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M E D I A R E L E A S E

Portland Center Stage Presents

Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*

Winner of the 2013 Tony Award for Best Play

January 16 – February 8, with Previews Beginning January 10

THE “SUNNY NEW PLAY ABOUT GLOOMY PEOPLE”

- *The New York Times*



Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike is the 2013 Tony Award-winning play that puts Chekhov and pop culture into a blender, with the comic genius that only renowned playwright Christopher Durang can deliver. “For humor to be truly satisfying it must be grounded in reality. The humor in this play comes out of that tension of reality and ridiculousness,” said Portland Center Stage Associate Artistic Director Rose Riordan, who will direct the action. Bringing the ridiculous

family drama to life are two artists familiar to PCS audiences – local favorite Sharonlee McLean as Sonia and Carol Halstead (last at PCS in *The Beard of Avon*) as her sister Masha – along with four exciting debuts: Andrew Sellon as Vanya, Nick Ballard as Spike, Olivia Negron as Cassandra and Eden Malyn as Nina.

Previews for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* begin January 10; it opens January 16 and runs through February 8, 2015 on the U.S. Bank Main Stage at PCS’s Gerding Theater at the Armory. Regular tickets start at \$36. Preview tickets start at \$29. Rush tickets are \$20. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays (excluding January 25 and February 3 and 8); 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; and matinees at noon on select Thursdays. Tickets can be purchased at [pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org) or 503.445.3700. A complete schedule can be found online at <http://www.pcs.org/vanya/>.

ABOUT THE PLAY

In *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, Vanya and his sister Sonia tolerate their mediocre middle-aged lives, until their movie-star sister Masha returns for a surprise visit with her boy-toy Spike that really shakes things up. “It’s been our cross to bear that our parents gave us names from Chekhov plays,” says Vanya at the top of the show, setting off the hilarious, Chekhovian-peppered tale of sibling rivalry, jealousy, regret, lust, aging and basically everything that’s wrong with America. There are certainly themes and characters that will be familiar to fans of Chekhov, but as Durang says, “I did my very best to write it so that you don’t have to know Chekhov to respond to it.”

AWARDS AND ACCLAIM

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike debuted on Broadway at the John Golden Theatre in 2013 after a sold-out Off-Broadway run at Lincoln Center. *USA Today* called it “hugely entertaining” and *Newsday* proclaimed it “one of the funniest comedies Broadway has seen in seasons.” *The New York Times* said “Durang fans can watch a master of antic psycho-comedy play with Chekhov like a self-amusing cat toying with a tangled string,” and noted that “even if you’ve never read a word of Chekhov, you’re likely to find plenty to make you laugh.” The play received six Tony nominations, taking home the coveted Best Play Award, along with a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. It quickly became the most-produced new play at regional theaters across the country during the 2014-2015 season.

CHRISTOPHER DURANG

Christopher Durang is a three-time Obie Award-winning playwright whose works include *A History of the American Film* (Tony nomination, Best Book of a Musical), *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You* (Obie Award), *Beyond Therapy* (on Broadway in 1982 with Dianne Wiest and John Lithgow), *Baby with the Bathwater*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* (Obie Award, Dramatists Guild Hull Warriner Award), *Betty’s Summer Vacation* (Obie Award, Drama Desk Award nomination) and *Adrift in Macao* (with music by Peter Melnick). He is the co-chair of the Playwriting Program at The Juilliard School, and a recipient of a Guggenheim, a Rockefeller, the CBS Playwriting Fellowship, a Lecompte du Nouy Foundation grant and the Kenyon Festival Theatre Playwriting Prize. Durang was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame in 2012.

THE CAST

Andrew Sellon makes his PCS debut as Vanya, a role he recently gave a “striking performance” of at Asolo Repertory Theater (*Talkin Broadway*); the hilarious local favorite, **Sharonlee McLean**, in her 23rd production at

PCS, plays the discontented sister Sonia; **Carol Halstead** (previously at PCS as Haley in *Bad Dates*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and Queen Elizabeth in *The Beard of Avon*) returns as their glamorous movie star sister Masha; **Nick Ballard** (recently the Los Angeles premieres of *Dog Sees God* and *Anita Bryant Died For Your Sins*) debuts as the self-absorbed Hollywood boy-toy Spike; **Olivia Negron** (on Broadway in *Cuba and His Teddy Bear* with Robert De Niro and *Serious Money* with Alec Baldwin) debuts as the cleaning lady and soothsayer Cassandra; and **Eden Malyn** (appearing in the upcoming season of *Orange is the New Black* as Erin Sikowitz) plays the star struck and naive Nina.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Leading the creative team is **Director Rose Riordan**, who most recently directed *The Typographer's Dream*, *LIZZIE* and *A Small Fire* at PCS. Bringing the Chekhov-inspired farmhouse to life – the play is set in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where Christopher Durang currently resides – is **Scenic and Lighting Designer Daniel Meeker** (most recently *The Typographer's Dream* and *LIZZIE* at PCS), joined by the debut of **Costume Designer Mike Floyd** (who also became PCS's new costume shop supervisor this season) and **PCS Resident Sound Designer Casi Pacilio** (most recently *Dreamgirls* and *The Last Five Years*).

***Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* | Ticket and Performance Information**

When: January 10* – February 8, 2015

***Opening Night is Friday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.**

Preview Performances: January 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays (excluding Jan. 25 and Feb. 3 and 8); 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; and matinees at noon on select Thursdays.

Where: On the U.S. Bank Main Stage at the [Gerding Theater at the Armory](#)
128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland.

More Info: <http://www.pcs.org/vanya/>

To Purchase: Regular tickets range from \$36-69. Preview tickets start at \$29. Rush tickets are \$20. Discounts for students, those under 25 and groups of 10+. Prices subject to change.

Online: www.pcs.org
By Phone: 503.445.3700, 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.
In Person: PCS's box office is at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue
12 p.m. to curtain on performance days
12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on non-performance days
Groups: Group tickets can purchased at 503.445.3794.

Please Note: *Recommended for ages 14+; contains mature language and sexuality.*

Accessibility: PCS is committed to making our performances and facilities accessible to all of our patrons.
Learn more at <http://www.pcs.org/access/>.

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[Portland Center Stage](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Founded in 1988, PCS is the city's leading professional theater and one of the top 20 largest regional theater companies in the U.S. PCS attracts more than 150,000 theatergoers annually with its blend of classical, contemporary and premiere works, along with its summer playwrights festival, JAW. PCS also offers a variety of education and community programs tailored for patrons of all ages.

[The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#) houses the 590-seat U.S. Bank Main Stage and the 190-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places – and the first performing arts venue – to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006.

Additional support for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* is provided by Show Sponsors Keith and Sharon Barnes.

[Portland Center Stage's 2014-2015 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Season Sponsors the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Regional Arts and Culture Council, Work for Art, and Season Supporting Sponsor KINK FM. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage. Portland Center Stage is a participant in the Audience (R)Evolution Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional not-for-profit American theater.

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