESCO Artist For Peace, Cultural Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, and Artistic Director of the Berklee Global Jazz Institute. He has toured and recorded with legends such as Dizzy Gillespie, Joe Lovano, Tito Puente, Wynton Marsalis, and Wayne Shorter. June 10, 7 pm. Rice Auditorium, Western Oregon University. Corner of Knox and Powell Streets Monmouth, OR For tickets call Sandy at 503-838-8333. \$25 in advance (plus a \$3 handling fee per transaction) \$11 students. \$28 at the door.

**June 13** Last Day of School for Central Grades K-11. DRIVE SAFE! Be watchful for kids this summer.

**June 14** Flag Day!

**June 18** Don't Forget Dad! Happy **Father's Day** from the Monmouth Business Association.

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Wednesday, June 14. 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM  
Monmouth Public Library (168 Ecels Street, S, Monmouth). Topic: Business Strategies & Resources. Lunch: \$12.00 boxed lunch from Three Legged Dog. Lunch orders must be received by noon 6/13/17. Fee incurred unless cancellation received via email to [micc@minetfiber.com](mailto:micc@minetfiber.com) by noon 6/13/17. RSVP MI Chamber Office 503-838-4268. Join us in June to learn and discuss business strategies and resources to help strengthen your business or organization.

**Thirsty Thursday**  
Thirsty Thursdays are held the **third Thursday** of each month from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM at member locations. Registration is requested to help the host site properly prepare. Attendees are encouraged to bring a small giveaway (less than \$10) to promote your business or organization. This month June — Airlie Winery, 15305 Dunn Forest Road, Monmouth

To advertise in this calendar call Heidi at the Itemizer-Observer 503-623-2373 ext 115