

263st Production 87^d Year

Community Players of Salisbury, Inc.

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike

Written by - Christopher Durang Directed by - Sharon Benchoff

Wor-Wic Community College Auditorium

Friday, April 12, 2024 - 7:30 PM Saturday, April 13, 2024 - 2:00 PM & 7:30 PM Friday, April 19, 2024 - 7:30 PM Saturday, April 20, 2024 - 2:00 PM

Presented through special arrangement with Dramatists Play Services 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

This production was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Salisbury/Wicomico Arts Council and the Maryland State Arts Council.

Community Players' President's Message

Welcome to Community Players' third production of the 2023-24 season, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike.

I know you will enjoy this funny and thought provoking show. Thanks to Sharon Benchoff and her cast and crew for bringing this story to life.

We will be performing a show at Community Players on April 26-28, The Harlem Renaissance: A Celebration of the Arts. It is a show that focuses on the visual, musical and literary artists who emerged during the 1920s and 1930s in Harlem. For more information contact Matt Bogdan at oceancityhappyme@aol.com.

We look forward to seeing you in the audience for the final show of this season — *Kiss Me*, *Kate*, which will be performed at Wicomico High School on June 21-23. Tickets are available at our website, sbyplayers.org.

If you are not getting our regular email blasts, you can sign up at http://eepurl.com/hpth1T. We won't sell your address nor overwhelm you with lots of emails.

If you have interest in being part of Community Players, please send me an e-mail at tomchicken@aol.com.

Tom Robinson

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Director's Message

Hello. I'm so pleased to see you in the audience. It is gratifying to see so many familiar faces as well as new.

I submitted Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike to the Board for inclusion in this season's productions because I found it witty and funny and that you, our audience, would see the humor in the actions and lines of the characters. My theory is that the audience will laugh more if they can see themselves, or someone they know, in the characters. These everyday characters (people) are thrown into circumstances, sometimes absurd circumstances, and how they react or what they say brings on hilarity.

Here is a quote from the playwright Christopher Durang: "Keep it simple and make it oddly believable," "Treat it as if they meant what they said. It is both funnier and 'deeper' that way."

The play won a Tony for best play, so I'm not the only one who thinks this play is a hoot and touching. I sincerely hope you will connect with the humor in the play, as well as the set.

We (Players) do what we do for you, and we love to see and hear you enjoy our voluminous hours of work. Sudden outbursts of laughter and belly laughs are encouraged.

Sharon Benchoff



The Cast

Vanya	Steve Culver
Sonia	Robin Finley
Cassandra	Melissa Dasher
Masha	Judy Hearn
Spike	Damion Sykes
Nina	Charlie Szentesi-Thomas

Production Staff

Director Sharon Benchoff
ProducerDarrell Mullins
Stage Manager Cass Dasher
Stage CrewSammy Barnes
Costumes Kim Cuesta, Lynne Bratten, Marsha Shull
Hair/MakeupRusty Mumford
PropsKim Cuesta
Lighting David Allen
Sound Emily Lawson
Set Design Sharon Benchoff
Set ConstructionKate Adkins, Sharon Benchoff, Bobbie Calloway, Steve Culver, Kim Cuesta, Pete Cuesta, Robin Finley, Judy Hearn, Ken Johnson, Jean King, Jim King, Andre Lambert, Heidi Lane, Emily Lawson, Darrell Mullins, Kat Schutte, Charlie George Steber, Charlie Szentesi-Thomas
Publicity Kate Adkins, Debby Nagel, Kel Nagel
Program Advertising/LayoutTom Robinson
House Manager Betsy Metzger

Synopsis

Middle-aged siblings Vanya and Sonia share a home in Bucks County, PA, where they bicker and complain about the circumstances of their lives. Suddenly, their movie-star sister, Masha, swoops in with her new boy toy, Spike. Old resentments flare up, eventually leading to threats to sell the house. Also on the scene are sassy maid Cassandra, who can predict the future, and a lovely young aspiring actress named Nina, whose prettiness somewhat worries the imperious Masha.

Act 1

Scene 1: Morning in the Morning Room Scene 2: Evening on the Same Day

15 minute Intermission

Refreshments are available for sale in the lobby.

Act 2

Scene 1: Later That Night-After The Party Scene 2: The Following Morning Scene 3: Later That Same Morning Scene 4: Later In The Afternoon



Who's Who in the Cast

Steve Culver (Vanya) made his debut with Community Players in 1979 as the Artful Dodger in *Oliver!*. In 2012 he appeared in *Oliver!* again, this time as Fagin. Other CPOS shows include *The Wizard of Oz* (Professor Marvel/The Wizard), *The Foreigner* (Charlie Baker), *Beauty and the Beast* (Cogsworth), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Teddy Brewster), *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Man in Chair), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Martini), and *Leading Ladies* (Doc Myers). Steve was most recently seen as Ken Gorman in *Rumors*.

Melissa Dasher (Cassandra) feels blessed to be working on another production with Community Players. Previously on stage she portrayed Nurse Preen in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* and Mildred in *Senior Follies*. She has worked behind the scenes since 2013, building, painting and moving sets and props. She was most recently producer for *The Dining Room*, stage manager for *The Drowsy Chaperone*, props coordinator for *Rumors* and *Death of a Salesman* and back stage manager for *Matilda*. Melissa has also served two terms on Board of Directors, including President, and is currently Chairman of Membership. Beware Of Hootie Pie!



Who's Who in the Cast (continued)

Robin Finley (Sonia) has been involved with Community Players since 2001. She is currently a member of the CPOS Board of Directors. Her acting experience include plays and musicals, such as *Calendar Girls, Arsenic and Old Lace, Brighton Beach Memoirs, The Hollow, Little Women, The Mouse that Roared , Moon Over Buffalo, The Addams Family, Into the Woods, and Jekyll and Hyde.* Robin has directed several productions for Players: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Love, Loss and What I Wore, Crimes of the Heart,* and *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress* (for American Cancer Society's Relay for Life). She wants to thank the audience for supporting theatre and her family for supporting her. Love this cast and crew!!!

Judy Hearn (Masha) is simply ecstatic to be portraying the irrepressible Masha. After seeing this play at the Arena Stage more than ten years ago, it is a role she has been desperate to try this role. What a dream come true! Judy has been active with Players since 2010, onstage, backstage, and creating sets. Previous performances include *Senior Follies, Noises Off, Calendar Girls, Steel Magnolias, Death of a Salesman, Arsenic and Old Lace, The Odd Couple, On Golden Pond, The Man Who Came to Dinner, Five Women Wearing the Same Dress, Blithe Spirit, The Mousetrap, The Hollow, and Tom, Dick & Harry. She also appeared in our Old Time Radio shows and the traveling productions Paths to Freedom, Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, Love Letters, and Love, Loss and What I Wore. Other work includes NPR radio dramas, local commercials and films, and an episode of House of Cards. Thank you for your support of the arts!*



Who's Who in the Cast (continued)

Damion Sykes (Spike) made their on-stage debut in October of 2023 in CPOS' production of *Pippin* and is excited to join CPOS for another fun production. Following in the footsteps of someone they've come to respect greatly, they are proud to portray the role of Spike on stage. Damion looks forward to creating even more memories with the Community Players of Salisbury in the future.

Charlie Szentesi-Thomas (Nina) has been acting since 2006 and became involved with Community Players in 2012. Favourite roles include *A Laura Ingalls Wilder Christmas* (Carrie Ingalls), *Blithe Spirit* (Edith), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Fruma-Sarah), and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (Childcatcher). Last year with Players, Charlie was involved with *Leading Ladies* (Dresser/Stage Crew), *Crimes of the Heart* (Assistant Stage Manager), and *Singin' in the Rain* (Assistant 3/Ensemble), as well as performing "The Masque of the Red Death" in *Edgar A llan Poe: His Tales of Horror*. Charlie was most recently found both onstage and backstage in *Rumors* as Officer Pudney and the Stage Manager.



Who's Who Behind the Scenes

Sharon Benchoff (Director/Set Designer) began her love of theatre as a child, accompanying her mom to play rehearsals. She remembers her first job as director, The Princess and the Pea, in fourth grade. Sharon likes to think her teacher saw her raw theatrical abilities, but it was probably that Sharon was extremely bossy even at the age of ten. In high school Sharon trod the boards as an actor, but during college she discovered she was a much better Techie than actor and concentrated on the off-stage side of productions. After Sharon obtained her degree in Speech and Theater from Salisbury State College (yes, before it was a university), she became a member of Players. For over 40 years she has designed lighting for numerous productions, including Jekyll & Hyde, Chicago, The Wizard of Oz and Into the Woods. Directing credits include Wait Until Dark, Laughing Stock, Tom, Dick & Harry, Moon Over Buffalo, Calendar Girls, Les Misérables and Jesus Christ Superstar. Born in southern Pennsylvania, Sharon had a clear vision in her mind of what the morning room of the family home in Bucks County, PA., where this play takes place, would look like. The dialogue gave the basis of how this sunroom would be decorated. Sharon wishes to thank her extremely talented actors, crew, production team, and set construction team for making her job as director and designer an absolute pleasure.

Darrell Mullins (Producer) has played lead roles in a number of Players' productions such as *Annie, Last of the Red Hot Lovers, The Odd Couple, The Man Who Came to Dinner,* and *Death of a Salesman.* He has also directed many productions including *Hello, Dolly!, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Chicago,* and *The Dining Room.* His most recent director's credit was *Little Women, the Musical.* He is grateful to Sharon Benchoff for giving him the opportunity to try a new role, that of producer.

"Special Thanks" for the help

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We also thank those individuals who contributed to this production, but we have inadvertently omitted them.

Who's Who Behind the Scenes (Cont.)

Cass Dasher (Stage Manager) currently serves as a member of the board for Community Players and has been involved in the technical side of theater since joining the stage crew for *Addams Family* in 2015. Previous shows they have Stage Managed include *Matilda: the Musical, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee,* and *Crimes of the Heart,* among others. By day, Cass works for the Worcester County Library and also serves on the board of Salisbury PFLAG. Cass wishes to thank Sharon for allowing them to be part of this great production, Mom for introducing them to the world of theater, and their partner Alyssa for her constant support, as always.

Kim Cuesta (Costumes/Props) thrilled be costuming this wonderful cast, as well as making and procuring props. Kim has had a number of roles, both on stage and behind the scenes, with The Community Players of Salisbury and Possum Point Players in Delaware. Favorite shows include *Calendar Girls, The Dining Room*, and *Social Security.* When Kim isn't at the theatre, she enjoys her career as a pathologist and being Mom to her two wonderful daughters. Kim thanks you, our audience, for coming out to support the arts, and her husband, Peter, and mom, Kay, for their endless support.



Who's Who Behind the Scenes (Cont.)

Emily Lawson (Sound) is happy to be working once again behind the scenes for this production. Emily has enjoyed helping with set construction, as well.

David Allen (Lighting) has been with Players for years and still enjoys working on the shows. He has served in almost all technical aspects but also has appeared in a few (by accident or on purpose). One of his favorite on-stage roles was the Fisherman rowing his boat across stage in *The Wizard of Oz* in the Tornado scene while running the wind-mill special effect. He trusted the two stage crew members not to push into to the orchestra pit.

Ken Johnson (Set Construction Supervisor) teaches Musical Theatre for Wicomico County Schools and can't think of a better way to spend his days than with the multi-talented students in his classes. He began his "career" with Players almost 40 years ago, running a follow spot for *Don't Drink the Water*, and we haven't been able to get rid of him since! Bert in *Mary Poppins* and Lumière in *Beauty & the Beast* are two of his favorite roles out of scores. Ken has directed several productions for Players, most recently, *The Addams Family*, *Into the Woods, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Matilda*, and *Noises Off.* Ken has also designed and built the sets and/or lighting for over 50 Players' productions. He thanks Yoshi and his friends at Players for allowing him to continue this "hobby".

Rusty Mumford (Make-up and Hair) has been a member of Community Players for almost 40 years, having held every office in the organization (except treasurer) and having taken part in almost every show, on stage or backstage. He has directed numerous productions for Players, the first being *The Odd Couple (Female Version)* in 1991 and, most recently, *Singin' in the Rain* last season. On stage, Rusty has appeared in many productions, including his favorites *Jekyll & Hyde* (Lord Reginald Kensington), *Rumors* (Ken), *Harvey* (Elwood P. Dowd), *Social Security* (David Kahn), and *Christmas Carol* (Scrooge/Dickens). He gives love to his family, especially Becky (and the other two P's), and Joanne. Thanks for believing in me!

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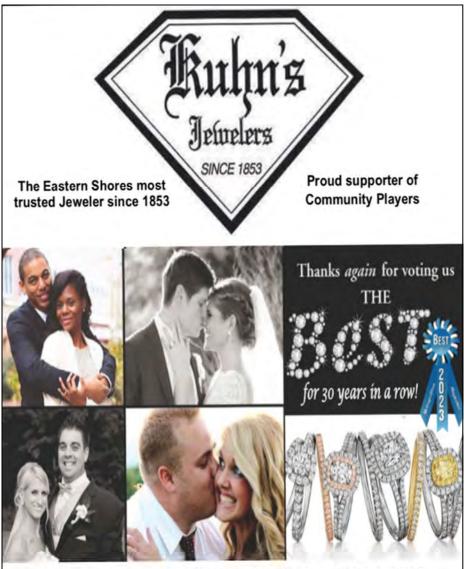
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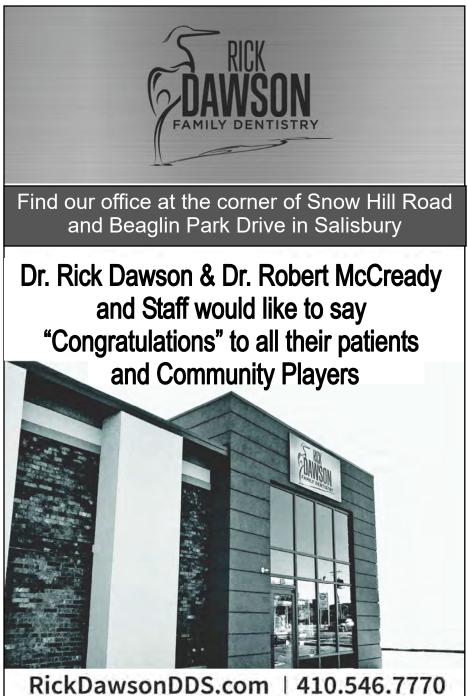
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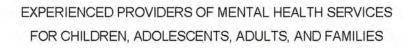
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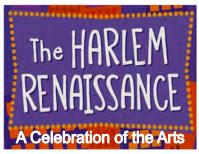
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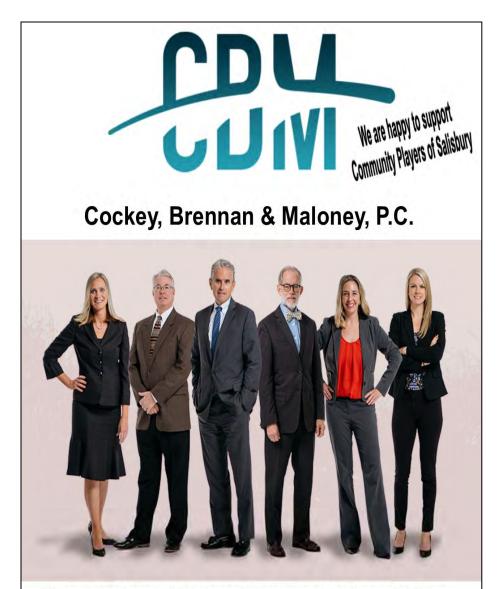
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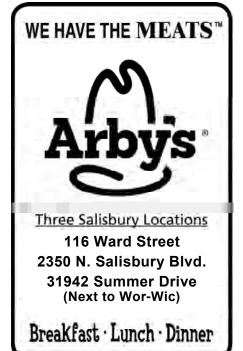


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