ISSUE 47
VOLUME 49
FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 19, 2021

SGN

CELEBRATING
47 YEARS
IN
PRINT

SEATTLE'S LGBTQIA+ NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY SINCE 1974

Holiday Special

THEATER GUIDE

SHOWS TO KEEP YOU MERRY & BRIGHT THIS SEASON

Dina Martina – Photo by David Belisle

INTERMISSION IS OVER
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®
ALEGRÍA
IN A NEW LIGHT
I AM THE LIGHT
OPENS JAN 18
KING COUNTY'S MARYMOOR PARK
cirquedusoleil.com/alegria

GIVE THE GIFT OF THEATRE
5-PLAY SUBSCRIPTION

MONSTERS OF THE AMERICAN CINEMA

ALMA

HERE THERE BE DRAGONS

THIS GIRL LAUGHS, THIS GIRL CRIES, THIS GIRL DOES NOTHING

miku, and the gods.

ARTS WEST
ONLINE & IN-PERSON | ARTSWEST.ORG
4711 CALIFORNIA AVE SW SEATTLE, WA
BOX OFFICE: (206) 938-0339

NUCOR
4 CULTURE
ARTSFUND
DML Insurance
KCTS9
SOUND
A&

SMC SEATTLE MEN'S CHORUS

RETURNING TO THE STAGE FOR THE ANNUAL AND BELOVED HOLIDAY PERFORMANCE.

SNOW BUSINESS

DEC 5-23
BENAROYA HALL

DEC 11
FEDERAL WAY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

DEC 18
EVERETT CIVIC AUDITORIUM

Don't miss it, get your tickets today
SEATTLECHORUSES.ORG

SGN
Holiday Special
"Do Something"
An interview with Dina Martina
Photo by David Belisle

Photo by David Belisle

by A.V. Eichenbaum
***SGN* Managing Editor**

For years the enigmatic, surreal, and chaotic Dina Martina has graced Seattle's stages during the holiday season to the delight and bewilderment of theatergoers. Her annual Christmas show, a whirlwind of wordplay, pageantry, song, and yuletide pandemonium, has become a world-renowned phenomenon.

Martina agreed to a quick Q&A with the *Seattle Gay News* for our 2021 Holiday Special Issue.

Editor's note: This interview is presented in its truest form, showcasing Ms. Martina's inimitable style. Any errors you may perceive are either intentional or caused by motion sickness.

SGN: Dina, thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. I understand you're very busy with your Christmas show coming up.

Dina Martina: Well I'm certainly pleasured, Gay!

SGN: You've been on the scene in Seattle for a long time. If I'm not mistaken, you started performing at Re-bar in the '80s. Would you mind talking a little about that? What was it like?

DM: I did make my Seattle debut in January 1989, but that was at CoCA [Seattle's Center on Contemporary Art], one year before Re-bar even opened. The show was called *Pearls before Swine*, and it was the brainchild of Steve Wells, who would later be one of the two original owners of Re-bar.

Pearls before Swine was a cabaret every Saturday in January, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and it featured a rotating lineup of performers doing everything from traditional cabaret singing and dancing, to reverse striptease, to legs being shaved, to voodoo dancing and tribal music, to vacuuming the stage to Birgit Nilsson arias.

At that time, CoCA was located on First Avenue, near where the Harbor Steps are today, and Steve wanted to bridge the gap between the voyeuristic atmosphere of next-door neighbor The Lusty Lady and the high-falutin', "artsy" atmosphere of the newly built Seattle Art Museum, located directly across the street. To accomplish this, Steve built a wall between the stage and the audience; next, he painted the wall to look like a white picket fence, then bored several peepholes into the wall, through which the audience would view the show.

People would line up behind the peepholes and wait their turn to see the show for a while — either until they'd seen enough, or until it was time to give the other people in line a turn to watch. The only thing we could see from the stage was a blank wall with all these eyes peering at us through the holes. At times, it was packed on the audience side of the wall, and sometimes there was absolutely no one, but we kept performing either way. It was unlike anything I'd ever seen, before or since.

SGN: How have things changed since then? Would you have done anything differently?

DM: Since then, I've learned the value of brevity and.

In the first several years, there was more dead air in my shows than you could shake a stick at, but I've worked really hard to try to squeegee that out. You know, "separate the wheat from the chafe."

SGN: Do you have any advice for young performers trying to break into the limelight in Seattle?

DM: Yes. *Do something.*

SGN: Could you elaborate on that?

DM: Having a great look isn't enough. I mean it's lovely to see — *for a couple of minutes* — but if you're going to charge admission to strangers and try to hold their attention for an hour or so, you'd better have more than just a "look." Sing! Dance! Tell stories! Make 'em laugh or cry or feel awkward! *Bake*, for Christ's sake — I don't care what you do, but please don't think it's okay to charge strangers to just sit and bask in your "look" for 60 minutes while you just... talk about stuff.

SGN: Let's talk about your Christmas show. How'd that get started?

DM: My first Christmas show was at Re-bar in 1997, though I had done non-holiday solo shows before then. It was successful, but I didn't do one in 1998, just because I thought people expected it, and I don't like being predictable. But of course, the holiday season is my favorite time of the year, and when Christmas '98 rolled around, I really wished I had done a show, so I've done one pretty much every year since. Doing a Christmas show has become the way I celebrate, and it means the world to me that people have made a tradition out of it.

SGN: Is it true that you're not doing in-person performances this year? Does that change a lot of things for you?

DM: No, that's a big fat lie. I'm doing a Christmas show here in Seattle at the Moore Theatre, December 10th and 11th, and then I'm bringing my Christmas show to London's Soho Theatre, 14–30 December. Notice how I put the dates before the month for the London show? They do that there. Oh, and I'm also re-streaming my online Christmas show from last year, because lots of peeps said they missed it or they just wanted to see it again.

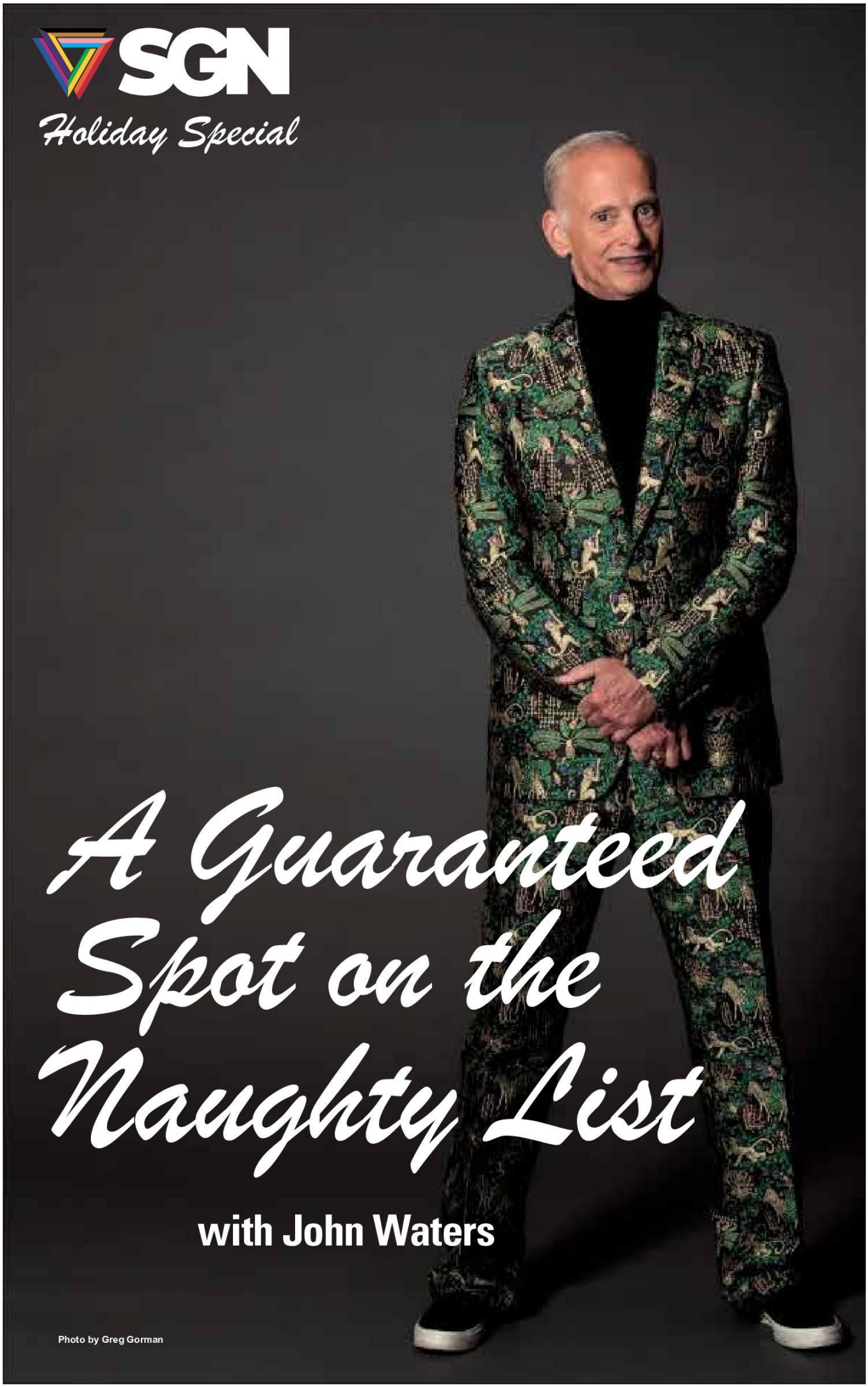
SGN: I've seen your show a few times. Always a delight, and it's clear you really love the holidays. Now, I'm not really a "Christmas person." Do you have any pointers for grinches like me to get into the holiday spirit?

DM: Yes I do. Eat a big bowl of Lipton California onion dip and snort some fat nutmeg rails. It's sure to get you in the mood. Or, just... *a mood*.

SGN: I'll do my best. Well, Dina, that about wraps it up for us. Thank you again for joining me today. Any final words you have for readers at home?

DM: Yes, I'd like to leave your readers with one of my grandmother's favorite sayings: "Funerals are for the living, and marriage is for the dead." I'm pretty sure she just meant dead *inside*. Merry Christmas!

Information on Dina Martina's upcoming shows and where to buy tickets can be found at dinamartina.com/calendar. You can also follow her on Instagram and Twitter @dinamartina.


SGN
Holiday Special
A Guaranteed Spot on the Naughty List
with John Waters
Photo by Greg Gorman

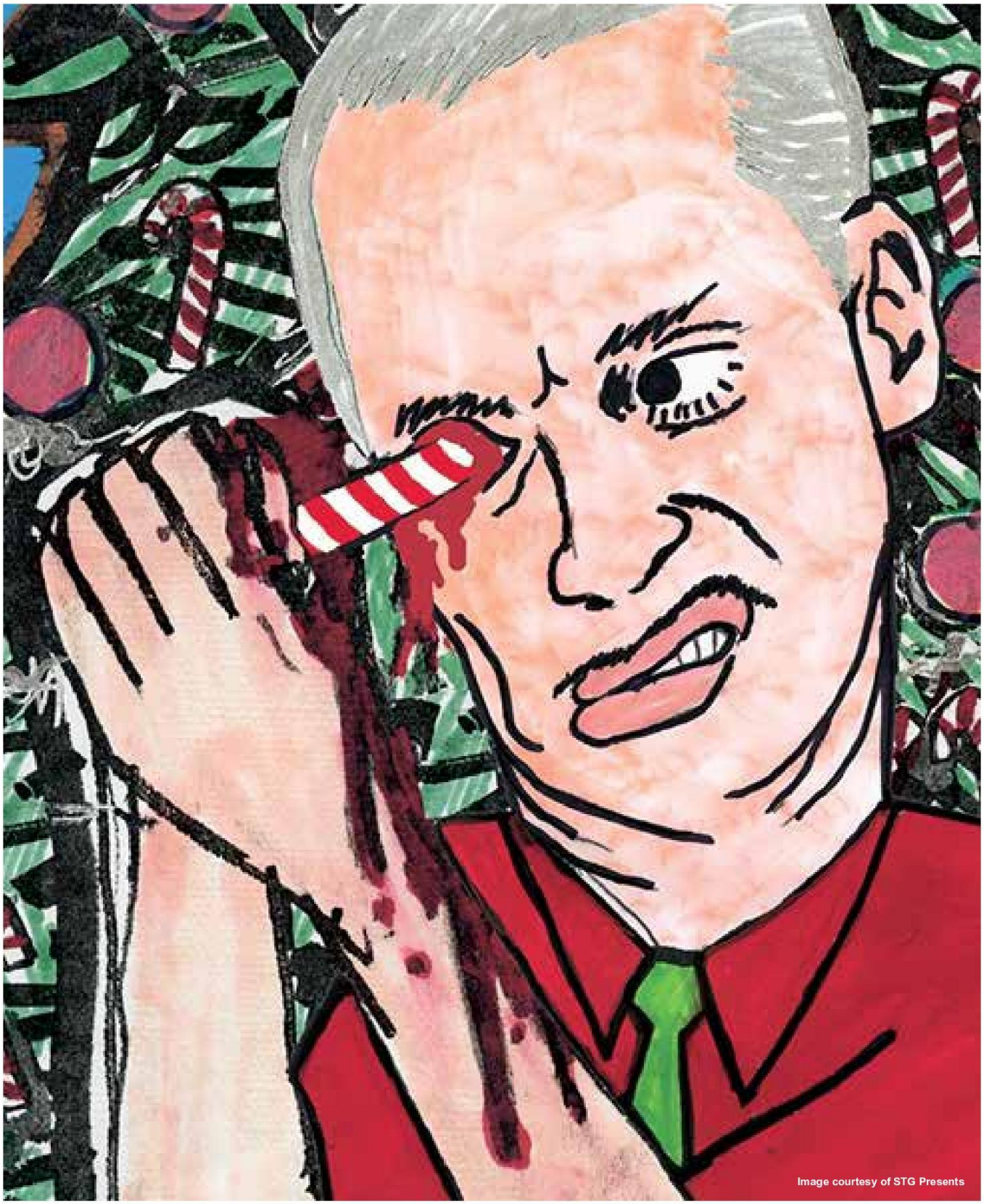


Image courtesy of STG Presents

by Nick Rapp
***SGN* Contributing Writer**

Fans of camp, absurdity, and comedic filth need not fear this holiday season — John Waters is coming to Seattle.

Initially set for a 2020 performance (but delayed due to COVID-19), Waters is performing his spoken word comedy show, "A John Waters Christmas," at the Neptune Theater on Wednesday, December 1, at 8:00 p.m.

A blurb from Seattle Theatre Group's website describes it as "the booster shot you need."

It continues: "Like an obsessed and shell-shocked St. Nick from quarantine, John Waters, the 'people's pervert' or 'queer Confucius' as the press recently called him, is back after a two-year home detention in Baltimore to hit the road again for his 25th Annual Xmas Tour. Bad little boys and girls, and everybody in between and beyond, will be thrilled to take a sleigh ride of sleaze down the slopes of good taste and over the ski jump of religious beliefs to a snow drift of candy cane anarchy."

Intriguing and purposely vague, the description gives as much information on the show as Waters would want any audience member to have. His past performances have been written to shock, stemming from a rich history of Waters' urge to deliver a style of comedy that is wholly unplaceable and unpalatable.

Waters has been churning out Queer art since his rise to notoriety in the seventies with cult films such as *Pink Flamingos* and *Female Trouble*. He is an inarguable Queer icon, always devoted to creating art that attacks conventions and exposes humor in the unexpected. His idiosyncratic stance on taboo subject matter brings about strong audience reactions to humor that is likely offensive, but not antagonistically so. That is to say, Waters doesn't offend for the sake of offending; he just has a deep love of subverting expectations of humor and cultural taste.

The *SGN* reached out to a member of Waters' crew to ask what the two-year hiatus meant in terms of new content for the Christmas show. They responded, "The material is almost all new. John always updates his Christmas show, and given all that has happened over the last two years, he has had more time to reflect and write."

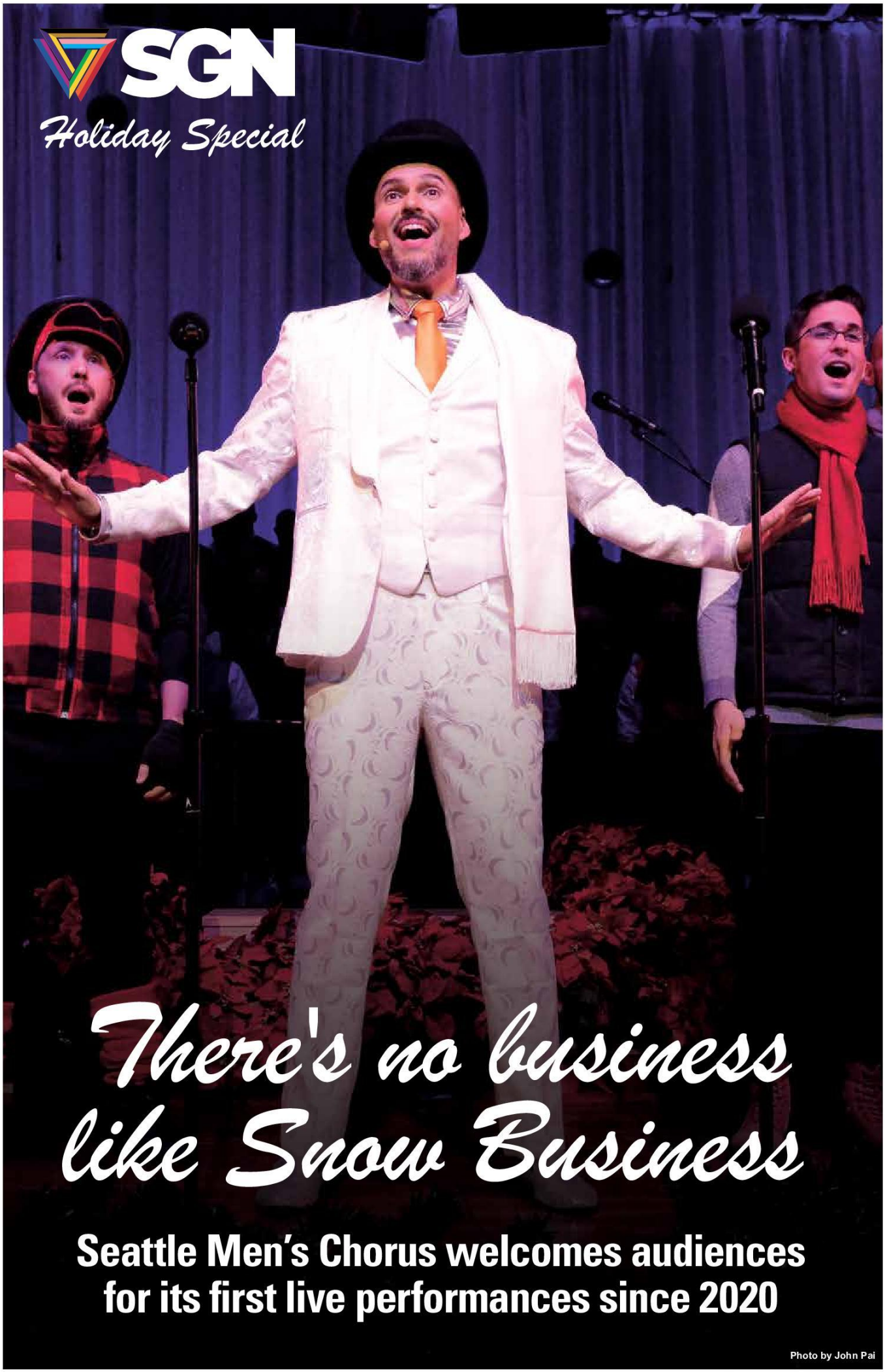
In past Christmas shows, Waters has opted for a simple production: just him in a chair on stage, amusing audiences with his rapid-fire quick wit and a Q&A segment at the end.

It is safe to say that audience members should expect rumination over the pandemic in America and our current precarious political state of affairs, along with a whole lot of off-color jokes about celebrating Christmas in the modern day.

Where to get tickets

Tickets for the show are available online on Seattle Theatre Group's website (www.stgpresents.org/calendar/5928/a-john-waters-christmas) and various reselling sites.

Waters' team mentioned that he "typically sells these shows out in advance" and they "wouldn't count on" tickets at the door. If you're looking to attend, you should get tickets early, leave the kids at home, and come sporting a mask with your proof of vaccination.



SGN

Holiday Special

There's no business like Snow Business

Seattle Men's Chorus welcomes audiences for its first live performances since 2020

Photo by John Pai

Photo by John Pai

by Paige McGlauflin
***SGN* Contributing Writer**

On December 5, the Seattle Men's Chorus will hold its first in-person performance since March 2020. Over the last 20 months, both it and Women's Chorus have been gathering and performing virtually. But, glowing with excitement, they are now ready to welcome audiences back into live performance venues.

"This is our first in-person performance where we're going to be together as a full choral organization, and we're really happy to be able to do that after essentially almost two years off stage and doing virtual performances," Samantha Berry, Seattle Choruses' marketing and sponsorship manager, told the *SGN*.

On select dates between Dec. 5 and Dec. 23, audiences can see the Seattle Men's Chorus's annual holiday show, *Snow Business*, at Benaroya Hall. Additional performances are scheduled at the Federal Way Performing Arts Center and Everett Civic Auditorium.

Fans of the chorus can expect a fun twist on festive favorites such as "White Christmas" and "Jingle Bells," and newer selections, including a new carol from the composer of *Frozen*.

Tickets for the show start at $27.50, but those looking for gifts for their music-aficionado loved ones this holiday season can also consider grabbing a subscription package, available for purchase through Dec. 1. However, those interested should act fast, these are also in demand.

"There are a lot of people who are excited about getting back into attending events in general, and we have had a nice increase in ticket sales even in the last week," said Berry. "Some of the shows are selling out pretty quickly. We're almost sold out of the December 5 show, for example. People who want to get in on that should do so quickly."

Photo by John Pai

Season preview and ticket/pass info

Following *Snow Business*, the Seattle Women's Chorus will gather in February to perform *We Are Family*, an homage to the classics from girl groups and sister acts. In April, the Women's Chorus will perform *Voices Rising*, a production dedicated to celebrating rock pioneer Sister Rosetta Tharpe and the Black women who have led innovation in music since.

In March, the Men's Chorus will return for *Motown and More*, celebrating the iconic sounds that came out of the famous Detroit music label.

"Personally, I'm pretty excited about that, because I love the Motown sound, and I think that's going to be a lot of fun," said Berry. "I also am really excited for the women's spring concert."

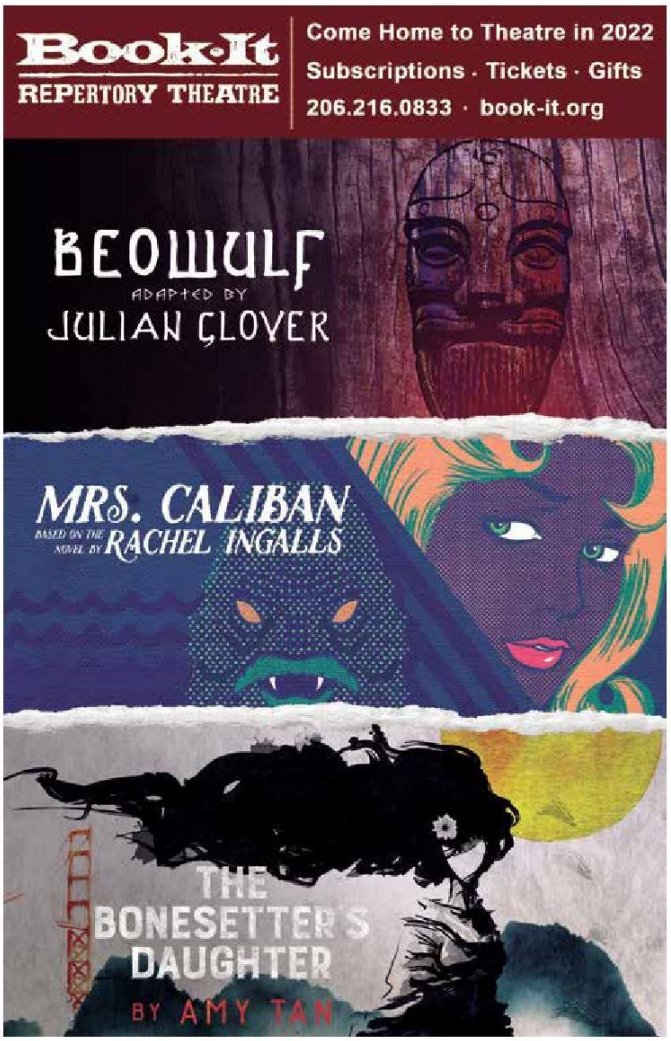
Though the 2021–22 season ends in April, fans can anticipate *Pride Pops*, the annual joint production from the Seattle Men's Chorus and Seattle Symphony, taking place June 24 and 25.

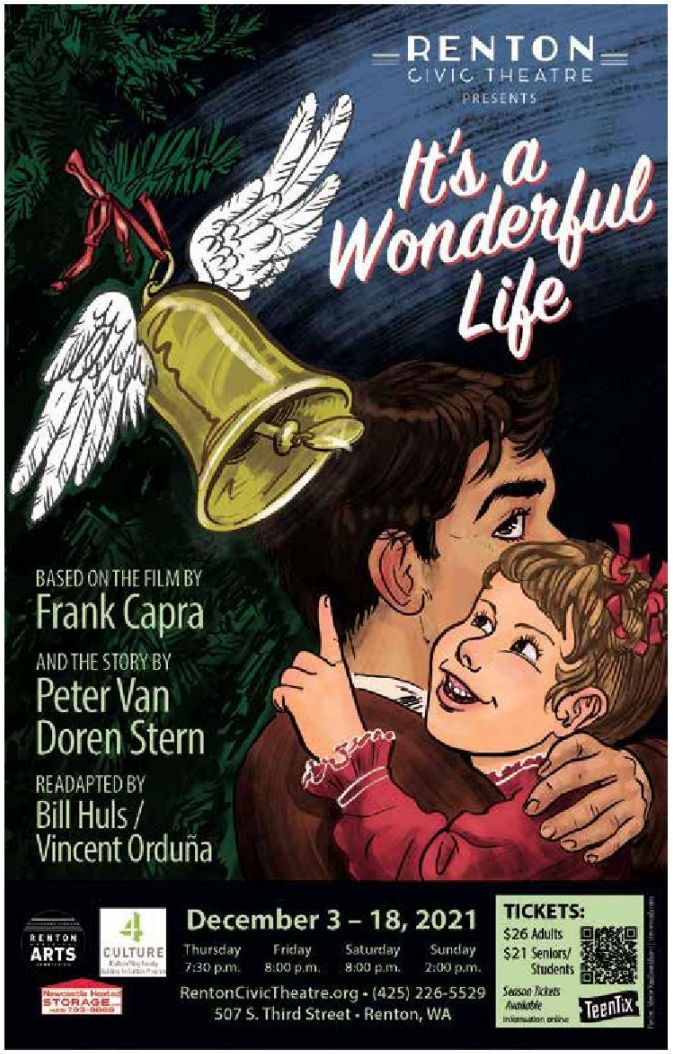
Subscriptions for the 2021–22 season come in two offerings: a two-performance package for either the Men's or Women's Chorus, or a full-season package for all four performances. Prices range from $53 to $178 and from $94 to $318 for the two- and four-performance packages, respectively.

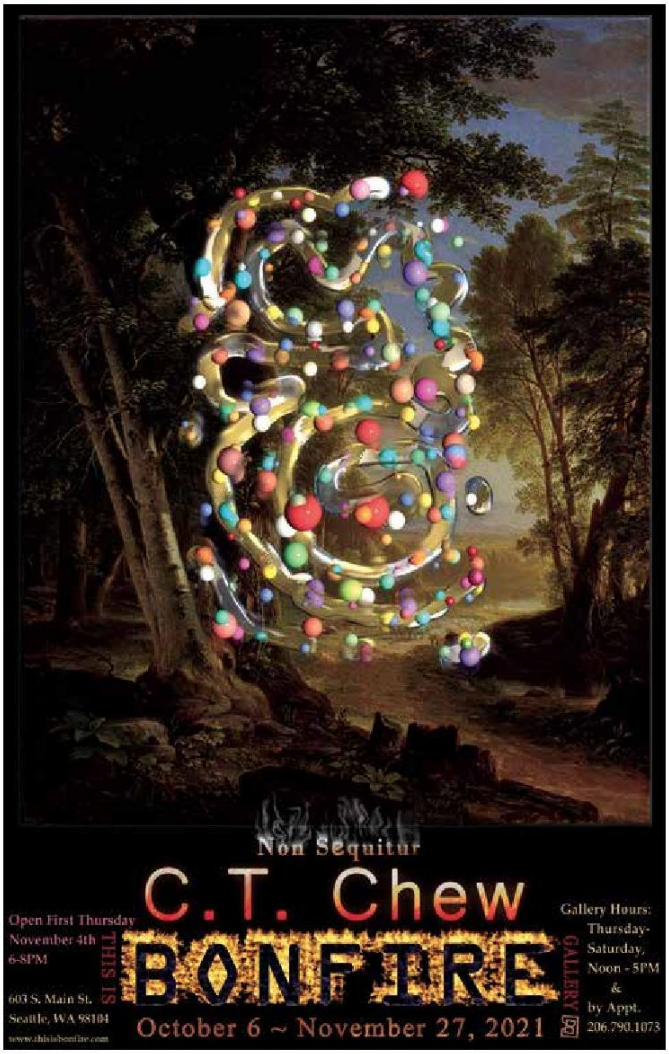
The season pass doesn't apply to *Pride Pops*, but pass holders can purchase tickets to the concert with a discount code, Berry said.

For more information on tickets and events, please visit www.seattlechoruses.org.

Join us LIVE @ Mount Baker Theatre
2021
2022
JOY of MUSIC
DEC 4 & DEC 5
7:30 PM 3:00 PM
Holiday Joy
Ramona Abbott
NARRATOR
tickets for the rest of our season on sale
NOVEMBER 29TH
BELLINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Visit our website BellinghamSymphony.org to get the latest to get the latest program and ticketing information.
Visit MountBakerTheatre.com for ticket sales


Book-It
REPERTORY THEATRE
Come Home to Theatre in 2022
Subscriptions · Tickets · Gifts
206.216.0833 · book-it.org
BEOWULF
ADAPTED BY
JULIAN CLOVER
MRS. CALIBAN
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY RACHEL INGALLS
THE BONESETTER'S DAUGHTER
BY AMY TAN


RENTON
CIVIC THEATRE
PRESENTS
It's a Wonderful Life
BASED ON THE FILM BY
Frank Capra
AND THE STORY BY
Peter Van Doren Stern
READAPTED BY
Bill Huls / Vincent Orduña
RENTON ARTS
4 CULTURE
Newcastle Heritage STORAGE
December 3 – 18, 2021
Thursday 7:30 p.m.
Friday 8:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 p.m.
Sunday 2:00 p.m.
RentonCivicTheatre.org · (425) 226-5529
507 S. Third Street · Renton, WA
TICKETS:
$26 Adults
$21 Seniors/ Students
Season Tickets Available
TeenTix


Non Sequitur
C.T. Chew
BONFIRE
October 6 ~ November 27, 2021
Open First Thursday
November 4th
6-8PM
603 S. Main St.
Seattle, WA 98104
www.thisisbonfire.com
THIS IS BONFIRE GALLERY
Gallery Hours:
Thursday-Saturday,
Noon - 5PM
&
by Appt.
206.790.1073

DIMITRIOU'S jazz alley

2033 6TH Avenue / 206.441.9729
www.jazzalley.com

Taj Mahal Quartet

The legendary blues and roots music Hall of Famer returns for our annual celebration of this international treasure!

Nov 19 - 28

Merry Christmas from José James

Have yourself a soulful little Christmas with smooth-as-silk crooner José James, the crown prince of new-jack jazz.

Nov 30 - Dec 1

Marcus Miller

Two-time Grammy-winning bass virtuoso

Dec 2 - 5

Jazzmeia Horn

Blessed with a fitting name for her chosen path – Horn is among the most exciting young vocalists in jazz

Dec 6 - 7

Mike Stern Jeff Lorber Fusion

featuring Jimmy Haslip & Gary Novak

All-star jazz fusion band with Stern (guitar), Lorber (keys), Haslip (bass) and Novak (drums) touring in support of their newest release ELEVEN

Dec 8 - 9

Gift Certificates Available

FULL CALENDAR at jazzalley.com

91.3 KBCS · knkx

All Ages / Free Parking

BELLEVUE CHAMBER CHORUS

2021 - 2022 CONCERT SEASON

www.bellevuechamberchorus.org • 425.522.3436
YouTube: Bellevue Chamber Chorus Official

How Can I Keep From (live) Singing?

An eclectic program selected by our members to mark our return to in-person singing, including everything from Mendelssohn, Barber, and Lauridsen, to jazz standards with bass and percussion!

Featuring: Kristine Anderson, piano
Bren Plummer, string bass ❖ Denali Williams, percussion

Available on YouTube starting Saturday Nov. 20, 2021

The Star in the East

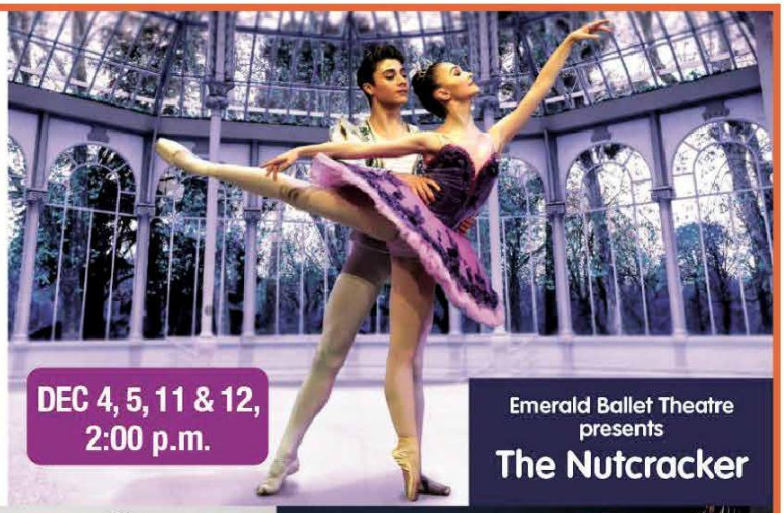
In this time of change and new directions, Bellevue Chamber Chorus wishes our audience and followers a path through challenging times. Join us on our YouTube channel for arrangements of traditional carols featuring violin and bass.

Premieres on YouTube Tuesday Dec. 21, 2021, 7:30 pm

Free to view ❖ Donations gratefully accepted

npaf
Northshore Performing Arts Foundation

PRESS PLAY npaf is back!



DEC 4, 5, 11 & 12, 2:00 p.m.

Emerald Ballet Theatre presents
The Nutcracker

Magician
Nash Fung

Feb 19, 2022 7:30 p.m.

MARINA AND THE DREAMBOATS

Feb 26, 2022 7:30 p.m.

Mercedes Nicole Trio's

A tribute to the music of Shirley Horn

Feb 27, 2022 7:30 p.m.

Mar 5, 2022 7:30 p.m.

Tickets on Sale Now at NPACF.org/tickets

425-298-3449 • 18125 92nd Ave NE • Bothell, WA 98011

Thank You to our Sponsors!

ARTS WA arts.wa.gov · KSER 90.7 Independent Public Radio · ARTSFUND · NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS · 4 CULTURE · BANNER BANK · The Woodhouse WINE ESTATES

NPAF: Bringing the community and the Arts together, one show at a time.

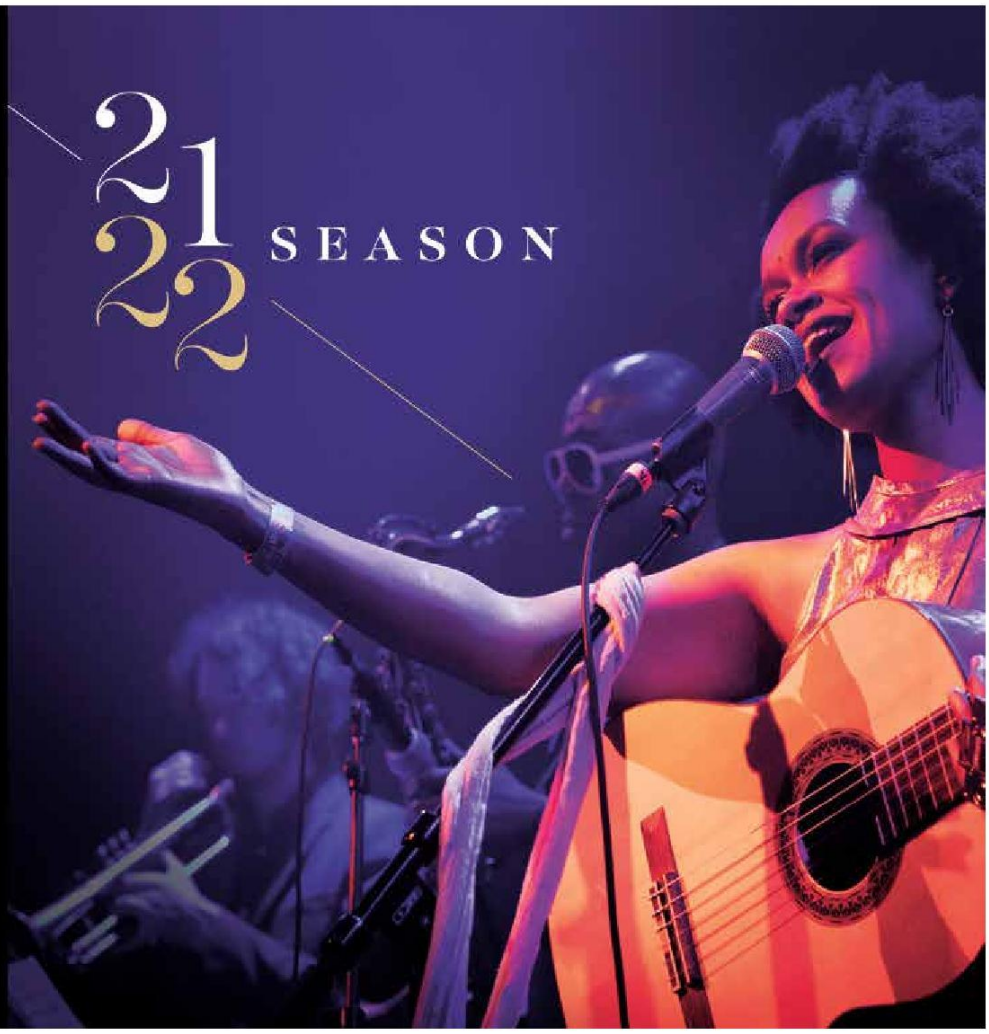
CHOOSE YOUR OWN SERIES

Pick four or more events to create a season that works best for you.

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company
Emerson String Quartet
Imani Winds & Catalyst Quartet
Jeremy Denk
Joyce Yang
Mark Morris Dance Group & Music Ensemble
Meklit
MOMIX
Sharon Isbin
Simone Dinnerstein
Third Coast Percussion/ Movement Art Is
And more!

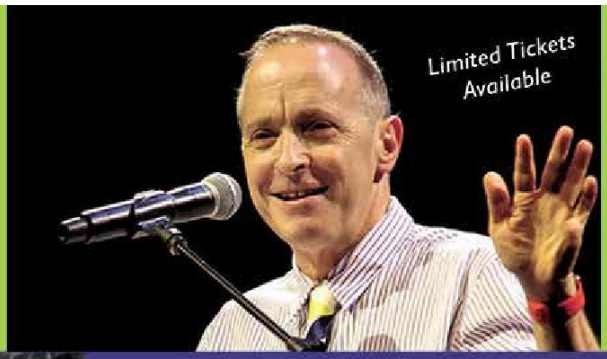
MEANYCENTER.ORG
206-543-4880

MEANY CENTER
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



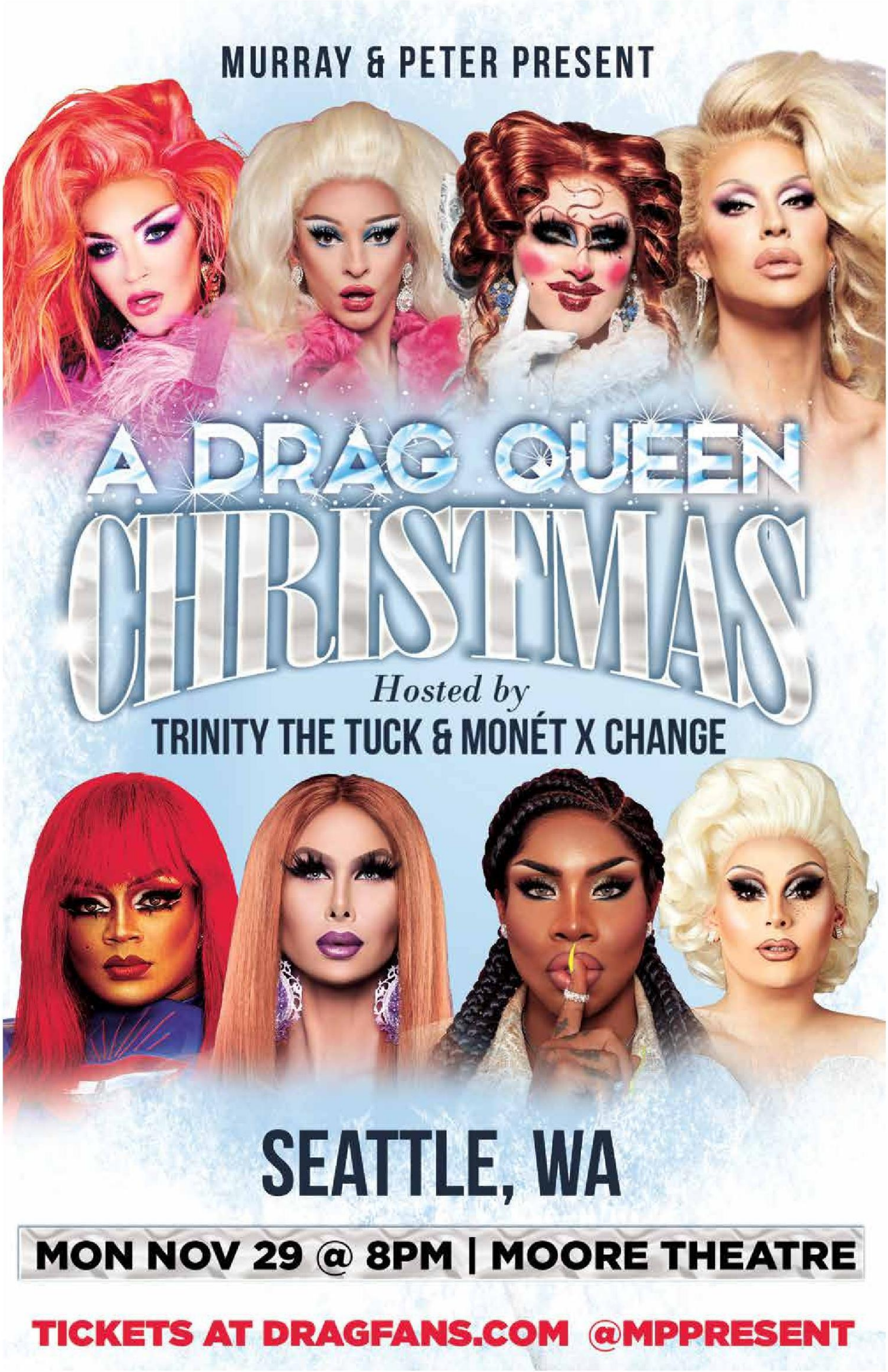
NW Center for the Arts
the Stranger
knkx present

David Sedaris
Week-long series of Workshop Readings
January 5 – 11
Broadway Performance Hall
sedaris.boldtypetickets.com



Fran Lebowitz
hosted by David Schmader
February 27
Benaroya Hall
benaroyahall.org

Neil Gaiman
May 1
Benaroya Hall
benaroyahall.org


MURRAY & PETER PRESENT
A DRAG QUEEN
CHRISTMAS
Hosted by
TRINITY THE TUCK & MONÉT X CHANGE
SEATTLE, WA
MON NOV 29 @ 8PM | MOORE THEATRE
TICKETS AT DRAGFANS.COM @MPPRESENT

EQUALUX

Taste of GSBA

Saturday, November 20

The Westin Seattle & Online

Title Sponsor

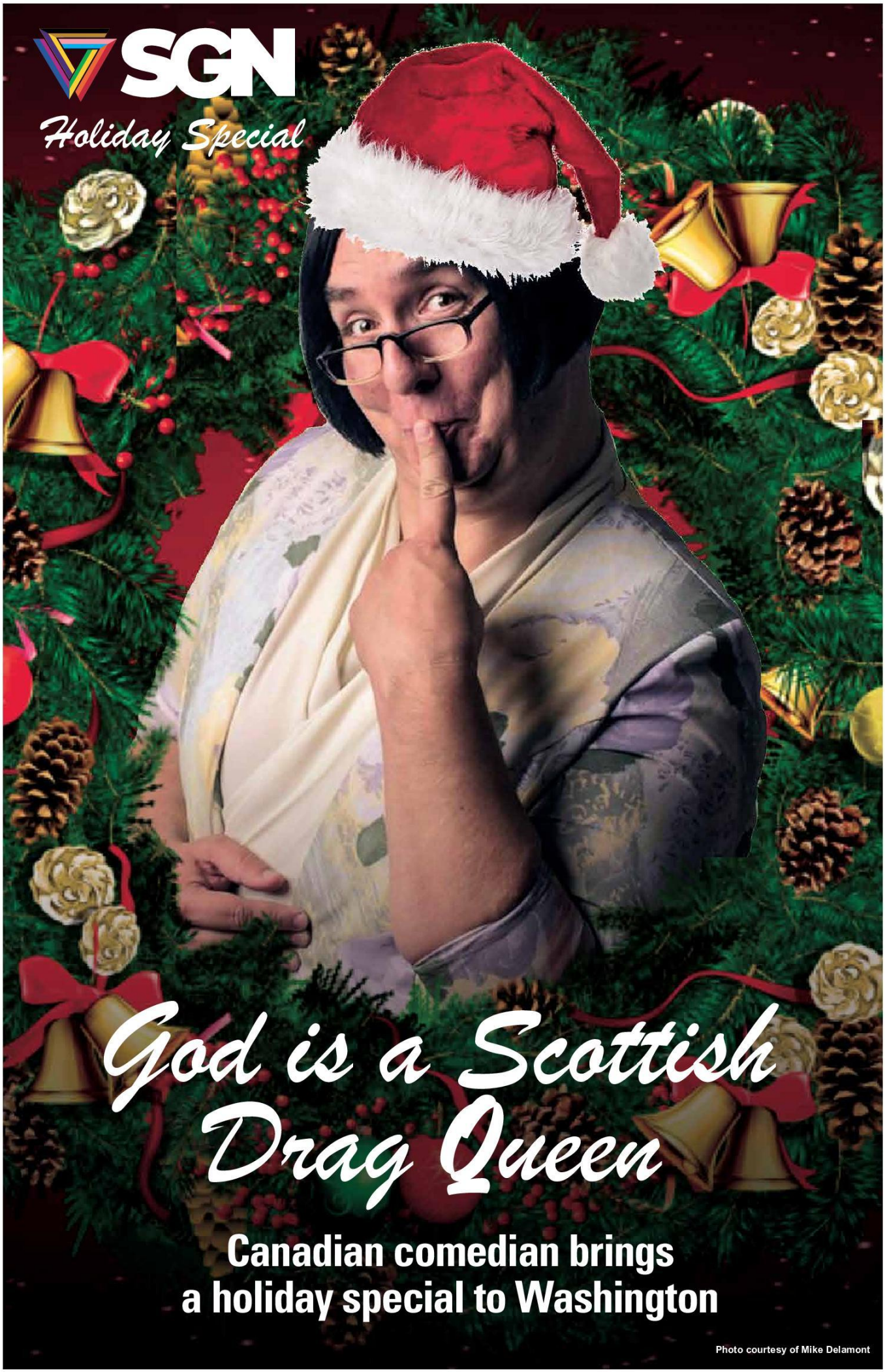
CAR PROS

Since 1978
Gay-Owned Business!
PACIFIC NORTHWEST SHOP
Local Everyday Gifts Made in the Northwest
Apparel • Bath & Body • Books • Food • Home & Garden • Toys
Free Giftwrap • Online Shopping
& Corporate
2702 N Proctor St, Tacoma 253.752.2242
4411 Wallingford Ave N, Seattle 206.535.6920
www.PNWShop.com

WHITE RIVER VALLEY MUSEUM
Festival of Trees
a literary forest
NOVEMBER 17, 2021 - JANUARY 9, 2022
Friends of the Auburn Library
AUBURN

FANS OF MONTY PYTHON, MR.BEAN, AND DR.SEUSS... GRAB YOUR TEACUPS!
O CHRISTMAS TEA
"COMPLETE AND UTTER FUN FOR ALL AGES."
★★★★★
CBC
A BRITISH COMEDY
by UK comedy legends James & Jamesy
NOVEMBER 30 · NEPTUNE THEATRE
TICKETS AND FULL TOUR AT JAMESANDJAMESY.COM/TICKETS

Find your happy place.
WINTER SESSION STARTS JANUARY 8TH!
• Online and in-person classes, combos, lessons, and workshops
• Music education designed for adults
• All skill levels welcome
JAZZ NIGHT SCHOOL



SGN

Holiday Special

God is a Scottish Drag Queen

Canadian comedian brings a holiday special to Washington

Photo courtesy of Mike Delamont

Photo courtesy of Mike Delamont

by Hannah Saunders
***SGN* Contributing Writer**

After delays due to the pandemic, comedian Mike Delamont will bring his award-winning show "God is a Scottish Drag Queen: Holiday Special" to the Washington Center for Performing Arts in Olympia this holiday season.

Delamont, who is originally from Victoria, BC, has been doing standup comedy for 10 years and sketch comedy for about 17 years.

"I was always a theatre kid in high school and kind of stuck with it and started doing the fringe festival circuit in North America right out of high school," Delamont said. "I enjoy being on stage and being able to entertain people. I love creating shows and figuring out the… craft of it and all the behind-the-scenes stuff that the audience doesn't get to see."

Delamont's performances have allowed him to travel across the globe, but in March of 2020, everything was shut down and he could no longer perform in person. Since then, the comedian had to cancel 350 shows in six countries.

"I was able to do a few little shows in the fall of 2020 — very tiny, socially distanced, small shows — and then things shut back down again, and they've only just started. Probably [just] in the last month, I've gone back on the road," Delamont said.

During the shutdowns, Delamont did what many artists did: he switched to online performances. After conducting a handful of Zoom shows, he concluded that comedy doesn't always work well when done virtually. He didn't enjoy those shows as much, and he felt like his audience wasn't getting what they wanted at that point.

During fall of 2020, he released a pandemic version of "God is a Scottish Drag Queen," which was filmed in front of a live audience and was posted as a film special on his website. He also released it as an album and a digital show. Delamont has created several versions of the performance; the holiday special edition is the most popular.

Origins

"I was doing a monthly cabaret show, and there was always a through line of some plot that went through all the sketches, and that month — I don't know why — we were doing a battle of the bands between Jesus and Satan," Delamont said.

"If you look at the Sistine Chapel image of God, he's wearing a gentle pink negligee — it's very feminist. It's like a rom-com, when the boyfriend sleeps over and wears the mom's robe, and at the same time, the face is so angry. So [the guy who created the character Ria and I] really liked the idea that this very angry character was so gently dressed and the juxtaposition of that."

From there, the idea for "God is a Scottish Drag Queen" was formed. The first night Delamont performed it, he wore a fiery red wig and what he describes as Lady Gaga glasses, but instead of a Scottish accent, he first tried an English one.

"The English accent felt too strict, like a headmaster," Delamont said. "I changed the wig to a black bob and glasses at the tip of the nose and a Scottish accent, which really worked — if the character was mad, you know they're in on the joke."

Delamont began brining the character back on stage every month thereafter.

"It's the character I've done the most. I liked it the most, so I decided to create a one-hour show of that," Delamont said. "I certainly didn't think when we created the character over 15 years ago that I'd still be doing it now."

A fan of Christmas

The comedian is a huge fan of Christmas. He explained how most performers pull from the same four Christmas stories, including *A Christmas Carol* and *The Nutcracker*. Then a question entered his mind: What does Jesus think about his dad's birthday?

"The idea of the original show was that God would come down and set the record straight on things," Delamont said.

"The nice thing about this show is that there's very little religious content in it," he added. "It's very themed, but it's very holiday. It has strangely become the most popular show in the franchise, and it's my favorite."

According to Delamont there are 17 major holidays between mid-November to mid-January. So his character talks about Christmas, Hannukah, Saturnalia, Yule, Jim Carey's Grinch, eggnog, and everything in between, including what really happened at the birth of Jesus.

"The nice thing about this show is that it's a comedy — it… feels like that's what people really want right now," Delamont said. "People are really… stressed, and things are a little broken these days. It seems that if people could get out for a couple of hours and get out in the world and have a giggle and a rum or eggnog, I think it'll do the world a good."

"Maybe don't bring the kids, but you can bring grandma. It's a nice escape… a welcoming and inclusive escape," Delamont said. "It's a nice way to ring in the holidays that is not the same four shows that everybody does every single year."

"God is a Scottish Drag Queen: Holiday Special" will take place in Olympia on Dec. 3 at 7:30p.m. For event and ticket information visit www.washingtoncenter.org/event/gisdq-a-christmas-special.

SGN

Holiday Special

Scott Shoemaker's War on Christmas

A chaotic cult classic

Photo by Bronwen Gilbert Houck

Photo by Bronwen Gilbert Houck

by Lindsey Anderson
***SGN* Contributing Writer**

Are you overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and seeking a chance to unwind and let loose? Well, look no further than *Scott Shoemaker's War on Christmas.* In the format of a '70s variety show, it's the hilarious brainchild of the titular Scott Shoemaker and his partner in theater — as well as life — Freddie Mulich.

"He and I write the show together. Essentially we think about it all year long," said Shoemaker. The inspiration for it stemmed from "some of the things we like and dislike about Christmas, popular songs we are interested in parodying," he added. "Freddie is a comic genius and constantly comes up with wild ideas."

The show takes place at a Christmas dinner party that soon turns into downright chaos. "It kind of devolves into sort of a wacky mishmash of a bunch of different acts that kind of take place in the realm of a Christmas party, and then it usually resolves itself in the end," Shoemaker said, laughing.

The production is made possible thanks to a talented cast. "We have an awesome cast that we call 'The War on Christmas Dancers,' and they are all great solo performers," said Shoemaker. They include Ade, "an overall chanteuse, actor, and sort of icon," Waxing Moon, "a world-renowned burlesque artist," Mandy Price, "a hilarious comedian" whose background is mainly in improvisation, and Faggoty Randy, a talented burlesque performer.

A cult classic that's new each year

The War on Christmas has become a bit of a cult classic in Seattle, with dedicated fans coming each year to see what Shoemaker and Mulich have added to the show. Despite it running each holiday season, they try hard to revamp it with new acts and fresh jokes each year. This year Shoemaker is very excited about what they are bringing to the table.

"The main thing is that there's gonna be a lot of elements of surprise, and a little bit of naughtiness. We are kind of doing a lot of bizarre and unusual acts that I think are very different from any Christmas show that you are going to see in the area. A lot of it skewers Christmas traditions, but it's tongue in cheek. It's subversive and wild, so people should be ready for a fun ride," he says.

Fans of the show are no doubt looking forward to these much-needed laughs after a long and treacherous year.

After nearly 18 months without in-person theater, Shoemaker is ecstatic to be back on stage. "We're ready to make people laugh again. We're taking safety extremely seriously, but we think that everybody can have a fun time reestablishing holiday traditions and getting a little bit of holiday cheer in their lives."

For those who might be interested in following in Shoemaker's footsteps, he offers some sage advice. "I would say that if you have a passion to be on stage, you don't need to let fear hold you back. It doesn't matter if you think what you're doing isn't perfect or isn't fully ready to be on stage. It's more important that you put yourself out there and start doing the work, because eventually you'll get better and better, and that's how you do it: putting it out on stage and just showing yourself to folks and what you're ready to offer."

Scott Shoemaker's War on Christmas will play December 2–24 at the Theater Off Jackson. Tickets are now available for pre-order at www.strangertickets.com.

SGN

Holiday Special

O Christmas Tea

sparks childlike joy in Northwest holiday tour

Photo by Thaddeus Hink

Photo by Thaddeus Hink

by Nick Rapp
***SGN* Contributing Writer**

Theater, at its best, refrains from simply telling a story; it brings the audience into a different kind of reality. Aaron Malkin and Alastair Knowles — known by their stage names "James and Jamesy," respectively — use their personas to invite audience members to world-build with them: the duo's Christmas show, *O Christmas Tea*, showcases their comedic talents as they navigate a world that is literally flooding with tea.

The pair, based in Vancouver, BC, are performing at the Edmonds Center for the Arts and the Neptune Theatre in Seattle on Nov. 29 and 30, respectively, at 7:30 p.m. (Both venues require vaccination for entry to events. Those unable to get vaccinated must present proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test.)

The shows are part of a 23-city tour, which Malkin and Knowles have been eagerly awaiting after over 20 months of a pandemic-induced live-theater stalemate.

Origins

As performers, Malkin and Knowles strive to embody the childlike spirit of the physical comedians, British comedians, and clowns that shaped their formative years in the theater industry. Their adoption of the names "James and Jamesy" was as organic and spontaneous as the interactive audience energy they bring about in their shows.

"We worked with a group of physical comedians and clowns in Vancouver a decade ago," explained Malkin. "Alastair happened upon this character that the other people in the room wanted him to explore more. That character had a peculiar physicality and happened to speak in an English accent." The group also wanted Malkin to improvise with Knowles, continuously asking him to switch his character impulses. Malkin "got frustrated, continuing to go back to default, stock characters," he said. "As soon as I stopped and found nothing," the group "said 'that one,' and we improvised together and it was sweet and fun."

The two performers continued to capitalize off the positive energy that came from their discovery of James and Jamesy as characters, turning the duo into a performance tool that is representative of the kind of theater they enjoy. As Malkin explained, "Alastair, as the character Jamesy, is inaccessible to the audience because of how eccentric he is. My character is an interlocutor — they get interested in Jamesy because of my fondness for him."

Collaborative comedy

In building a relationship with each other, they also build one with the audience, generating an immersive theater experience that they hope brings out everyone's childlike sense of wonder and joy.

"Many people want to play," said Knowles. "That is the philosophy that we approach theater with. We create shows to come together in a shared experience. People become part of the show. Audience members play characters up on stage, in costume. It might be daunting, but it is also really quite playful, which is at the heart of it."

O Christmas Tea is a particularly special show, as it infuses James and Jamesy's knack for collaborative comedy with the spirit of the holiday season. "Our first shows weren't Christmas themed, but at the heart of our shows, there has always been imagination, friendship, and play. Christmas, to us, is about that in many senses," said Malkin. People "make an effort to see each other. They travel and take time off from work. In this time off, you get to build memories."

And the audience participation that is vital to their show's success is only recently possible. While some performers shifted to Zoom, Knowles and Malkin were stuck waiting out the pandemic in uncertainty. "The style of creation that we do is largely about audience engagement," Knowles explained. "We do not have an online product that is a substitute. There was a big emotional reaction when pandemic restrictions were loosening."

The two extend their "huge gratitude to all of the people that have done the work in order to make [performance] possible. Whether that is vaccine research, healthcare, or daily life — we are so grateful."

"And to all of the people who have gotten the vaccine," they added.

Photo by Thaddeus Hink

Tickets to O Christmas Tea can be purchased at www.jamesandjamesy.com/o-christmas-tea.

GIVE THE GIFT OF THE ARTS AT THE CENTER

THE WASHINGTON CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

WINDHAM HILL'S
WINTER SOLSTICE
DECEMBER 1 | 7:30 PM

GOD IS A SCOTTISH DRAG QUEEN:
A CHRISTMAS SPECIAL
DECEMBER 3 | 7:30 PM

PINK MARTINI
FEATURING CHINA FORBES
JANUARY 24 | 7:30 PM

PIONEERING WOMEN IN JAZZ
BESSIE, BILLIE & NINA
MARCH 15 | 7:30 PM

THE GOLDEN GIRLS SHOW!
A PUPPET PARODY
MARCH 25 | 7:30 PM

ONE WAY OUT TOUR
MELISSA ETHERIDGE
APRIL 4 | 7:30 PM

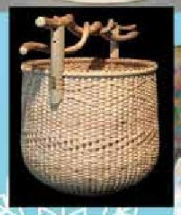
KORESH DANCE COMPANY
APRIL 16 | 7:30 PM

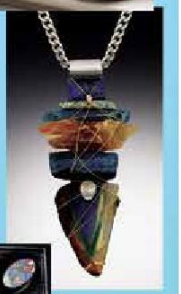
Lift Hearts with a gift of the **Arts!**

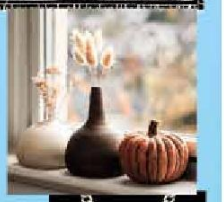
GIFT CERTIFICATES
NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

TICKETS: (360) 753-8586 • WASHINGTONCENTER.ORG
512 Washington St. SE Olympia, WA 98501 •

The Virtual NWAA
Holiday Market







Enjoy shopping safely online on a secure website. Support talented artists and shop a wide variety of handmade items from over 60 vendors. Find unique gifts or something special for yourself. Artwork can be shipped to your home- some delivery and pick-up options available.

Online, Nov 19-Dec 5

bestofthenorthwestart.org

Go Figure

UNTIL DECEMBER 6

Prepare for the unexpected!

Experience the human body as art.

Laurels by Juliette Aristides

Enter by Shannon Borg

San Juan Islands' Artists' Show

DECEMBER 16, 2021 TO FEBRUARY 21, 2022

Enjoy the best-from 70+ local artists

Discover SJIMA, where there is always something new!

SJIMA SAN JUAN ISLANDS MUSEUM OF ART

540 Spring Street, Friday Harbor, WA
OPEN Friday – Monday, 11a - 5p
360.370.5050 • www.sjima.org

WINDSONG TRIO

THE CLASSIC REMIX.

MOZART TO MACKLEMORE.

Make an entrance with jaw-dropping arrangements to your favorite songs.

Book Today. Dates fill fast.

206.948.9033 | windsongtrio.com | f /windsongclassicaltrio

BRIDE'S BEST

GIRLIE PRESS

1658 21ST AVENUE
SEATTLE, WA 98122
206.720.1237
GIRLIEPRESS.COM

Halloween Items!-Goth/Punk Gear-Posters-Pins-Patches-Model Kits

Down under on the 3rd level!

Real B/W PHOTOBOOTH
Dracula PINBALL!

Orange Dracula

5 and 10

PIKE PLACE MARKET

Buttons card craft retro kitsch d.i.y. fun!

1501 Pike Place #319 Seattle, WA. 98101 (206) 623-5064

The Dimestore for people with strange and unusual tastes

Pacific Northwest

Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum

Imagine. Create. Inspire.

703 South 2nd Street
La Conner, WA 98257
(360) 466-4288
www.qfamuseum.org

Hours:
Wednesday-Sunday 11AM-5PM

Face masks required.

Three floors of exhibits in a 1891 historical Victorian mansion. *New exhibit every month!* Exhibits include both traditional and contemporary quilts, weaving, knitting, stitchwork, basketry and *more!*

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

December 1, 2021 - January 4, 2022
Victorian Christmas! Come see the mansion decked out in holiday style. View our vintage crazy quilts from our permanent collection - many never exhibited before.
Free Open House: Saturday, December 4, 11am-5pm. Hot cider, cookies & activities.

December 1, 2021 - March 27, 2022
Baltimore Goes Modern
Artist Cathy Erickson

OBSESSED PRESENTS

Ginger Minj's Winter Wonderland

December 10 & 11

Broadway Performance Hall

GingerMinjLive.com