



The Colonial Players' 69th season will take you on a journey from 19th century Austria to Monte Carlo to a Catskills hideaway with a blend of comedy, drama, and music that will have you laughing, tapping your toes, and taking an emotional ride with characters overcoming the problems of everyday life. If you are a current subscriber, we hope you will join us again next season. If you are not a subscriber, check out our money-saving plans that guarantee your seat selections. All at bargain prices that remain unchanged from last season. Details are available at thecolonialplayers.org or at 410-268-7373.

HERE IS A LOOK AT THE SEASON:

★ **SHILOH RULES:** A competition for Best Female Reenactor of the Year is the focus of Doris Beazley's drama set in the Shiloh Civil War battlefield in southwestern Tennessee. The competition leads to real conflict with an African-American park ranger who would rather be anywhere than the year 1862, imaginary or not. As the reenactment rages out of control, the six women discover that not all conflicts were left behind when the war ended. [Sept. 8-Oct. 1](#)

★ **33 VARIATIONS:** Separated by 200 years and the Atlantic Ocean, a 21st-century musicologist and Ludwig van Beethoven come together in Moises Kaufman's Tony-nominated play. Drama, memory, and music combine to transport you from present-day New York to 19th-century Austria in this extraordinary play about passion, parenthood, and the moments of beauty that can transform a life. [Oct 20-Nov. 12](#)

★ **IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY:** This beloved American holiday classic comes to captivating life as a live 1940s radio broadcast. With the help of an ensemble that brings a few dozen characters to the stage, Joe Landry's adaptation of the story of idealistic George Bailey unfolds as he considers ending his life one fateful Christmas Eve. [Nov.30-Dec. 10](#). [Our annual holiday offering](#)

★ **QUARTET:** In Ronald Harwood's comedy, Cecily, Reggie, and Wilfred reside in a home for retired opera singers in Kent, England. Each year, on the tenth of October, a concert is held to celebrate Verdi's birthday. Jean, who used to be married to Reggie, arrives at the home and disrupts their equilibrium. She still acts like a diva and refuses to sing. But the show must go on in this funny and poignant play. [Jan. 12-Feb. 4](#)

★ **SEX WITH STRANGERS:** Laura Eason's comedy about a millennial blogger and a fortyish novelist examines the question of how far we will go to get what we want. When the two meet one snowy night, each craves what the other possesses. As attraction turns to sex, they inch closer to getting what they want. Before that happens, however, they must confront the dark side of ambition as they try to reinvent themselves in a digital world where the past is only a click away. [Feb. 23-March 18](#)

★ **LUCKY STIFF:** This musical by Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens is an offbeat, hilarious murder mystery farce about an unassuming English shoe salesman who stands to inherit \$6 million --but only if he takes the body of his murdered uncle to Monte Carlo and passes him off as alive. Otherwise, the money goes to a home for dogs. [April 6-May 6](#)

★ **CASA VALENTINA:** Harvey Fierstein's Tony Award-winning play is set in a Catskills hideaway where heterosexual men leave their families behind and dress up as women, inhabiting their female alter-egos for a weekend. Based on real events and infused with Fierstein's trademark wit, this moving, insightful, and delightfully entertaining work offers a glimpse into the lives of a group of "self-made women" as they search for acceptance and happiness in their very own Garden of Eden. [May 25-June 17](#)



MAY 19 – JUNE 10, 2017 2016/2017 season



THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.

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Telephone: 410-268-7373

thecolonialplayers.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, and welcome to our final production of the 2016-2017 season!

It is hard to believe that we've already reached the end of our season, and yet, we don't ever really "go dark" during the summer. This year we have two special events, and I hope you will be able to join us.

First up is the Colonial Players' Promising Playwright Competition. This contest for unpublished and unproduced plays is open to residents of the original 13 colonies and the District of Columbia. The winner receives \$1,000 and a weekend workshop event with the author that culminates in a staged public reading of the work held on Sunday, June 25, here at the theater.

Our second summer event is the One-Act Festival, generally held biennially. Performance Dates: July 28 - August 6, 2017 in two alternating slates – and we hope you will be enticed to join us for this community favorite event.

When we're not producing these events, we will be busy making sure the theater is in tip-top shape for the start of our 2017-2018 season. (You may have already noticed a new, second handrail leading up to the second floor restrooms.) It's these small changes that we continue to work on (through the summer and throughout the year) to make this theater the second home we've all come to love and cherish.

Hope to see you this summer!

– SHIRLEY PANEK

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WHAT'S GOING ON AT CP.



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Colonial Players gratefully acknowledges the generous bequest from Roland Riley, a longtime patron whose gift helps ensure the future economic viability of our theater.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

There probably are stranger collaborations in the theater world than Anton Chekhov and Christopher Durang – but I can't think of many. What is it about Chekhov's "hyper-realism" that does, in fact, work with Durang's absurdist sensibilities? Is it that what is real about our lives IS actually absurd (or is that too obvious)? I'll be honest with you, esteemed audience, I usually find Durang's work a bit too "out there." HOWEVER, when I read this script, I could just visualize Chekhov saying to Durang "*ne otryvat'sya ot real'nosti*" ("Keep it REAL"), while Durang would reply "Loosen UP" ("*Rasslab'tes*"). They do seem to temper each other. The result is a script that is thoughtful and real, populated by people we can easily imagine, and hopefully relate to and care about, dealing with situations that are certainly plausible, if not common. BUT these people are also subject to some outrageous moments of surrealism – some very "Where did THAT come from" moments (I won't spoil the surprises). Durang's genius in this play is that it is in THESE moments that the characters seem even more real to us than in the other more "normal" moments. Somehow the characters remain grounded, even when they are spinning off into more and more eccentric

trajectories. And we get to circle around them and watch as they whirl, collide, and eventually stabilize and achieve a "normal" orbit (enough with the rocket science metaphors – that's my day job).

And speaking of day jobs, I want to thank my family (especially Jo) for putting up with crazy schedules, strange mutterings, and odd mime-like performances of me working out blocking and bits in the kitchen. I also want to thank the cast and crew for being such a wonderfully intelligent, energetic, and collaborative team. Much of what you are seeing on stage does not originate from me – but from the numerous "jam" sessions that rehearsals and production meetings often are. This is why I keep coming back to the theater – it is such fun to get in a room with these people and see what can happen. I only hope that all of the fun we have had – and ARE having – is infectious and you, dear audience, catch the bug.

Now, IF I can only convince CP to do *The Oresteia*<heh, heh, heh>

– STEVE TOBIN

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



STEVE TOBIN didn't wait 25 years to direct again at The Colonial Players, returning after a mere two years to helm this production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. Steve

last directed CP's laugh-fest *The Liar*, which won the Ruby Griffith Award for Best All-Round Production. In between, Steve directed *The Diary of Anne Frank* and assistant directed *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at Compass Rose Theater. He also returned to performing after nearly 20 years, appearing as Jacob Marley in this season's *A Christmas Carol* ("Yellow eyes, so help me God! YELLOW EYES!"). Steve received his undergraduate degree in Theatre from Yale, where he studied with Nikos Psacharopoulos and Murray Biggs and performed in or directed

over a dozen different productions. He did his professional acting apprenticeship under Paul Barry at The New Jersey Shakespeare, where, in addition to numerous acting roles, he returned to be the assistant director for their nightly repertory productions of *Hamlet* and *Rosencranz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Directing credits also include *Catch Me if You Can* (28 years ago at CP), *Sleeping Beauty* (Adventure Theater), *Laura* and *The Elephant Man* (Trinity Players), *Pool Fever* and *At Xmas* (Source Theater), and several staged readings at St. John's College (where he also served as a directing mentor to the King William Players from 2003-2007). In his spare time, Steve enjoys being with his family, making awful puns, and commuting long distances late at night.



THE CAST



DARICE CLEWELL (Sonia)

Holding a degree in Theater Arts/Drama from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Darice acts, directs, and choreographs, and has served on CP's board of directors several times over her 30 years with the theater, most recently as president. She portrayed Marie in this year's *Calendar Girls*, and has appeared in *Enchanted April*, *Lettice and Lovage*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Steel Magnolias*, and many more. Elsewhere, she's appeared in *The Crucible*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Sordid Lives*, and *The Vagina Monologues*. As a director, Darice has helmed *Trying*, *Copenhagen*, *Art*, *Stones in His Pockets*, *Is There Life After High School?*, *The Shadow Box*, and *Isn't it Romantic?* Twenty-eight years ago, she was directed by Steve Tobin in *Catch Me If You Can* at CP and has waited a long time for him to return ... and is tickled to renew that working relationship for this dream role. When she was 52 and never married, she, like Sonia, hoped parties might yield a gentleman friend. Instead, it was theater that introduced her to her husband. And tonight he's her brother. It's all rather Pirandellian. And rather cheeky.



REBECCA KYLER DOWNS (Masha)

Rebecca has a degree in theater from Tufts University and a masters in opera from Boston Conservatory. Over the course of her career as an actor and singer, she has had guest-starring and principal roles on shows such as *CSI Miami*, *Robbery Homicide Division*, *Monsters*, *Will & Grace*, *Another World*, and *Night Stand*. She has shot independent features in NY and LA, working with some wonderful actors on some truly terrible straight-to-video films such as *Eyes Of St. Anthony* and *The Black Gate*. She has done voices for animated series and video games, including multiple characters for the *World of Warcraft* series, as well as theater in NY, LA, and Boston. Some favorite roles were Ruth in *The Homecoming*, Twirler in *Talking With...*, Cassandra in *Agamemnon*,

and Lillian LaFleur in *Nine*. As a commercial actress for a variety of products - Fed-Ex, Nyquil, Toyota, Applebee's, Taco Bell, Verizon, to name a few - she is always a mom. Rebecca is also a professional jazz singer and published songwriter. She collaborated on music for films such as *Wedding Crashers* and *Monster-In-Law*. She's performed her own songs on soundtracks for Oscar-nominated *The Cooler*, *Down With Love*, *Roswell*, and *Cathouse*. She is profoundly grateful to her parents for opening the world to her, and to her fiancé for his love and support.



PATRICK FINN (Spike)

Patrick is overjoyed to be performing for the first time at The Colonial Players. He got his start working tech backstage for *The Importance of Being Ernest*. And from there his passion for performing arts grew. He later appeared in Schubert's opera *The Conspirators* as well as *The Overnight Christmas*. He's studied classical voice and piano, worked with improv groups and mission teams, and put together little productions in Ghana and Poznan, Poland. He sends a huge thank you to Sarah Wade for inspiring him to join The Colonial Players.



HALLIE PARROTT (Nina)

Hallie is 18 years old and will graduate from Broadneck High School this year. She will attend Emerson College next year in Boston. You may have seen her as Martha in *A Christmas Carol* earlier this season. She has been active with CP for eight years. Hallie participates in theater at school as well as track and cross country. She is thrilled to be playing Nina and hopes you enjoy the show!



JIM REITER (Vanya)

Jim most recently appeared as Bob Cratchit in CP's *A Christmas Carol* and received a Washington Area Theatre



THE STAFF (continued)



ERNIE MORTON (Stage Manager)

Ernie usually stays on the technical side of theater, as he is doing by stage managing this show. But for this, a Christopher Durang play, he tried to be artistic by writing out his stage managerial career in the free verse that follows: "*This and That* is a tale told by an idiot. It has neither sound nor fury but signifies nothing. *A Few Good Men* were chased off by a Liar, who Tortured Wrong and the People Who Love *The Cripple of Inishmann* who was remembered by molecules with Russian names. They did not have a meeting with the Russian ambassador." Considering the editor's reaction to this, Ernie will limit his attempts at artistic improvisation to the weekly sessions with the Coast Guard Headquarters jazz big band, where he plays tenor saxophone when he's not working as a Program and Management Analyst for the U. S. Coast Guard.



CONSTANCE ROBINSON (Properties Designer / Set Decorator)

Since 2003, Connie has volunteered as a public relations consultant, graphic designer, box office assistant, properties designer, and set decorator for Colonial Players. She also serves on the current Marketing Committee. Connie has collected props for numerous productions

at The Colonial Players and one play at Dignity Players. She is proud to have received three WATCH nominations for properties designing. There have been many unique challenges when collecting or creating unusual props that still make her wince, or laugh. Connie enjoys her volunteer time at CP because of the terrific people she works with. She thanks her husband, John, for his help and also thanks her family and friends for loaning personal belongings for set props, and for their enthusiastic support.



SARAH WADE (Assistant Director)

Sarah is thrilled to be the assistant director for Steve for VSMS. Most recently, she was the sound designer for *Calendar Girls* and received a WATCH award for Best Featured Actress for her role as Honey in last fall's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. Other credits include *A Christmas Carol*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Ernest in Love* (WATCH nominated), *The Liar* (with Steve Tobin and also WATCH nominated), *These Shining Lives*, *Communicating Doors*, *Annie*, and *Taking Steps*. Sound credits include *Side Man* and *Watch on the Rhine* at Colonial Players and, at Compass Rose Theater, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Miracle Worker*. She would like to thank Steve for this opportunity, her husband, Eric, for everything, and her friends because, as always, "I can't, I have rehearsal."

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

CHRISTOPHER DURANG is a prize-winning American playwright as well as an actor and cabaret performer. He won the 2013 Tony Award for best play for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* and has won numerous other awards, fellowships, and high-profile grants. Durang's first professionally produced play, *The Idiots Karamazov*, was presented at the Yale Repertory Theatre and starred fellow student Meryl Streep playing an 80-year-old nutty woman. He and another famous classmate from Yale, Sigourney Weaver, co-wrote and performed a satirical cabaret act, *Das Lusitania Songspiel*, at an off-Broadway theater in 1976. Durang's plays are mostly absurdist and dark in tone, but are unfailingly funny. He says his recent works have more positive endings than his earlier works, as is the case with *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*.



THE STAFF



KAELYNN BEDSWORTH (Costume Co-Designer)

This is Kaelynn's eighth season with CP, and she has volunteered both on the stage and off in a variety of roles from actress to go-button pusher to steampunk wig maker to Looney Tunes sound effect specialist to smushed banana cleaner. You may have seen her grace the stage in *The Secret Garden*, *Annie*, *1776*, and more. Previous costume designs include *Venus in Fur*, *Shipwrecked!* (for which she received a Washington Area Theatre Community Honors nomination for Outstanding Costume Design), *Sunlight, Company*, and *Inventing van Gogh*. Kaelynn currently serves as Treasurer on Colonial Players' Board of Directors. She sends love to her husband, Wes, who shares this crazy theater world with her on a daily basis.



ALEX BRADY (Lighting Designer)

Alex has been designing lighting in Annapolis and Baltimore since 2002. In 2016, he was nominated for the WATCH Award for Outstanding Lighting Design for both *Venus in Fur* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Colonial Players. Alex also designs for the AACC Dance Company and various local theaters and high schools. Last year, he performed the role of Macbeth in The Theater at AACC's production of *Macbeth*. He is SAFD certified in stage combat with the broadsword. Brady is an alumnus of the Graduate Institute at St. John's College and teaches in the Humanities Department at AACC.



CARRIE BRADY (Costume Co-Designer)

Carrie is happy to be working with Colonial Players again after costuming last season's *Sherlock's Last Case* and this season's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *City of Conversation*. Previously, she costumed for Spirited Productions and the Moonlight Troupers/The Theatre at AACC, covering shows

such as *The Appeal* and *Twelfth Night*, and assisting with *Macbeth*. From time to time, Carrie enjoys helping out at her alma mater, St. Mary's High School Drama Club, with set construction and costumes. Big thanks to everyone who has helped out and been so understanding of her work schedule.



TIM BROWN (Producer)

Tim most recently was lighting assistant and programmer for *Nine*. Earlier credits at Colonial Players include stage manager for *A Christmas Carol*, lighting assistant and programmer for last summer's production of *Sex, Drugs, Rock and Roll*, and assistant producer for *Boeing Boeing*. Tim claims to have found that the perfect way to spend his retirement-enabled free time is to support his long-time favorite theater - Colonial Players. He sends thanks to all the wonderful people at this theater who have been so welcoming and fun to work with.



EDD MILLER (Set and Floor Designer)

Edd has a long history with The Colonial Players as a director, actor, set designer, and volunteer in other areas. His most recent set designs were for this season's *Calendar Girls* and last season's *Good People*, which he also directed. Other recent design credits include *Rocket Man*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *In the Next Room*, and *Annie*. Edd was nominated for a Washington Area Theatre Community Honors set design award for *Chapter Two* and won a 2012 WATCH award for best direction for *Going to St. Ives*, which also won awards for best play (out of 83 plays judged) and for best lead actress. Edd also has acted in and directed many other shows since joining CP in 1964.



THE CAST (continued)

Community Honors best director nomination for last October's *Side Man*. Other CP roles include Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, the Dead Guy in *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, Ben Hecht in *Moonlight and Magnolias*, Dale in *Dog Logic*, Mr. Maraczek in *She Loves Me!*, multiple characters in *Hauptmann* (WATCH Award for best featured actor), Robert in *Proof*, and Boolie in 1995's *Driving Miss Daisy*, way back when he was ... never mind. He played Mal in Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre's *The Addams Family* and directed *The 39 Steps* at Dignity Players, where he performed in *Sordid Lives*, *The Crucible*, and *The Shadow Box*. Other local appearances include Annapolis Shakespeare's *Pride and Prejudice* and Bay Theatre's *Becky's New Car*. At 2nd Star Productions, Jim directed *1776*, *The Music Man*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, and *How to Succeed in Business...*, and appeared in numerous productions. In real life he is Senior VP of Communications at the Maryland Hospital

Association, a theater reviewer for *Bay Weekly*, a proud Dad and three-time Pop-Pop, and he loves he loves he loves his Calendar Girl and scene partner Sonia.



ASHLEY SPOONER (Cassandra)

Ashley is delighted to take the stage as Cassandra in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. This production marks her second performance with The Colonial Players. She previously played Kate in the 2016 production of *Good People*. Ashley is grateful to her family and friends for their encouragement and support. She would like to thank Steve for giving her the opportunity to portray such a colorful character as Cassandra. Ashley would also like to thank the cast and production team for making rehearsals and the stage such a joy!

A BIT OF CHEKHOV; A LOT OF LAUGHS

Anton Chekhov and laughter are words that don't seem to fit together even though the noted Russian dramatist considered most of his plays to be comedies. Yes, some humor is scattered throughout his morose portrayals of characters consumed with feelings of ennui and struggling with family discord and economic uncertainty. Twenty first-century audiences will find some chuckles here and there in a well-produced Chekhov play. But not the kind of belly laughs found in Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, a riff on Chekhovian themes and characters set in current times in Bucks County, PA.

Durang said in a *Chicago Tribune* interview that his contemporary play was designed to "jump off Chekhovian themes," but is not a parody of Chekhov. He didn't borrow plots from the famous Russian playwright's works, but there are references to themes and places and names that are found in plays such as *The Seagull*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Three Sisters*. (Check out the set for some subtle references to Chekhov's plays.) "I have written parodies. This is not one of them," Durang said in his interview with the *Tribune*. "If you know Chekhov, there are lots of references, but this is really a play that ends up being about siblings." So a familiarity with and appreciation for Chekhov isn't necessary to appreciate the Durang play.

Chekhov began writing at an early age. His father struggled financially, and the son's gift for storytelling helped him support the family with freelance writing of hundreds of short comic pieces while he also attended medical school. Chekhov was only 44 when he died in 1904 of tuberculosis. His death came as he was at a peak of creativity, having produced his four dramatic masterpieces during the last decade of his life.

THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.
presents



Written by
CHRISTOPHER DURANG

Directed by
STEVE TOBIN

THE CAST
(in order of appearance)

Vanya.....Jim Reiter
Sonia.....Darice Clewell
Cassandra.....Ashley Spooner
Masha.....Rebecca Kyler Downs
Spike.....Patrick Finn
Nina.....Hallie Parrott

TIME
The present

PLACE
A lovely farmhouse in Bucks County

Originally produced on Broadway by:
Joey Parnes, Larry Hirschhorn, Joan Raffae/Jhett Tolentin, Martin Platt & David Elliot, Pat Flicker Addiss, Catherine Adler, John O'Boyle, Joshua Goodman, Jamie deRoy/Richard Winkler, Cricket Hooper, Jiraneck/Michael Palitz, Mark S. Golub & David S. Golub, Radio Mouse Entertainment, Shadowcatcher Entertainment, Mary Cosette/Barbara Manocherian, Megan Savage/Meredith Lynsey Schade, Hugh Hysell/Richard Jordan, Cheryl Wiesenfeld/Ron Simons, S.D. Wagner, John Johnson in association with McCarter Theatre Center and Lincoln Center Theater

Originally commissioned and produced by McCarter Theatre Center, Princeton NJ, Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director; Mara Isaacs, Producing Director; and produced by Lincoln Center Theater, New York City under the direction of Andre Bishop and Bernard Gersten in 2012

There will be one intermission between Act I and Act II.

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service.

Taking photographs and using any recording devices are strictly prohibited. Smoking is prohibited throughout the building.