



Placer Repertory Theater

Performing arts, cultural & economic enrichment for Placer County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Placer Rep performs famous classic Uncle Vanya

Comedic love triangles, a mid-life crisis and dysfunctional family strife are key ingredients that serve up Placer Repertory Theater's performance of Anton Chekhov's tragicomedy, ***Uncle Vanya: Scenes from a Country Life***, presented publicly **September 8 and 9** as the Placer Rep 2023-2024 season opener.

The play, ***Uncle Vanya: Scenes from a Country Life***, will have a private preview script-in-hand showing in August, then officially open for **ONE WEEK ONLY** in Rocklin California on September 8 and 9, after which Placer Rep's *Uncle Vanya* is available for bookings throughout the region (boxoffice@placerrep.org). This show, full of humor and pathos, is punctuated by brief interludes of Eastern European folk music played live by musician Craig Dunlap, who is a regular on stages as a musician/singer/songwriter in the Sacramento Region music scene. There will also be drawings for gift baskets full of prizes donated by local businesses. More information regarding the September 8 & 9 showings is found at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/placer-rep-presents-uncle-vanya-tickets-694205315787>.

Cast members selected for Uncle Vanya include Ronnie Duska Fowler as Yelena, Cloud Adams as Professor Serebryakov, Judy Merrick as MME. Voynitskaya, guest musician/actor Craig Dunlap as Telegin (Waffles), Arie Knyazev as Dr. Astrov, Kyla Quinn as Sonia and Matthew D. Heyer as Uncle Vanya. All cast members have training and professional experience, for example, Judy Merrick attended USC's BFA program, RADA, and performed for over 10 years off-Broadway and won Best Actress at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Kyla Quinn, BA from CSULB, has Southern California credits that include working for Lifetime and Asylum Studios film/tv production companies, and Cloud Adams (BA SSU) & Matthew D. Heyer (BFA University of Louisiana at Lafayette) both have professional film acting credits.



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Placer Rep's Uncle Vanya script-in-hand performance was developed in workshop from deep study and practical application of Stanislavski's theories, methods, tools and techniques in Studium-Practicum, Placer Rep's professional growth program for its company members. In the tradition of high-quality professional performing arts programs throughout the world, Placer Rep has established the Studium-Practicum educational program for continuous professional growth & development. With curriculum modelled after world renowned MFA programs by drama schools such as Yale and RADA, Placer Rep Company Members attend free of charge as they master theories, methods and techniques in acting, directing, playwrighting for styles and genres from around the world, explored cooperatively in a rich, sophisticated, and meaningful, facilitated process. Studium-Practicum is designed to lead to formal rehearsals and public performances for which company members are paid, which enhances their professionalism and benefits the local economy.

The storyline includes an elderly professor and his glamorous, much younger second wife, Yelena, visit his daughter Sonia's rural estate that supports the couple's urban lifestyle. Sonia (who inherited the estate from her mother, the professor's first wife) and her Uncle Vanya have been working for many years to keep the estate going to supplement the lavish urban life of the professor and his young wife. Yelena's presence is a catalyst that awakens once-dormant hopes in Sonia, who yearns for Dr. Astrov, as well as romantic desires in Uncle Vanya and Dr. Astrov, both of whom fall under Yelena's spell to comic effect. All of this heightens Sonia, Vanya and Dr. Astrov's angst regarding their lives, often to humorous effect. Matters are brought to a crisis when the professor announces his intention to sell the estate, Vanya and Sonia's home, with a view to investing the proceeds to achieve a higher income for himself and his wife.

"Huge thanks belong to the City of Rocklin and its Parks & Recreation department, who is sponsoring the Uncle Vanya performance venue," said Placer Rep Founder Teresa Stirling Forsyth. "And where would we be without our friend and partner, Tamie Rogers at Tamraloo Studios, who provides us with Studio E in Lincoln as the home of the Placer Rep Studium-Practicum professional growth program. Thank you to our wonderful supporters!" For more information on the September 8 & 9 performances, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/placer-rep-presents-uncle-vanya-tickets-694205315787>.

While Uncle Vanya opens Placer Rep's 2023-2024 season, the second show of the season is the evolved production of My Jekyll & Hyde for two actors, which includes local history and context, as well as retelling of the famous Robert Louis Stevenson tale.



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My Jekyll & Hyde opens in October/November 2023, then is available for bookings and finally, at the end of 2023, the Placer Rep Annual Holiday party is planned for December 10. Any parties interested in booking Uncle Vanya or My Jekyll & Hyde after each production's opening run, may contact boxoffice@placerrep.org to have these productions perform in their community's venue, whether it is a scholastic institution, retirement community or performing arts/civic facility.

Placer Repertory Theater (www.PlacerRep.org) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission to offer educational and quality-of-life enriching professional performing arts and cultural programs relevant to the people of Placer County and surrounding area, while supporting local organizations and acting as an economic engine for the region. Follow Placer Repertory Theater on Facebook (PlacerRep), Twitter and Instagram: @PlacerRep and subscribe to their YouTube Channel (Placer Repertory Theater).

Publishers: FMI: contact Info@placerrep.org



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UNCLE VANYA Team



TERESA STIRLING FORSYTH – Producing Artistic Director, Director, Adapter. With an MFA in Dramatic Arts and an MS in Business Management & Leadership, this former Silicon Valley high-tech VP and critically acclaimed professional director/playwright also plays the role of Producing Artistic Director for Placer Repertory Theater, which includes all program oversight, including Placer Repertory Theater VAPA Academy.

Previously, the artistic director for two San Francisco theater companies and founder/board president of an economic & workforce development nonprofit organization for Santa Cruz County, her performing arts background includes prior professional acting experience in touring theater and TV, director/playwright credits for national and international touring productions with renowned professional performing artists, such as Brenda Wong Aoki (AEA/SAG/AFTRA), and companies like Dell'Arte Players (AEA). Projects on which Forsyth worked performed at venues such as the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian, Magic Theatre, Cowell Theater, Mark Taper Forum, Dallas Theatre Center, San Diego Repertory Theater and many other renowned venues, and received Dramalogue Awards, Critics Circle Awards, Broadway World Awards, the Gloria Burt Fellowship, as well as numerous grants from the NEA, NEH, CAC, ACPC and corporations.

She is a member of the professional organizations: The Dramatists Guild of America (DGA), Stage Directors & Choreographers Society (SDC), The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) and NNPN/New Play Exchange.



JUDY MERRICK – MME. VOYNITSKAYA. Judy worked for over 10 years in New York as a performer and director. Her favorite credits include Portia in *Merchant of Venice* (Santa Monica Playhouse) and Lysander in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (RADA). She co-founded the NYC theatre Company, The Amoralist, and some of her credits include *The Cheaters Club*, Adam Rapp's *Ghost in the Cottonwoods* and *Bring Us the Head of Your Daughter*. Judy also worked at Playwrights Horizons, and the Manhattan Theatre Club, and toured with *Knuckleball*, which won best show, and she, best actress, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



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Having studied with the BFA program at USC, she then trained at RADA and AADA in NY. More recently, Judy performed in *Persephone's Tale* with her new Nevada City theater company House of Fates, and in Placer Rep's award-winning production *Persuasion: a holiday romantic comedy*.



KYLA QUINN – SONIA. Kyla Quinn's background spans professional, academic and community performing arts. Despite receiving training for and being a talented performer, Kyla received their BA degree in Technical Theatre in 2020 from California State University Long Beach and worked in the art department for both Lifetime and Asylum Studios in southern California. In addition to professional work on set, Kyla worked on several academic productions as both a designer and crew member. Most notably they worked as a makeup designer for a collaboration piece between California State Long Beach and the Long Beach Opera entitled *The Penal Colony*.

As a performer, Kyla starred in two independent films and particularly enjoys playing the roles of antagonists like Mr. Small in Placer Rep's production of *Sherlock Holmes Sign of the Four*, and Miss Henrietta Musgrove in Placer Rep's *Persuasion: a holiday romantic comedy* in 2021. Kyla was named a Placer Rep company member in January 2023, and is engaged in Placer Rep's professional growth program Studium-Practicum learning new theatrical theories, methods and tools, and the philosophies behind them.



MATTHEW HEYER – UNCLE VANYA. Graduate of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette where he received his BFA in Theatre, Matthew won the Irene Ryan award for his ensemble work in 2018 and for his performance as Elliot in *Completeness* in 2019. Behind the scenes, Matthew is also a Costume Designer and Fabricator, a Set Designer and Constructor, and a Lighting Designer and Lighting Technician, and dabbles in Stage Management. His design credits include *The House that Will Not Stand*, *Completeness*, and *The Bard on Broadway*.

Matt studied IPA (the International Phonetic Alphabet) and performs duties as a Dialect Coach for Placer Repertory Theater productions. Currently, studying under PRT's Studium Practicum professional



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growth program, Matt has found new professional areas of concentration such as movement for the actor, vocal techniques, style acting and textual analysis. As an actor for Placer Rep in 2021, Matthew played George and Milo in two one-acts in the production known as *From the Mind of Scott Charles*, and the title role in *An Evening with Sherlock Holmes*. In 2022, Matt performed with Placer Rep in the ensemble show, *Haunting History*, and was nominated for two Broadway World Awards, including his performances for PRT's 2022 monthly show, *Rifts in Time*.



RONNIE DUSKA FOWLER – Actor. Ronnie Duska Fowler studied at Cosumnes River College, where she performed in *Arcadia* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and she performed in *The Laramie Project* at Sacramento City College. She has been seen on the stages of *Big Idea Theater* in the Rover, in several productions at Freefall Stage and Theatre in the Heights where she performed in several Shakespeare plays and *Blithe Spirit*. More recently, she played Ann Deever in *All My Sons at The Stage at Burke Junction*. For Placer Repertory Theater, Ronnie performed professional readings for the masterclass “The Writer’s Workshop,” studies with the professional growth program Studium-Practicum and plays the key role of Yelena in *Uncle Vanya* this September.



CAROL ANNE LOPEZ – Actor. Carol is an actor with professional film and tv credits who attended American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Pasadena and has been acting for over 30 years and has played numerous theatrical roles in Arizona, Colorado and California. In Colorado, some of her stand-out credits include *The Man Who Came to Dinner* with Nomads in Boulder and *Auntie Mame*, *Annie* and *Nunsense* with the Longmont Theatre Company. During the pandemic, Carol performed two livestreamed productions with Falcon Eye Theater. She was seen more recently in The Lincoln Theatre Company productions of *Blyth Spirit* and *Lend Me a Tenor*. She currently receives professional growth training in Studium-Practicum with Placer Repertory Theater and plays the nurse, Marina in *Uncle Vanya*, opening September 2023.



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ARIE KNYAZEV plays Dr. ASTROV. Arie is an early career actor whose formal education at UC Davis led to the receipt of a BS in Computer Science, BS in Mathematics, and a minor in Psychology. Currently, outside of his acting career, Arie works as a Software Engineer touching signal processing and machine learning in the defense sector. Arie's actor training includes musical theater training with a private instructor, several years of acting study at Studio 24 and current participation in Placer Rep's Studium-Practicum, the professional growth program, as well as experiential education through on-the-job performance.

Some of Arie's favorite roles include William Gillette in *The Game's Afoot*, Max in *Lend Me a Tenor*, Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and of course his first role: Cogsworth in *Beauty and the Beast*. Arie's first work for Placer Repertory Theater began in 2022 as a member of the ensemble cast that performed at the *Haunting History* events in Lincoln and Rocklin and performed stage readings of early drafts of the new play *Ghosts of Placer County* in Foresthill, Sacramento and Roseville.



CLOUD ADAMS plays Professor SEREBRYAKOV.

Cloud's passion for theater and acting has been evident throughout his life. His initial foray into theater and acting began as the lead performer in theatrical works during his primary and secondary education. After 10 years of military service, during which he entertained soldiers when off duty, Cloud left the military and sought a college degree. Upon graduation from Sacramento State University with a B.S. in Judaism Theology, Cloud became quite serious about his acting career.

Cloud's most recent works include the character George Spelvin in *The Actor's Nightmare* by Christopher Durang, Apollo Host in *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* by Alan Janes, and as an extra in the film "In Broad Daylight," and produces digital shorts on YouTube and Switch. Cloud recently was named a 2023 Company Member for Placer Repertory Theater and participates in their Studium-Practicum professional growth program.



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CRAIG DUNLAP plays TELEGIN (Waffles) / musical accompaniment & acoustic sound cues. Craig Dunlap is well known on the greater Sacramento Region stages as a musician/singer/songwriter. Placer Repertory Theater became aware of Craig's talents during his performances at Collaboration LAB (a free Placer Rep new works/talent incubator & networking program). This is Craig's first professional role as an actor, and his bravery in taking on this role is applauded. In addition to playing Telegin in Uncle Vanya, he also plays Eastern European folk music within the play, and as underscoring, as well as provides acoustic sound cues, like a window slam, sounds of thunder and rain.

WHAT

Placer Repertory Theater's performance of

UNCLE VANYA: Scenes from a Country Life

DETAILS

A famous classic play performed on renowned stages throughout the world, Uncle Vanya is a tragicomedy that explores the humor and pathos of a dysfunctional extended family. In addition to the script-in-hand performance of the play, there will be live acoustic music, drawings for gift baskets, and post-show Q&A/mingle with the actors.

WHERE

Parkview Room, Johnson Springview Park 5460 5th Street Rocklin, CA 95677

FMI/Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/placer-rep-presents-uncle-vanya-tickets-694205315787/>

WHEN

Uncle Vanya public performance, ONE WEEK ONLY: **September 8 & 9, 2023 @ 7 p.m.**

(Or by booking: boxoffice@placerrep.org)



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FMI

To reserve seats for events & shows: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/placer-rep-presents-uncle-vanya-tickets-694205315787>.

For Bookings & Questions: Email: boxoffice@placerrep.org

WHO

Placer Repertory Theater company members & affiliates

- T.S. Forsyth, Producing Artistic Director, Director, Adapter
- Kyla Quinn, Actor, Make-up Specialist, plays SONIA
- Matthew D. Heyer, Actor, Costume Specialist, plays UNCLE VANYA
- Judy Merrick, Actor, plays MME. VOYNITSKAYA
- Ronnie Duska Fowler, Actor, plays YELENA
- Carol Anne Lopez, Actor, plays NURSE MARINA
- Arie Knyazev, Actor, plays DR. ASTROV
- Cloud Adams, Actor, plays PROFESSOR SEREBRYAKOV
- Craig Dunlap, Guest Musician/Actor, plays TELEGIN (Waffles)

GRAPHIC: MATTHEW D. HEYER as UNCLE VANYA



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