

Portland Center Stage at

**THE ARMORY**  
PRESENTS

***The Santaland Diaries***

**By David Sedaris**

**Adapted by Joe Mantello**

**Directed by Wendy Knox**

**Starring Darius Pierce**

**November 26 – December 24, 2016**

Artistic Director | Chris Coleman

# *The Santaland Diaries*

**By David Sedaris  
Adapted by Joe Mantello**

**Directed by Wendy Knox  
Starring Darius Pierce**

**Scenic and Costume Designer  
Jessica Ford**

**Lighting Designer  
Don Crossley**

**Sound Designer  
Sarah Pickett**

**Stage Manager  
Janine Vanderhoff**

**Production Assistant  
Kristen Mun**

**Casting  
Rose Riordan**

Originally produced in New York by David Stone and Amy  
Nederlander-Case on November 7, 1996.

*The Santaland Diaries* is presented by special arrangement with  
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

**Performed without intermission.**

Videotaping or other photo or audio recording of this production is  
strictly prohibited.

*The Actor and Stage Manager employed in this production are  
members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional  
Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

**FEATURE** | By Benjamin Fainstein, Literary Manager

### **Mirth and Magic at Santa's Village**

Heading to the mall to capture a Kodak moment on Santa's lap is a memory shared by millions of Americans. Stores have been hiring good old Saint Nick to spread cheer and goodwill to shoppers since the 1870s, and Santa-in-training programs have been turning out top-tinsel graduates since the 1930s. To complete the picture, many department stores transform their floors into Kris Kringle's wintry workshop. While Macy's Santaland is one of the most iconic amusements of its kind, the custom dates back to 1879, when Lewis's department store in Liverpool, England, established its first Christmas Grotto. By the time the Macy's Parade began marching down the streets of Manhattan in 1924, the store had ample experience to draw upon to perfect its wonderland of sophisticated window displays and endless maze of Santa-themed decorations.

When David Sedaris read excerpts from his essay "Santaland Diaries" on NPR on December 23, 1992, he ushered an unorthodox newcomer into the pantheon of American Christmas traditions. The wildly successful tale was included in his first book, *Barrel Fever*, and later in his collection *Holidays on Ice*. The books sold millions of copies, and "Santaland Diaries" has become a modern holiday touchstone. The essay was adapted for the stage in 1996 by prominent director Joe Mantello, and twenty years later, it remains one of the most widely produced plays across the country. Sedaris gave a backstage glimpse into the kooky and socially complex world of Macy's hallowed Christmas kingdom, and his account of his experiences as an elf named Crumpet wallows in the Christmas spirit while turning it completely on its head. Whether he's bemoaning shoppers' unsavory behavior or finding himself

unwittingly swept up in the holly jolly spirit, Crumpet proves that a pilgrimage to Santaland is something everybody ought to dare themselves to survive at least once.

## **Of Reindeer and Retail**

Crumpet's holiday journey isn't the only artistic offering whose history is intricately tied to the world of the department store.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is a prominent figure in American Christmas lore, and it's difficult to go an entire holiday season without hearing his eponymous song. But the character actually appeared first as the protagonist of a children's book given out as a promotional gift to Montgomery Ward shoppers. Robert May was a copywriter for the store who had been bullied for his small stature throughout childhood. When asked to write the annual gift book in 1939, he seized the opportunity to give kids a story about an outcast whose unique ability changes him from misfit to hero. Just before the book was published, May's terminally ill wife passed away, leaving the suddenly single father with massive medical debts.

Montgomery Ward owned the copyright, however, and May received no royalties. But around Christmas in 1946, after *Rudolph* had been distributed to over 6 million families, May approached the company's president, Sewell Avery, and asked for the rights to his work. In what seems like a true Christmas miracle, Avery returned control of the lucrative reindeer to May, and May was built a licensing empire for Rudolph. His brother-in-law Johnny Marks took the 89 rhyming couplets of the book and composed the now famous song, which was followed by various cartoon adventures and merchandising. Rudolph's popularity empowered May to dig himself out of debt and provide for his daughter, Barbara, who had been the very first child to encounter the rosy-nosed deer nearly a decade earlier.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### **Darius Pierce**

#### **Crumpet**

Darius is happy and grateful to be spending his ninth consecutive year celebrating the holidays with Portland Center Stage at The Armory, after four years of *The Santaland Diaries*, and two each of *A Christmas Story* and *A Christmas Carol*. Other productions at The Armory include *Stupid F\*\*king Bird*, *Cyrano*, *Beard of Avon* (Drammy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor), *Twelfth Night*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *The 39 Steps*, *Frost/Nixon*, *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found*, *Misalliance* and the JAW festival. Elsewhere, some favorite shows have been the world premiere of *Stupid F\*\*king Bird* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company); *The Gaming Table* and *Comedy of Errors* (Folger Theatre); *Lips Together*, *Teeth Apart* (Profile Theatre); *As You Like It* (Portland Shakespeare Project); *My Fair Lady* and *Les Misérables* (Broadway Rose Theatre Company); *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Portland Playhouse); *1776* (Lakewood Theatre Company); and *The Long Christmas Ride Home* (Theatre Vertigo). Darius is a company member at Third Rail Repertory Theatre and a co-founder of the Anonymous Theatre Company. He can occasionally be seen on screen, where his credits include *The Librarians*, *Leverage*, *Portlandia*, *Grimm*, *Mock Trials*, *Thomas & the Trainmaster* and *Cell Count*. Thank you all for spending a little bit of your holiday season with us! And thank you calendars for aligning so that Hanukkah can start on Christmas Eve this year. There will be an extraordinary number of candles lit that night!

## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

### **David Sedaris**

#### **Creator**

David Sedaris made his comic debut recounting his strange-but-true experiences of being a Macy's elf clad in green tights, reading his *Santaland Diaries* on National Public Radio's Morning Edition. Sedaris' sardonic humor and incisive social critique have since made him one of NPR's most popular and humorous commentators and a best-selling author in the United States and abroad. The great skill with which Sedaris slices through euphemisms and political correctness proves that he is a master of satire. Everywhere he goes, David Sedaris delights his audience with his irreverent style and great humor. In addition to his commentaries on NPR, David Sedaris is the author of the best-sellers *Barrel Fever* and *Naked*. His collection of Christmas related stories is entitled *Holiday on Ice*. His book of essays, *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, was published in June 2000 and became an immediate best-seller. David and his sister, Amy Sedaris, have collaborated under the name The Talent Family and written several plays which have been produced at La MaMa and Lincoln Center in New York City. These plays include *Stump the Host*, *Stitches*, *One Woman Show* (which received an Obie Award), *Incident at Cobbler's Knob* and *The Book of Liz*. David is a regular contributor to *Esquire* magazine and his essays have also appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Allure* and *Travel and Leisure*. Sedaris' original radio pieces can often be heard on public radio's *This American Life*, distributed nationally by WBEZ in Chicago, as well as BBC radio in London. David Sedaris currently resides in Paris.

## **Joe Mantello**

### **Adaptor**

Directing credits include *Assassins* (Tony Award); *Wicked*; *Take Me Out* (Tony Award); *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair De Lune*; *A Man of No Importance*; *Design for Living*; Terrence McNally and Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* for the San Francisco Opera; *The Vagina Monologues*; *Bash*; *Another American: Asking and Telling*; *Love! Valour! Compassion!*; *Proposals*; *The Mineola Twins*; *Corpus Christi*; *Mizlansky/Zilinsky or Schmucks*; *Blue Window*; *God's Heart*; *The Santaland Diaries*; *Lillian*; *Snakebit*; *Three Hotels*; *Imagining Brad*; and *Fat Men in Skirts*. Mr. Mantello also directed the film *Love! Valour! Compassion!*. As an actor he appeared in *Angels in America* (Tony nomination) and *The Baltimore Waltz*. He is the recipient of the Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Helen Hayes, Clarence Derwent, Obie, and Joe A. Callaway awards. He is a member of Naked Angels and an associate artist at the Roundabout Theatre Company.

## **Wendy Knox**

### **Director**

Wendy Knox is artistic director of Frank Theatre, marking its 28<sup>th</sup> season in Minneapolis, MN. Credits include critically acclaimed productions of Max Frisch's *The Arsonists*; George Brant's *Grounded*; Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information*; Brecht-Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*; Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*; Enda Walsh's *Misterman* and *The New Electric Ballroom*; Danaï Gurira's *Eclipsed*; a company-generated adaptation of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*; Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman* (presented by Guthrie Theatre); Brecht's *Good Person of Setzuan*, *Mother Courage, Puntila and Matti*, *His Hired Man* and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*; an original adaptation of Euripides' texts, featuring a

blues-based score by composer Marya Hart, titled *The Women of Troy*; Suzan-Lori Parks' *Venus, Fucking A* and *The America Play*; Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*; and Ruth MacKenzie's music/theater/dance spectacle, *Kalevala*. Knox also works as a freelance director and a teaching artist, and has been a guest director at many colleges and universities. She directed *Berlin to Broadway* for Skylark Opera, *Lysistrata* for the Guthrie Theater, *The Sound of Music* for Ordway Center for the Performing Arts and *The Santaland Diaries* twice for Syracuse Stage. Her work has been recognized by the McKnight Foundation with fellowships for outstanding work by a professional artist, the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Jerome Foundation, and an MRAC/McKnight Next Step grant to attend the LaMama International Directing Symposium in Spoleto, Italy. Knox was a Fulbright Fellow in Finland. She holds an M.F.A. in Directing from the University of Washington.

## **Jessica Ford**

### **Scenic and Costume Designer**

Jessica is delighted to be returning to The Armory for *The Santaland Diaries*. Other regional theater credits include productions at The Long Wharf Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Baltimore Center Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, The Folger, Barrington Stage, Hangar Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville and the Alley Theatre in Houston. In New York, she has worked with Ars Nova, The Play Company, Second Stage, P73, Rattlestick Playwright's Theatre, Pearl Theatre and The Public, to name a few. Jessica received her M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama and was a recipient of the 2007 – 2009 NEA/TCG fellowship for designers. Recently, she won the Connecticut Critics Circle Award for *These Paper Bullets* at Yale Rep.



## **Don Crossley**

### **Lighting Designer**

Don is excited to re-create his design for *The Santaland Diaries*. Don has served as a lighting designer for JAW: A Playwrights Festival, and was Portland Center Stage at The Armory's master electrician from 1996 to 2007. Previous lighting designs for the company include: *The Santaland Diaries* (2009 – 2015), *The People's Republic of Portland* (2013, 2015), *The Receptionist*, *Act a Lady*, *The Thugs*, *Fully Committed*, *Another Fine Mess*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *The Santaland Diaries/A Christmas Memory* (2002-2004) which earned Don one of his eight Drammy Awards for Lighting Design. Don has also designed lighting for Portland Opera, Oregon Children's Theatre, Third Rail Repertory Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre and CoHo Productions, among others.

## **Sarah Pickett**

### **Sound Designer**

Sarah has worked with theatrical companies all over the United States including: Yale Repertory Theatre, CT; Oregon Shakespeare Festival, OR; Victory Gardens Theater, IL; Drury Lane at Oakbrook, IL; Long Wharf Theatre, CT; Theatre for a New Audience, NYC; Playmakers Repertory Company, NC; Syracuse Stage, NY; Stonington Opera House, ME; Asolo Repertory Theatre, FL; Hangar Theatre, NY; and Women's Theatre Project, NYC. Sarah holds a B.F.A. from Syracuse University, an M.A. from Cornell University and an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama. She is a sound design and music composition instructor at Carnegie Mellon University.

## **Janine Vanderhoff**

### **Stage Manager**

Janine is glad to be back for her second season at The Armory. Previous credits at The Armory include: *The Oregon Trail*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, JAW 2016, *Great Expectations*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Our Town*. Other Portland credits include Portland Opera's *Sweeney Todd* (followspot caller); the world premiere of DC Copeland's *Play* (stage manager/production manager); and *How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes* and *The Other Place* at Portland Playhouse (stage manager). Touring stage management credits include: *The Graduate* (starring Morgan Fairchild), *CATS*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *Jekyll & Hyde* and *Show Boat*. While in New York, Janine had the opportunity to work on *The Lion King* on Broadway, as well as with many Off-Broadway and regional companies. Production management credits include: *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* for "Democalypse 2012 Republican National Convention" (Tampa, FL); Straz Center (Tampa, FL); and The Fox Theatre (Atlanta, GA). Proud NYU graduate and AEA member.

## **Kristen Mun**

### **Production Assistant**

Kristen Mun is originally from Hawaii and graduated from Southern Oregon University with a B.F.A. in Stage Management. This is her fourth season at The Armory, where previous credits include: production assistant on *Hold These Truths*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Each and Every Thing*, *Forever*, *The Santaland Diaries*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Threesome*, *LIZZIE* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Outside of Portland, she has worked at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Idaho Repertory Theatre and Actors Theater of Louisville. In Portland, she has worked as a production assistant and stage manager with theater companies including Artists Repertory Theatre

(*And So It Goes ...* and *Red Herring*), Oregon Children's Theatre (*A Year with Frog and Toad*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Ivy and Bean* and *Junie B. Jones*) and Broadway Rose Theatre Company (*Oklahoma!*). Outside of stage managing, Kristen is a fight choreographer and stage combat teacher.

## **Chris Coleman**

### **Artistic Director**

Chris joined Portland Center Stage at The Armory as artistic director in May, 2000. Before coming to Portland, Chris was the artistic director at Actor's Express in Atlanta, a company he co-founded in the basement of an old church in 1988. Chris returned to Atlanta in 2015 to direct the world premiere of *Edward Foote* at Alliance Theatre (Suzi Bass Award for Best Direction, Best Production and Best World Premiere). Other recent directing credits include the Off-Broadway debut of *Threesome* at 59E59 Theaters; a production that had its world premiere at The Armory and was also presented at ACT Theatre in Seattle. Favorite directing assignments for Portland Center Stage at The Armory include *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Threesome*, *Dreamgirls*, *Othello*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Clybourne Park*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Shakespeare's Amazing Cymbeline* (which he also adapted), *Anna Karenina*, *Oklahoma!*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *Ragtime*, *Crazy Enough*, *Beard of Avon*, *Cabaret*, *King Lear*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Man and Superman*, *Outrage*, *Flesh and Blood* and *The Devils*. Chris has directed at theaters across the country, including Actor's Theater of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, ACT Theatre (Seattle), The Alliance, Dallas Theatre Center, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop and Center Stage (Baltimore). A native Atlantan, Chris holds a B.F.A. from Baylor University and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon. He is currently the

board president for the Cultural Advocacy Coalition. Chris and his husband, Rodney Hicks – who is appearing in the new musical *Come From Away*, which opens on Broadway in March – are the proud parents of an 18-lb Jack Russell/Lab mix, and a 110-lb English Blockhead Yellow Lab.

### **Portland Center Stage at The Armory**

Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since 2000. An estimated 150,000 people visit The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. Eleven productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events — created in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 20 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

## **LEAD CORPORATE CHAMPION**

### **Umpqua Bank**

Actors take chances. Sometimes they work. Sometimes they don't. But none of these actors would be on stage tonight without taking chances. It's part of growth, and we're all made to grow. That's why we're such a proud supporter of Portland Center Stage. Let this performance inspire you to take the chances that power your own growth.