

ISSUE N°03 | HOLIDAYS 2016

# OLY ARTS

*Your festive guide to theater, culture, music and visual arts.*

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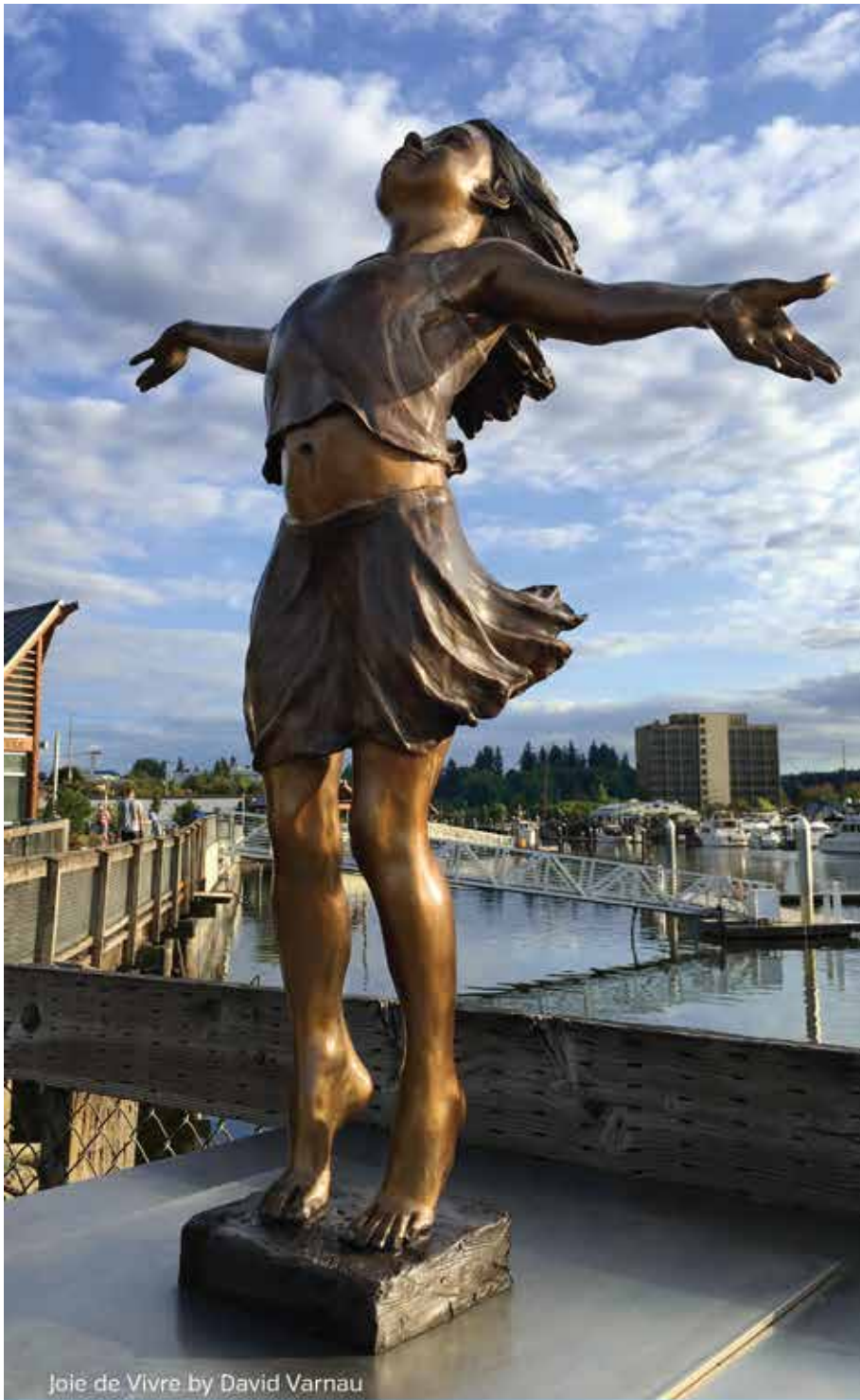
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## OLY ARTS ISSUE No.3, HOLIDAY 2016

NOVEMBER 2016 - JANUARY 2017

### BEAT THE WINTER BLUES WITH OLY ARTS!

OLY ARTS invites you to join us this wintertide in a celebration of the arts. In this last issue of 2016, we bring you comprehensive coverage of holiday and winter theater in Olympia. We also offer a complete guide to Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*, from Studio West's production at the Minnaert Center to Ballet Northwest's mainstage production at The Washington Center.

OLY ARTS is delighted to feature an exclusive interview with Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee and first lady Trudi Inslee about their family's holiday traditions in Olympia.

With this issue, OLY ARTS has added a NEW weekly podcast to our portfolio, contributed by fantastic editorial intern Christina Butcher.

In this season of darkness and celebration, we invite you to redeem the time and save the world by supporting and enjoying local art, literature and theater.

Happy holidays to you and yours from the team at OLY ARTS. --Ned Hayes, Publisher

#### OLY ARTS

##### The Leading Guide to Arts and Culture in the South Sound

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# OLY ARTS

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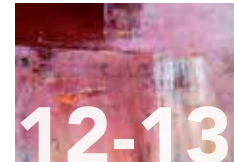
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The Best Christmas Pageant Ever  
A Christmas Cactus

Sister's Christmas Catechism

The Physician in Spite of Himself

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A Lollard in the Wind  
My Name Is Rachel Corrie  
Starry Messenger  
Stomp



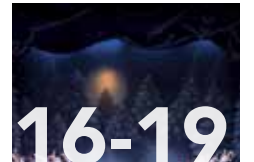
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# Stardust Christmas Enchantment

By MOLLY GILMORE

Forget the boughs of holly. Harlequin Productions greets the holidays with a liberal application of *Stardust*.

The *Stardust Christmas Enchantment*, opening Nov. 25, is the company's 21st original musical set at Manhattan's Stardust Club.

*Enchantment* takes place in 1960, setting the stage for such songs as The Drifters' "This Magic Moment" and Maurice Williams & the Zodiacs' "Stay."

As usual, something goes awry and, as usual, the gang at the club is as ready as Mickey Rooney to pitch in and put on a show.

This time, the complications are caused by a magician (John Serembe) who arrives at the club without his props—including his prized rabbit.

Serembe, who played Lord Manderson in last year's *The Stardust Christmas Dazzle*, is the first returning 'Duster to play a second character, noted director Linda Whitney.

Also returning are Christian Doyle and Maggie Ferguson-Wagstaffe as Louie and Joy, the couple running the club, and Xander Layden as British baritone Desmond. Bruce Haasl, last seen at the Stardust Club in 2014, is back as Eddie, Joy's brother.

Amy Shephard's Rosalie is gone but not forgotten: Desmond and Eddie are pining for her, much as she pined for Eddie last year. Behind the scenes, Shephard is back—as the choreographer. 0

## WHAT

Stardust Christmas Enchantment

## WHERE

Harlequin Productions' State Theater,  
202 Fourth Ave. E, Olympia

## WHEN

8 p.m. Nov. 25 and 26, Nov. 20-Dec.  
3 and Dec. 8-10, 14-17, 21-23, 29  
and 30; 2 p.m. Nov. 27 and Dec. 4,  
11, 18 and 24; and 7 p.m. Dec. 31

## HOW MUCH

\$25-\$41 (Nov. 30 is pay-what-you-  
can)

## LEARN MORE

360-786-0151  
[harlequinproductions.org](http://harlequinproductions.org)

# At Long Last, Her Name Is Rachel Corrie

by CHRISTIAN CARVAJAL

Even now, 13 years after her death at age 23, few names are more controversial in Thurston County than that of Olympia activist Rachel Corrie. Corrie died in a Gaza combat zone under the tread of an Israeli bulldozer. The driver of that vehicle insisted he never saw her. Fellow protestors from the International Solidarity Movement characterized her passing as the deliberate murder of a protestor acting as a human shield.

Corrie, a student at The Evergreen State College, kept a journal. In 2005, passages from Corrie's journal and her emails to her parents were adapted into a stage play, *My Name Is Rachel Corrie*, by actor Alan Rickman and journalist Katharine Viner. Rickman then directed the play at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Remarkably, a full production of that play has never been mounted in Olympia—until now. “For people who knew her and missed her, and also for people who are passionate about her death,” says Jeff Painter, director of the story for Harlequin Productions, “this has been a really fresh wound.”

Painter first read the play in 2015. “I knew her story, or at least I thought I did. I picked it up and had a really emotional experience when I read it. I don't think I've ever cried so much in a public place before.” Painter approached actor Kira Batcheller, last seen as Julia in Harlequin's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. “I thought it'd be perfect for her...but we were still talking about it as a someday kind of thing.”

Then Rickman died in January 2016, and Painter read a quote from Rickman: “Actors are agents of change...(A) piece of theater...can make a difference. It can change the world.” That led Painter to commit to producing an Olympia production of *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* within a year. “I'm just about barely gonna make it,” he notes, chuckling.

“The power of this play is in its ability to heal,” Painter adds. “Since it portrays her humanness most of all, it gives people an opportunity to connect to her in



a way they might not have been able to connect to her story before. They've seen her in news articles, and they reacted to it through the Israel-Palestine conflict and not to her as a person.”

Before producing the play, Painter met with Corrie's parents. “They've been really supportive, and they're very excited we're doing the show,” Painter says. “We're gonna keep working with them throughout the production for sure. The second time I met with them, I went up to The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice offices...Their window looks right out on the Harlequin marquee.”

An Olympia production has been a long time coming, but perhaps some things are just meant to be. 0

## WHAT

My Name Is Rachel Corrie

## WHERE

Harlequin Productions' State Theater,  
202 Fourth Ave. E, Olympia

## WHEN

8 p.m. Thursdays – Saturdays,  
Jan. 19 – Feb. 11;  
2 p.m. Sundays, Jan. 22 – Feb. 5

## HOW MUCH

\$25-\$41

## LEARN MORE

360-786-0151  
HarlequinProductions.org



# Olympia Family Theater Has The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

By KELLI SAMSON

Two of the most treasured traditions at Olympia Family Theater (OFT) are the annual holiday show and the multigenerational cast show. This year, the two are brilliantly rolled together for a play that will surely get even the biggest Scrooge into the holiday spirit.

Today's parents may recall from their youth Barbara Robinson's 1970's young adult novel *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.

"It's a holiday classic I read every year as a kid and cried. I just loved it," shares artistic director Jen Ryle. Thankfully, Robinson also adapted the beloved and hilarious novel for the stage.

At the helm of this production will be lifelong actor and director Isaac McKenziesullivan. He has the theater in his blood, as his father began Tenino's Young at Heart Theater in 1994. Audience members will recall McKenziesullivan's starring turn as Charlie Brown in last year's OFT holiday show. He recently finished a run as the elephant Gerald in OFT's production of *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"* this fall.

This season, McKenziesullivan will direct as the cast of the rough and wild Herdman family surprises everyone by getting starring roles in the annual Christmas play, then putting their own wacky spin on things.

Years ago, OFT chose this production as their first-ever all-youth cast show, and Ryle is very excited to revisit it this holiday season. There is a large cast of about 30 actors, this time around ranging from seven years and up. *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* will include Christmas carols to make the whole experience complete and give the audience that warm realization that Christmas is finally here. 0

## WHAT

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

## WHERE

Olympia Family Theater,  
612 Fourth Ave. E, Olympia

## WHEN

7 p.m. Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 9 and 16; 2  
p.m. Nov. 26 and 27, December 3, 4,  
10, 11, 17 and 18

## HOW MUCH

\$13-\$19 (Dec. 2 is pay-what-you-can)

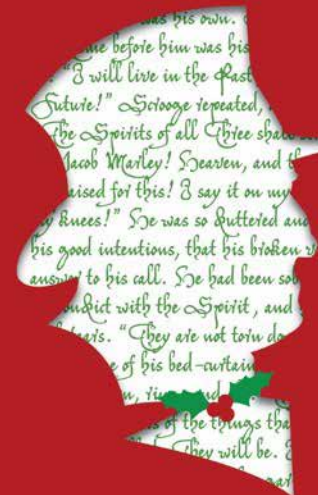
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# Starry Messenger Takes the Stage at Olympia Family Theater

by JONAH BARRETT

**H**eliocentrism isn't a radical idea anymore, but that wasn't the case 400 years ago. Olympia Family Theater will premiere its production of Kari Margolis's *Starry Messenger*, with Brian Tyrrell directing.

*Starry Messenger* is a historically based play about imagination and discovery. It follows the life of Galileo Galilei as he deals with criticisms of heliocentrism (the theory that planets of the solar system orbit the sun). Galilei first published his work *Sidereus Nuncius* in 1610, documenting the phases of Venus and moons of Jupiter by using observations from early telescopes. This ultimately led to his condemnation by the Catholic Church.

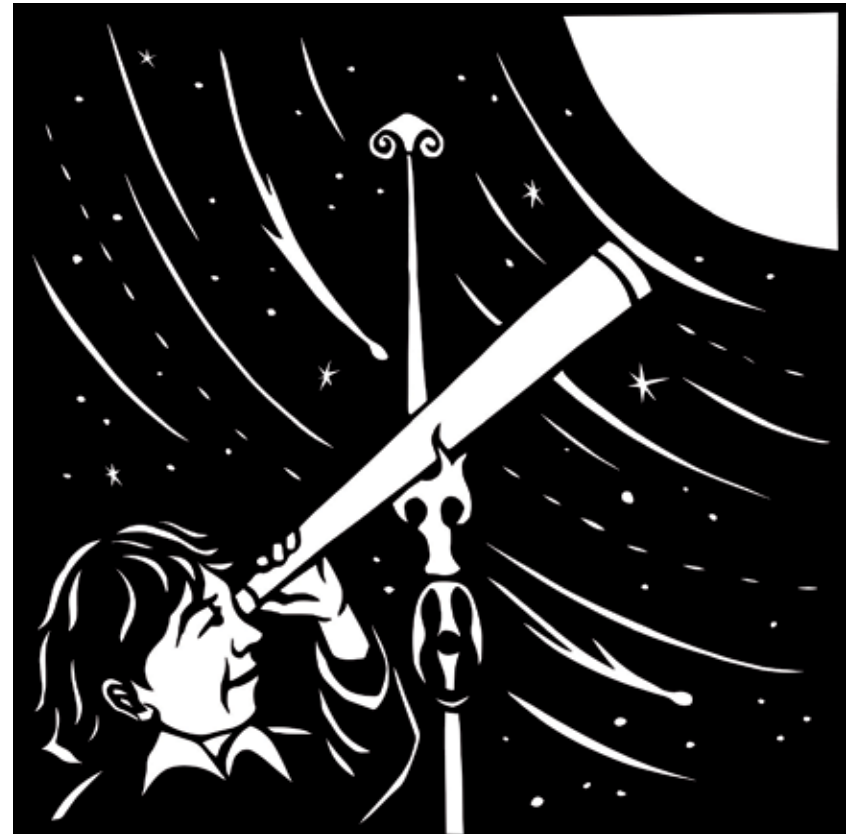
"Here we are faced with the challenge of taking somebody's specific life, doing the research, and then telling the tale about the message of the stars," said Tyrrell.

Tyrrell is a former company member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and is now perhaps the region's best-regarded theater director. His work has previously appeared on regional and national stages, including the National Shakespeare Festival, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Capital Playhouse, Harlequin Productions, Fifth Avenue Theater and decades of work building the Centralia College theater program. This will be the first time for Tyrrell to direct at Olympia Family Theater, though the director has long had *Starry Messenger* in mind as a possible production.

The director stated he was drawn to the play by the marriage of fact and fiction, and that he'll place an emphasis on educating audience members of all ages while inspiring them to stick with their dreams. The play will stretch across space and time, illustrating how Galilei's dreams informed space travel.

Bringing the grand spectacle of the cosmos to the stage will be no easy challenge, but Ryle isn't worried. "I find that kids are really willing to go with you," she said. "You can trust them to take that leap of imagination that's necessary to see that kite at the end of your pantomime string. We just need to tell the story well and they'll follow us."

"For me it's less about Galileo and more about dreaming," said Tyrrell, "and allowing our inner dreams and hopes to emerge, even though there is a certain amount of derision with being an outsider, and that's not a 400-year-old idea!" 0



## WHAT

Starry Messenger

## WHERE

Olympia Family Theater,  
612 Fourth Ave. E, Olympia

## WHEN

7 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays  
Jan. 27 – Feb. 10;  
2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays  
Jan. 28 – Feb. 12

## HOW MUCH

\$13-\$19  
(Feb. 2 is pay-what-you-can)

## LEARN MORE

360-570-1638  
olyft.org

# A Noir Christmas at Olympia Little Theatre

By CHRISTIAN CARVAJAL

“Take Marley was dead,” says director Kendra Malm, adding with a wink, “to begin with.”

It’s a measure of the familiarity of Charles Dickens’ 1843 novella *A Christmas Carol in Prose, Being a Ghost-Story of Christmas* that Malm can drop that literary allusion so casually. In *A Christmas Cactus*, presented this Yuletide season at Olympia Little Theatre, the narrative’s a bit more convoluted, even shadier—in a word, noir. “It’s a takeoff on Dickens and film noir,” Malm explains, “so you’ve got the hard-boiled detective, the con on the run.”

In this present-day, comic mystery by playwright Eliot Byerrum, “Marley was the private eye,” says Malm, “who sent up the escaped convict, who comes breaking into his successors’ office on Christmas Eve looking for vindication. The successor is Cactus O’Riley,” a redheaded private eye portrayed by Erin Quinn Valcho.

The story gets even twistier from there, but rest assured, *A Christmas Cactus* is still suitable for audience members of all ages. “It is a fun, family-friendly show,” Malm promises. “It’s not too complicated for kids to follow, but still has enough funny, inside references for adults to enjoy.” So what drew Malm to this particular story? “It’s always hard to find a good Christmas show,” she acknowledges. “There’s lots of them out there, but they tend to fall into certain categories... You get the heartwarming dramas, and you have your choice of the classics.” With a shrug she names the inevitable: “*A Christmas Carol*.” *A Christmas Cactus*, on the other hand, is a witty take on Dickens’ standby, with, as Malm says, “a Christmas flavor to it, without anyone feeling overwhelmed in sugarplums.”

## WHAT

*A Christmas Cactus*

## WHERE

Olympia Little Theatre,  
1925 Miller Ave. NE, Olympia

## WHEN

7:25 p.m. Thursdays – Saturdays,  
Dec. 2-17;  
1:25 p.m. Sundays, Dec. 11 and 18

## HOW MUCH

\$9-\$15

## LEARN MORE

360-786-9484  
olympialittletheater.org

# Chaucer Comes to Life on Stage

By ALEC CLAYTON

In mid-January 2017, Olympia Little Theatre (OLT) will produce a staged reading of *A Lollard in the Wind: Chaucer’s Dilemma* by local actor-turned-playwright John Pratt. Pratt was most recently seen in the leading role, Arthur Putnam, in OLT’s *An Act of the Imagination*.



Based in part on Chaucer’s stories from *The Canterbury Tales*, *Lollard* is a period drama with comic elements. In each of the three acts, Chaucer receives a guest in his home on the property of Westminster Abbey. In the first act his guest is an old friend, Sir Lewis Clifford, a crusader and veteran of warfare with France. In the second act Chaucer’s son, Thomas, drops in for a visit. In the final act Chaucer is confronted by a member of the clergy.

Pratt says all the play’s characters were real people. “We know something about the activities of these people, but less of their character,” he says. “That gives the playwright much opportunity to develop the way they think and opportunity to guess at the gaps in their bios.”

Pratt toured the Globe Theatre in London six years ago. “Our guide,” he recalls, “a young man in his 20s, entertained us quite well, but at the end of his presentation about Shakespeare and the theater, he praised the Bard of Avon by denigrating Chaucer. He said, ‘Chaucer is dead. Nobody reads him anymore.’ My son looked at me and whispered, ‘Are you going to let him get away with this?’... So I thought I would do my bit, on the local level at least, to try to bring Chaucer back into focus. This play, six years and 15 drafts later, is ready for presentation.” The play had not been cast at time of writing.

## WHAT

*A Lollard in the Wind: Chaucer’s Dilemma*

## WHERE

Olympia Little Theatre,  
1925 Miller Ave., Olympia

## WHEN

7:25 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Jan.  
13-14; 1:55 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 15

## HOW MUCH

\$5-\$7

## LEARN MORE

360-786-9484  
olympialittletheater.org



# Molière's The Physician in Spite of Himself

by ALEC CLAYTON

In December, when most theaters are doing holiday shows, Theater Artists Olympia (TAO) will present Molière's 17th-century farce *The Physician in Spite of Himself*. TAO's version of the French comedy, as adapted by Philip Wickstrom and the TAO collective and directed by Pug Bujeaud, will be set in Louisiana in the 1880s.

Sganarelle, played by Robert McConkey, is a poor woodworker who drinks a lot and beats his wife. Through a bizarre set of circumstances, he finds himself in a predicament wherein he must pretend to be a doctor. He discovers he likes it.

"I think I had better stick to physic all my life. I find it the best of trades; for, whether we are right or wrong, we are paid equally well," Sganarelle says. "A shoemaker in making shoes can't spoil a scrap of leather without having to pay for it, but we can spoil a man without paying one farthing for the damage done. The blunders are not ours, and the fault is always that of the dead man."

Bujeaud said, "In these times when everywhere I turn there is more tragedy in the world, I have needed to step back and ground myself. I simply wanted a break from the angst, from the anger, and to have some great fun and share it with both my theater coworkers and the larger theater community. *Physician in Spite of Himself* is just that. It is funny, it is naughty, it lends itself to inclusion. I was gifted a copy of a translation that my college theater professor did for a production I was in years ago, with the encouragement to take it and run with it. So I've recruited some of the best talent in the area to do just that."

In addition to McConkey, the play will feature local actors Mark Alford, Jess Allen, Ethan and Marko Bujeaud, Alayna Chamberland, Heather Christopher, George Dougherty, Silva Goetz, Gabe Hacker and Vanessa Postil. 0

## WHAT

The Physician in Spite of Himself

## WHERE

The Midnight Sun,  
113 Columbia St. N, Olympia

## WHEN

8 p.m. Dec. 2-3, 9-11 and 15-17;  
2:30 p.m. Dec. 4

## HOW MUCH

\$15

## LEARN MORE

360-359-3149 | olytheater.com

# Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold

by ALEC CLAYTON

From the coauthor of *Late Nite Catechism* comes the holiday comedy *Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold* for a one-night-only performance at The Washington Center for the Performing Arts.

The Center calls the play "CSI: Bethlehem," a holiday extravaganza. This comedy-mystery features "Sister," a woman out to discover what happened to the Magi's gold.

"We know Mary used the frankincense and myrrh as sort of potpourri," Sister says. "They were in a barn, after all." Her search for the missing gold is laced with irreverent humor and—beware—audience participation. Sister retells the story of the Nativity scene as it has never been told.

*Sister's Christmas Catechism* is a spinoff from *Late Nite Catechism*, which originated in Chicago in 1993 and was written by Vicki Quade and Maripat Donovan. Variations and spinoffs of the show have been performed across the United States over the past 23 years. The upcoming performance at The Washington Center is part of the "Holiday at the Center" campaign, which includes a holiday quilt exhibition, sing-alongs and a choir concert. 0



## WHAT

Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold

## WHERE

Washington Center for the Performing Arts,  
512 Washington St. SE, Olympia

## WHEN

7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1

## HOW MUCH

\$16-\$45

## LEARN MORE

360-753-8585  
washingtoncenter.org

# Stomp Clangs Its Way to Olympia

By GUY BERGSTROM



The international hit *Stomp*—which first hit the London stage in 1991 and has been playing on Broadway since 1994—is coming to Olympia in January of 2017.

Creators Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas go back another decade to 1981. Cresswell is a self-taught drummer who left school at 15 for music, with session work for Elvis Costello and Bette Midler. McNicholas is an actor, musician and composer who shares director credits with Cresswell.

Before they started *Stomp*, Cresswell and McNicholas were part of a theater group and the street band Pookiesnackenburger.

While their band didn't go anywhere, their spirit of experimentation—including a 120-piece drum orchestra—eventually led to *Stomp*.

Their play is very different from other Broadway musicals. There's no dialogue and no traditional plot line. The eight performers use garbage cans, brooms and other common objects as junkyard percussion, instead of traditional drums.

"We are super excited to have them coming back through town," said Michael Cordier, marketing director for The Washington Center for the Performing Arts. "They came through once about five years ago and we were lucky enough to have their tour come through the Northwest again." 0

## WHAT

Stomp

## WHERE

Washington Center for the Performing Arts,  
512 Washington St. SE,  
Olympia

## WHEN

7:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 22

## HOW MUCH

\$28-\$87

## LEARN MORE

360-753-8586  
washingtoncenter.org



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by Eliot Byerrum

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Thurs-Sat 7:25pm, Sundays 1:55pm

Directed by Chris Finkle

OLYMPIA LITTLE THEATRE

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OR CHAUCER'S DILEMMA**  
by John Pratt

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by Molière  
Directed by pug Bujeaud

**December 2-17**  
**8:00pm**

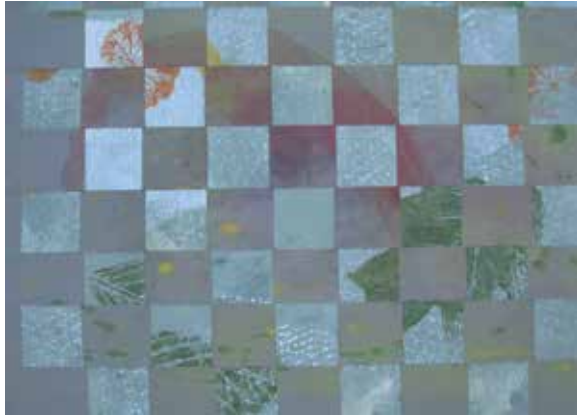
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[olytheater.com](http://olytheater.com)



# Viewing the World Through Different Eyes

By GUY BERGSTROM

Before the performance of the international hit *Stomp* on Jan. 22, The Washington Center for the Performing Arts is holding a free reception and viewing of three local painters. *The Ways We See* features the work of Lois Beck, Betty Knold and Mia Shulte, none of whom see the world in quite the same way as the lens of a camera.



## LOIS BECK

is a printmaker who uses woodcuts, rubber blocks, etchings, linocuts and other methods to create her work. She says she got her start as an artist late, taking her first art class the last year of her degree at The Evergreen State College after taking various classes for 30 years. She describes her artistic process as layers of ink and multiple passes. Recently, she started including collages in her prints. Beck's work has won a number of awards at exhibitions and contests in the Northwest.



## BECKY KNOLD

creates paintings, sculptures and cylinders. Her paintings feature bold colors and shapes, designed to "pull the viewer in to explore imagined spaces, depths and mysteries." Knold says it's no accident that her paintings don't resemble photographs. "My intention is not to record how something appears outwardly," she says, "but to express a response to what is not apparent."



## MIA SHULTE

calls her work a mix of abstract and expressionist styles. Born in Turkey, she lived in Europe, the Middle East and Washington, D.C. before coming to Olympia. Her work has been shown around the state. She now works full time as an artist, often taking inspiration from nature in the Pacific Northwest and incorporating landscapes in her work.

### WHAT

The Ways We See

### WHERE

Washington Center for the Performing Arts,  
512 Washington St. SE, Olympia

### WHEN

Reception 6-7:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 22, 2017;  
Show through March 14

### HOW MUCH

Free

### LEARN MORE

360-753-8586  
washingtoncenter.org



# Native American Art at South Sound Community College

By ALEC CLAYTON

The Native American Art Exhibition at South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) features a wide variety of works by regional Native American artists. Look for paintings, basketry, carved wood pieces, textiles and mixed-media art curated by Mandy McCullough. McCullough is an Ojibwa from White Earth, Minnesota, who has created jewelry since she was in grade school. “This is the seventh year I have curated the exhibition. My family works along with me each year,” McCullough says.

She says the highlight of this exhibition is Native American art from several states. The work was produced by new and returning artists, including two college students from Fort Lewis, beadwork by Monica Maes, photography by Kayla Jackson, and baskets by Squaxin elders. Jackson is Navajo. Maes, from Denver, is Southern Ute, Jicarilla and Apache. “She has just started beading and has been excelling at what she does,” says McCullough. “She was Miss Hozhoni contestant for Fort Lewis College last year; she participates in powwow and other cultural activities. Monica is a young person with a huge heart. She stands up for Native Peoples and is a role model for Native youth.”

Skokomish tribal member Denise Emerson will show a beaded bag. “This is my 49th year of beading,” she says. “Right now my bead art is about artistically portraying tribal people captured from a historical viewpoint and bringing them forward in time to show that we are still here. For the beaded body of this bag I used Skokomish historical photographs, concentrating on designing and creating a bag that includes text. Including Skokomish language ‘SqWuqWu’b3sh,’ meaning ‘people of the river,’ and Skokomish symbolism in the foreground and background gives integrity to the existence past, present, and future of the Skokomish people.”

Charles Bloomfield is a member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe with family lines in the Tsartlip First Nation and Lummi Nation. His sculpture “Circle of Rx Life” is a fish made from 6,500 empty pill capsules and caught with the “lure” of an empty prescription bottle. Bloomfield says, “Some 80 other drugs and personal care products, totaling as much as 97,000 pounds, enter the Puget Sound each year.”



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 Saturday, Dec 24 5:30 pm Christmas Worship with Children's Pageant  
 Saturday, Dec 24 10:30 pm Festival Christmas Worship  
 Sunday, Dec 25 8:00 am Christmas Day worship with Christmas Carols

### WHAT

Native American art exhibition

### WHERE

Kenneth J Minnaert Center for the Arts  
 Gallery,  
 South Puget Sound Community College,  
 2011 Mottman Rd. SW, Olympia

### WHEN

Noon – 4 p.m., Nov. 1 – Dec. 9;  
 opening reception 6-8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 4

### HOW MUCH

Free

### LEARN MORE

360-596-5527  
[spsc.edu/gallery](http://spsc.edu/gallery)



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December 21, 6 P.M.

Christmas Eve Services  
5, 7 and 10 P.M.

Christmas Day Services  
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New Year's Day Services  
10 A.M. and 6 P.M.

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# Governor Inslee and the First Lady Celebrate the Holidays

By NED HAYES

The Inslee family has several traditions that revolve around family, and this year the first couple of Washington state was happy to share its traditions with OLY ARTS.

According to first lady Trudi Inslee, Gov. Jay Inslee willingly transforms into an artist and story-writer over the holidays, as he's also a 65-year-old grandfather who loves his grandchildren. Every year, Gov. Inslee reads aloud *The Night Before Christmas* and a book he wrote for his grandchildren 10 years ago, *Sammy and the Santas*. The first lady explains, "The children and adults (in our family) delight in finding the actual Santas in our house who are the characters in the story, also photographed by Jay... Jay has continued the tradition by writing and illustrating a new book for our grandchildren each and every year."

The Inslee family has fond memories of the White House holiday party in Washington, D.C., and the Inslees enjoy opening the governor's residence for public tours. "Whether in D.C., Olympia or Bainbridge, we have socks hung on the mantel and enjoy family and friends," says Gov. Inslee.

The Inslees also share the joy many lifelong Olympians find in the vibrant life of local stores:

"Wagner's is always a favorite spot to enjoy great pastry and the smiles of Rudy and his crew," says Gov. Inslee. "We pick up extra cinnamon bread over the holidays and other tasty treats. We also enjoy walking around downtown and finding gifts at the local shops."

Gov. Inslee did not indicate where he buys the art supplies and writing pens for his grandchild-inspired books of holiday fun. Perhaps that's a secret for Santa. 0



## HERE'S HOW TO ENJOY OLYMPIA OVER THE HOLIDAYS WITH THE FIRST FAMILY OF WASHINGTON STATE:

*Downtown for the Holidays:* The Olympia Downtown Association produces a holiday kickoff extravaganza each year on the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

### WHAT

A festival with gingerbread houses, musical entertainment, wagon and trolley rides and photos with Santa. A parade at 3 p.m. is followed by a tree-lighting ceremony.

### WHERE

Sylvester Park,  
615 Washington St. SE, Olympia

### WHEN

Noon – 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 27

### LEARN MORE

360-357-8948  
DowntownOlympia.com

*Wagner's European Bakery & Cafe* has served European treats for the last 77 years. Owned and operated by three generations of the Wagner family, it specializes in pastries, doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, waffles and European classics.

### WHAT

European-style pastries

### WHERE

1013 Capitol Way S, Olympia

### LEARN MORE

360-357-7268  
WagnersOly.com





# Nutcracker,

By MOLLY

As the 124th anniversary of its first production approaches, *The Nutcracker* might be more popular than ever. There's an entire website ([NutcrackerBallet.com](http://NutcrackerBallet.com)), in fact, devoted to listing productions of the holiday ballet about a little girl who gets a nutcracker for Christmas and finds herself transported to magical lands of snow and sweets. The site lists 26 productions in Washington state. In Olympia, where Ballet Northwest is staging its 32nd *Nutcracker* and Studio West Dance Theatre is presenting its eighth, it's clear vast numbers of people have visions of Sugar Plum Fairies dancing in their heads.

Last year, Ballet Northwest's version of the Tchaikovsky classic was the highest-grossing in that company's history. "It was a banner year—their best ever," said Michael Cordier, marketing director for The Washington Center for the Performing Arts, where the production is held.

"It's amazing," said Ken Johnson, Ballet Northwest's co-director. "We have dancers and audiences who come from Pierce County, Mason County, Lewis County and south King County."

Meanwhile, Studio West's *Nutcracker* has grown so much that the studio is spreading performances over two weekends this year, with eight performances compared to last year's six. "The last few years, we did six shows in a weekend, starting on a Thursday, and it was like 98 percent sold out," said Stephanie Wood-Ennett, Studio West's co-director. "That's why we're doing two weekends. We also have room to add an extra show if need be on Sundays."

Studio West is introducing a new element this season, a pre-matinée party for young fans. "The kiddos will do crafts, and they'll get to meet some of the characters," said Wood-Ennett, who plans to attend with her daughter Vivienne Ennett, 4. "The characters will read them the story. They'll get treats. They'll feel more connected to the ballet."



# Nutcracker

## GILMORE

There are plenty of local youngsters who already feel connected. That's aside from the performers, who begin as young as age 7 for Studio West, age 8 for Ballet Northwest. Vivienne is one of those fans. "She is obsessed," Wood-Ennett said. "She knows everybody's parts. Even in the summertime, she wants to listen to *Nutcracker*."

Ken Johnson and his wife, co-director Josie Johnson, are also raising a devotee, 9-year-old Chloe, who plays a captain in the fight scene. The Johnsons recently spotted a dancer's little sister performing in the hallway at a rehearsal. "She was dancing as Clara was dancing, and she knew the whole dance," Josie Johnson said.

Each production involves elaborate costumes and sets, 200 or more dancers and months of rehearsals. Auditions for both productions happen in September, before stores even start putting up holiday decorations. "We want to put our best foot forward, and we want the kids to be successful," Wood-Ennett said. "We make it

just in the nick of time. Right by the time the curtain opens, it's ready."

It's a good thing, then, that she and the Johnsons share an enduring passion for the ballet. Ken Johnson danced in his first *Nutcracker* 28 years ago. For Josie Johnson and Wood-Ennett, it's been 27 years. Both Ken Johnson and Wood-Ennett began at Ballet Northwest.

"It's so part of the holidays for me," Ken Johnson said. "I love the music. Sometimes when we're traveling, we even go to other people's productions."

"I never get tired of it," Josie Johnson added. "We have built so many memories that revolve around it."

"I still love *The Nutcracker*," Wood-Ennett said. "I'm glad I love it." 0





# Jill Carter's Land of the Sweets

By NED HAYES

When the curtain first rose on Jill Carter's original set design for "Land of the Sweets" 20 years ago, there was a gasp from the audience, followed by a round of applause. The audience cheered for the scenic design itself. "I was so thrilled that the set elicited such a response," said Carter. She had found her calling.

"I love creating an environment in a large scale and collaborating with a huge range of people to all together create something magical and live," says Carter. "Ballet allows you to be much more fantastical than most theatrical dramas."

The fantastical story behind *The Nutcracker* was written by German author E. T. A. Hoffmann in the early 1800s and then adapted into a ballet in Moscow in 1892, with original music composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The ballet became popular in the United States in the 1940s.

In Olympia, the ballet was first performed by Ballet Northwest in 1983 in the Experimental Theater at The Evergreen State College, before The Washington Center for the Performing Arts was constructed. Carter was mentored at The Evergreen State College by Ballet Northwest founder Bud Johansen in 1987 and designed early sets for Ballet Northwest productions.

Now Carter is one of the consummate set designers and production artists in the Pacific Northwest, with submissions requested by the Moscow Ballet and design companies around the world. She's designed sets for the American Conservatory Theater, Animal Fire Theater Company, Harlequin Productions and many other theaters and stage productions. In 2017, Carter will be the art director for a major feature film.

Here in Olympia, she's created complete scenic designs for *Coppelia*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Swan Lake*. She also contributed to ballet productions of *Cinderella*, *Don Quixote*, and *Sleeping Beauty*.

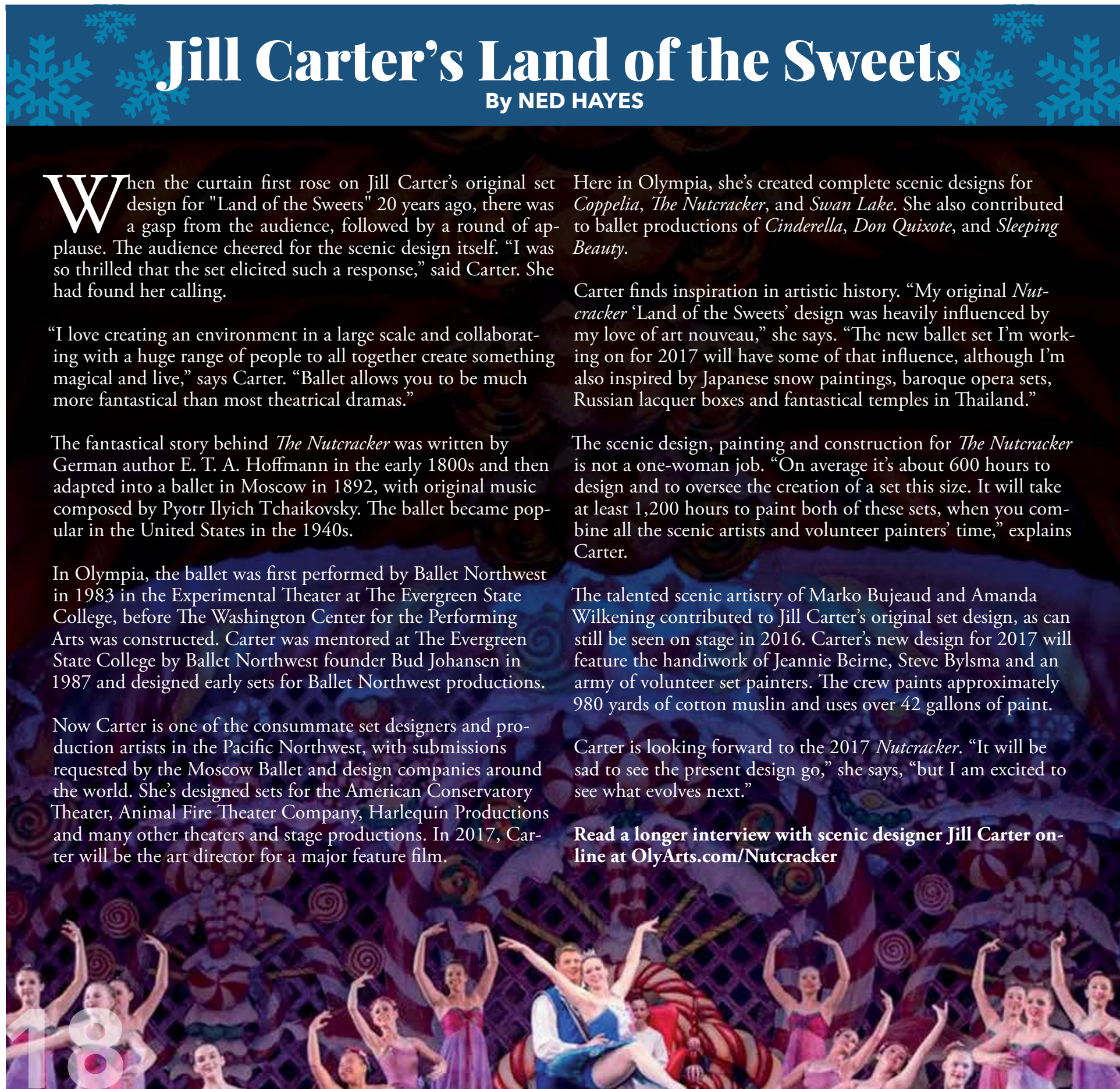
Carter finds inspiration in artistic history. "My original *Nutcracker* 'Land of the Sweets' design was heavily influenced by my love of art nouveau," she says. "The new ballet set I'm working on for 2017 will have some of that influence, although I'm also inspired by Japanese snow paintings, baroque opera sets, Russian lacquer boxes and fantastical temples in Thailand."

The scenic design, painting and construction for *The Nutcracker* is not a one-woman job. "On average it's about 600 hours to design and to oversee the creation of a set this size. It will take at least 1,200 hours to paint both of these sets, when you combine all the scenic artists and volunteer painters' time," explains Carter.

The talented scenic artistry of Marko Bujeaud and Amanda Wilkening contributed to Jill Carter's original set design, as can still be seen on stage in 2016. Carter's new design for 2017 will feature the handiwork of Jeannie Beirne, Steve Bylsma and an army of volunteer set painters. The crew paints approximately 980 yards of cotton muslin and uses over 42 gallons of paint.

Carter is looking forward to the 2017 *Nutcracker*. "It will be sad to see the present design go," she says, "but I am excited to see what evolves next."

**Read a longer interview with scenic designer Jill Carter online at [OlyArts.com/Nutcracker](http://OlyArts.com/Nutcracker)**





## Ballet Northwest's The Nutcracker



### WHERE

Washington Center for the Performing Arts, 512 Washington St. SE, Olympia

### HOW MUCH

\$14-\$33

### TICKETS AND INFO

360-753-8586

[WashingtonCenter.org](http://WashingtonCenter.org)

### WHEN

7:30 p.m. Dec. 9, 10, 16 and 17

2 p.m. Dec. 10, 11, 17 and 18



## Studio West Dance Theatre's The Nutcracker



### WHERE

Kenneth J Minnaert Center for the Arts, South Puget Sound Community College, 2011 Mottman Road SW, Olympia

### HOW MUCH

\$16-\$25

### TICKETS AND INFO

360-753-8586

[WashingtonCenter.org](http://WashingtonCenter.org)

### WHEN

7 p.m. Dec. 9, 10, 16 and 17;

2 p.m. Dec. 10 and 17; 1 p.m. Dec. 11 and 18



## Winter Wonderland Nutcracker Party



### WHERE

Kenneth J Minnaert Center for the Arts, South Puget Sound Community College, 2011 Mottman Road SW, Olympia

### HOW MUCH

\$10 for children 4 and up, accompanying adults admitted free

### TICKETS AND INFO

360-753-8586

[WashingtonCenter.org](http://WashingtonCenter.org)

### WHEN

1 p.m. Dec. 10 and 17

# Get Your Motor Runnin' for Olympia Toy Run

By JONAH BARRETT

Once a year, the streets of Olympia close for a few hours as thousands of motorcycles roar down Pacific Avenue onto State, Capitol, Fifth and Deschutes Parkway. This is the 39th-annual Olympia Toy Run. Toys and proceeds are donated to the Salvation Army. They get there by being strapped to riders who zip through downtown Olympia, waving to crowds as they go.

Come rain, shine, or the rarity of Olympian snow, riders participate in this event year after year. "The first and foremost reason to brave the weather for me is the opportunity to contribute some small ray of light to a kid who could desperately use it," said rider Jimmi Davies, "and in doing so, relieve a little bit of holiday stress on a parent who is struggling just to get by, let alone find extra money to buy a toy for Christmas."

Riders come from all across the state to participate in the event, some from as far away as Whidbey Island, West Seattle, Vancouver and even Humptulips in Grays Harbor County.

"I've never given out so many high fives to elated kids in my life!" said Davies. "It has got to be a huge thrill for them to have a biker give them a thumbs up or a wave. I think the Toy Run is an important holiday tradition, and one that I'm fiercely proud to be a part of every year."

## WHAT

Olympia Toy Run

## WHERE

Downtown Olympia

## WHEN

10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 3

## HOW MUCH

New, unwrapped toy (no stuffed animals, please) or \$7.50-\$10

## LEARN MORE

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# The Surprising Sounds of Table Sugar

By ADAM MCKINNEY



For some bands, messiness can be a virtue. Not everyone thrives on the airtight compositions of Robert Fripp or other leaders of compositional tidiness. A band like The National draws its strength from disciplined arrangements and an almost drum-machine-esque rhythm section, but that focus can result in music devoid of surprises. Stagnation is birthed from being too comfortable, so bands that allow themselves the freedom to play around frequently avoid this pitfall.

Olympia art-punk four-piece Table Sugar has no such hang-ups. The band's mindset with putting songs together is about throwing everything at the wall to see what sticks. The music, as a result, is blanketed in chaotic discordance, a wild, vaguely confrontational jumble of jagged chords and shouted vocals. Every song is spotted with auditory tripwires, lending a lo-fi jolt of unpredictability to what might otherwise be straightforward garage rock.

Comprising Pascal Luther (guitar and vocals), Ella Svete (guitar and vocals), Aidan McNellis (bass) and Bryn Ackley (drums), Table Sugar began on a whim after its members met in art class at The Evergreen State College. That early "let's start a band!" enthusiasm translates to their songwriting.

"I don't want to say this for everybody, but we don't really know music," says Luther, laughing. "It's not intentional. We're not saying, '(Forget) music theory.' It comes on accident, because we're trying lots of stuff and we don't know what's right and what's wrong. If we like something, we like it, and discordant stuff can be really pretty, sometimes."

Through the lens of Table Sugar, prettiness is often conveyed through buzzing guitars and madcap tempos. After laying down a demo EP last year, Table Sugar will release its debut LP in December 2016, no doubt finding the band further exploring the beauty of disorder. **D**

## WHAT

Table Sugar (with Deadbeat Club)

## WHERE

Le Voyer,  
404 Fourth Ave. E, Olympia

## WHEN

10 p.m. Friday, Jan. 20

## HOW MUCH

Free

## LEARN MORE

360-943-5710  
voyeurolympia.com

# Olympia Farmers Market Holiday

By CHRISTINA BUTCHER

The Olympia Farmers Market is celebrating the holidays this year by holding a “Farm2Table Thanksgiving” event Nov. 19 and 20 and a “Holiday Shopping Delight” Dec. 22 to 24. The Farm2Table Thanksgiving event gives community members the opportunity to purchase everything they need for a Thanksgiving dinner at the weekly, vendor-packed market. In addition to the local produce, artisanal crafts, baked goods, meat and dairy usually available to market-goers, turkeys and other poultry can be preordered from market vendors Chehalis Valley Farm, Kirsop Farm and August Farm.

Santa Claus will be available to take pictures with shoppers on Dec. 10, 11, 17 and 18. A portion of the venue will be sectioned off to allow families to visit and even shop with Santa throughout the day. The following week, the Holiday Shopping Delight event includes extended winter hours, special musical performances by the barbershop chorus The Puget Sounders, singer-songwriter Charlie Saibel and popular jazz band Hook Me Up.

Regarding the upcoming performances, Mary DiMatteo, community outreach manager for Olympia Farmers Market, said, “They’re the perfect way to invite the holidays in. They’re cozy and warm and they light up the market with sound. They’re phenomenal.”

The market will be decorated with Christmas lights and garlands this holiday season, coinciding with the 41st anniversary of the Olympia Farmers Market organization. Each year, 400,000 visitors attend the market, which supports direct relationships between local businesses and consumers and development of small-scale agriculture to promote market balance within the community. Hunter Family Farm, a local, regular vendor at the market, donated all garlands used in decorating the venue. Gift certificates and market tokens will be available for purchase during the holidays and may be redeemed at any vendor in the market. 0

## WHAT

Holiday events

## WHERE

Olympia Farmers Market,  
700 Capitol Way N, Olympia

## WHEN

Farm2Table Thanksgiving: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Nov. 19-20;  
Holiday Shopping Delight: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Dec. 22 - 24

## LEARN MORE

360-352-9096  
OlympiaFarmersMarket.com

## Olympia Farmers Market

April - Oct | Thu - Sun  
Nov - Dec | Sat & Sun  
Jan - Mar | Sat Only

10 am - 3 pm

## Holiday Shopping Delight

December 22, 23 & 24

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olympiafarmersmarket.com





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# O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings— Messiah Sing-Along

By ADAM MCKINNEY



As the winter months descend on the world, the cold and darkness is met with a combination of reverie and revelry. Nights get quieter, and the solitude is countered with companionship. One lasting holiday tradition is the singing of Handel's *Messiah*, an oratorio from the mid-18th century. *Messiah*'s enduring popularity can be credited to its timeless beauty. Utilizing orchestra and choir, the piece excels at capturing the combination of joy and solemnity that defines winter, bouncing from pomp to somber reflection and back again.

While its libretto comes from a combination of the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, *Messiah* can be enjoyed by nonbelievers as well as those of the Christian faith. Its three-act depiction of the life and death of Jesus may resonate more with those versed in the story, but it remains a moving staple for more than its religious imagery.

Student Orchestras of Greater Olympia will stage *Messiah* at The Washington Center for the Performing Arts. In a special twist on the classic oratorio, this production of *Messiah* is billed as an annual sing-along. Audience members are encouraged to join in, if they wish, or to simply sit back and let the gorgeous music wash over them.

The event is free, but guests are invited to purchase a copy of the score for a mere \$10. Whether you view this as a religious celebration or simply want to take part in a soulful community experience, this *Messiah* is well worth your time. 0

## WHAT

Messiah Sing-Along

## WHERE

Washington Center for the  
Performing Arts,  
512 Washington St. SE, Olympia

## WHEN

7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 19

## HOW MUCH

Free

## LEARN MORE

360-753-8585  
washingtoncenter.org





# Jingle: A Christmas Celebration

By JENNIFER CRAIN

On December 3, the Masterworks Choral Ensemble's annual Christmas concert kicks off the Yuletide season. Gary Witley, director of the community chorus since he helped found it in 1981, says listeners can expect a family friendly evening with traditional favorites, sing-alongs and tunes to make them laugh.



"Every Christmas concert is a mix of traditional, familiar and new music," he says. "Even if it's a song that you have heard before, there are always new and interesting arrangements."

Concertgoers will hear fresh takes on "Go Tell It on the Mountain," "Sing We Now of Christmas" and "O Come All Ye Faithful." Several pieces are arranged for piano four-hands (two players at one piano), an exciting and less conventional instrumentation for choral works. "The Twelve Days of a Regifted Christmas" and "Text Me Merry Christmas" inject some humor into the lineup.

The ensemble will also sing "Glow," a popular piece by composer Eric Whitacre. For the work's inaugural performance, Whitacre combined individual recorded performances of choral artists from all 50 states to form a virtual choir, a concept that gained him worldwide recognition.

At the concert, listeners will be treated to a solo performance by one of this year's Youth Music Competition winners, Benjamin Martin, an alto saxophonist and junior at North Thurston High School. Martin is one of three recipients of the Masterworks annual award and accompanying scholarship, which fosters the arts and helps young people further their music education. 0

## WHAT

Jingle: A Christmas Celebration

## WHERE

The Washington Center for the Performing Arts,  
512 Washington St. SE, Olympia

## WHEN

7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3

## HOW MUCH

\$10-\$22

## LEARN MORE

360-753-8586  
washingtoncenter.org

# One Starry Night at Living Water

By JENNIFER CRAIN

Kids take the stage at Church of Living Water on December 2. *One Starry Night*, an evening of crafts, carols, choir and band performances—even live donkeys—is an annual event that launches the season. Its central element is a retelling of the Christmas story. "It's a really creative avenue to get kids involved and make the story come to life for them," says children's pastor Beth Green. "It's turned into a for-kids, by-kids event."

Kids write the script every year, then rehearse with the help of director Brooke Gurrad and a host of other adults. This year, Tumwater High School junior Kaylie Hanson wrote original songs for the show along with Gurrad. About 35 kids and youth are involved, including 20 who take part in the drama.

The show will be accessible for even the youngest audience members. It opens with a handful of carols, followed by musical performances by the children's choir and a band that includes drums, guitar, bass and vocals. The first and second acts of the drama are split by an interactive intermission that includes family craft stations, a photo booth, and a hospitality tent where kids can visit the donkey costars. After the show, people gather with cookies and cocoa.

This free, all-ages event draws between 500 and 600 people. Green says it's not a church service or even a pageant, but rather a celebration of Christmas and a kid-centered evening for families. 0



## WHAT

One Starry Night

## WHERE

Church of Living Water,  
1615 Chambers St. SE, Olympia

## WHEN

6:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2

## HOW MUCH

Free

## LEARN MORE

360-754-5830  
livingwater.com

# 25

# Lessons and Carols at St. John's Episcopal Church

by MOLLY GILMORE

Music is part of the mission of St. John's Episcopal Church, and the annual Service of Lessons and Carols is a shining example. The service is both a religious observance and a musical event that draws a community crowd far exceeding the regular congregation.

"Last year, there were at least 200 people," said Curt Sather, St. John's organist and choirmaster, "and most likely, it was a dark and stormy night."

Big audiences are nothing new for St. John's, which hosts a concert series that attracts noted Northwest musicians. In the fall, the church held its first jazz cabaret.

The Service of Lessons and Carols tells the story of Advent and Christmas through readings that alternate with Christmas carols. "We have such a wonderful tradition of Advent and Christmas music," Sather said, adding that the service is dramatic. "It reaches a musical crescendo," he said.

St. John's three choirs will perform, as will the church's jazz ensemble, contemporary pop band and liturgical dance troupe. The service will also showcase a newly installed world-class church organ, the recent bequest of a congregant. The 3,800-pipe organ made its debut at last year's Service of Lessons and Carols.

Those who love caroling will get their chance, too. "I like to get the people in the pews singing," said Sather, who plans the service with Father R.C. Laird, the church's spiritual leader. The speaker for the service will be Bishop Greg Rickel. The lessons and carols tradition began in 1918 at Kings College, Cambridge. *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols*, held each Christmas Eve, has been broadcast on BBC since 1928, reaching millions each year. 0

## WHAT

Service of Lessons and Carols

## WHERE

St. John's Episcopal Church,  
114 20th Ave. SE, Olympia

## WHEN

6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 15

## HOW MUCH

Free (donations accepted)

## LEARN MORE

360-352-8527  
[stjohnsoly.org](http://stjohnsoly.org)





# Duck the Malls at the Capitol Theater

By JONAH BARRETT

The Olympia Film Society's 14th-annual Duck the Malls fundraising event is a benefit for Olympia Film Society (OFS). The funds raised by table fees and bake sales help with upkeep for the Capitol Theater's mezzanine art space and keep the theater open for free during Arts Walk.



"The Capitol Theater is more than just a movie theater, it is a cultural hub that hosts art, music and other live events," said volunteer Diane Kurzyna, or "Ruby Re-Usable." "Duck the Malls is one more way to support the arts community by offering artists a place to sell their work."

Attendees can expect to find items from over 50 vendors, including handcrafted musical instruments, board games, ironwork, toys and dolls, ceramics, lighting and homemade baked goods (gluten-free and vegan varieties, too) at the concession stand.

"The motivation for creating this event was to send a message to support and shop local, and you could avoid the malls. In the early years it was more... garage and yard-sale stuff and some handmade items," said OFS executive director Audrey Henley. "As the event grew, ideas of how to truly make it a unique and artistic event developed and we refined the idea to lean solely towards locally handcrafted items and less garage and yard junk. Part of the OFS mission is to not only support film and music, but art in all forms." 0

## WHAT

Duck the Malls

## WHERE

Capitol Theater,  
206 Fifth Ave. SE, Olympia

## WHEN

11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10

## HOW MUCH

Free

## LEARN MORE

360-754-6670  
olympiafilmsociety.org

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# A Walk Through Providence Christmas Forest

by MOLLY GILMORE

In its 29th year, Providence Christmas Forest is a different kind of winter wonderland—a forest of trees and wreaths decorated in themes from traditional to surprising. One tree will have a NASCAR theme, while another was inspired by Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. The forest is the biggest fundraiser for the Providence St. Peter Foundation, which funds capital improvements, equipment and Providence St. Peter Hospital programs, with a focus on serving vulnerable or low-income populations. Over the years, it's brought in \$9.8 million.

The 25 trees and 11 wreaths, some decorated by professional designers and others by artistic amateurs, will be sold to the highest bidder at a Dec. 2 gala dinner. While wandering through the forest, visitors will be entertained by community groups including senior choirs, high school orchestras and local dance companies. On Senior Day (Dec. 1), seniors get \$1 off admission and decorated mini-trees will be on sale for \$50 each. On Kids' Day (Dec. 3), Santa will be present, and the Hands On Children's Museum will lead craft sessions.

## WHAT

Providence Christmas Forest

## WHERE

Hotel RL Olympia by Red Lion,  
2300 Evergreen Park Drive SW,  
Olympia

## WHEN

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Wed, Nov. 30;  
10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Thur, Dec. 1;  
9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sat, Dec. 3;  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Sun, Dec. 4

## HOW MUCH

\$1-\$6

## LEARN MORE

360-493-7981  
provforest.org



# Holiday Giving at Thurston County Food Bank

by MOLLY GILMORE

During the winter holidays, people's thoughts turn to giving. No wonder it's the biggest season for donations to the Thurston County Food Bank. While the food bank operates like a grocery store, with patrons choosing what they like to eat, the holiday box is pretty standard. "It includes all the things you'd expect: stuffing, pie filling, potatoes, apples, vegetables, gelatin, muffin mixes, all of that," Coit said. It also includes the turkey, ham or roast beef. "The single most expensive thing is the meat," Coit said. "Between both holidays, we typically spend about \$22,000 buying turkey every year."

The bank, which distributes about 3,000 boxes before Thanksgiving and about 2,000 before Christmas, is also collecting school supplies and books. Donations for holiday boxes and stockings are needed by Dec. 9. Of course, the food bank also accepts donations of food and money year-round. "People still need to eat after the holidays," Coit said.



## WHAT

Thurston County Food Bank

## WHERE

Client Services Center, 220 Thurston Ave. NE, Olympia;  
Warehouse and Distribution Center, 2260 Mottman Rd. SW, Tumwater

## WHEN

Donations accepted 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. weekdays at the Client Services Center;  
8 a.m. – 4 p.m. weekdays at the Tumwater warehouse

## LEARN MORE

360-352-8597  
thurstoncountyfoodbank.org



# Joking Darkly With Hari Kondabolu

By ADAM MCKINNEY

Why is it such a common occurrence for comedians who talk politics to be met with the dismissive refrain, “Stick with the comedy?” For as long as comics have been making audiences laugh, they’ve also been ferrying us through tumultuous times of uprising and conflict. They comfort anxieties while simultaneously drawing attention to important issues.

Hari Kondabolu is one of the best comedians around at striking this delicate balance. Though his material frequently tackles weighty subjects, Kondabolu makes laughing at serious topics seem effortless. Given the insane election season this country’s endured, a comedian like Kondabolu becomes essential.

“I’ve been saying this recently, that I feel like Nero,” says Kondabolu. “I’m making people laugh, I’m telling these jokes, and meanwhile everything feels like it’s on fire behind me. There’s a sinking feeling with what’s happening in the country, but (my) job is to make fun of the reality that’s there. And that’s really hard when you’re scared to death...I suppose, for me, some of the best stuff comes from a dark place. It always has. The things that hurt and cause pain—that’s what’s always been interesting to me.”

On Kondabolu’s recent album, *Mainstream American Comic*, the comedian finds material in racial inequality, the political establishment, abortion rights and those who insist on saying “all lives matter,” making even the toughest subjects hilarious and vibrant.

Though born and raised in New York, Kondabolu has deep connections to the Pacific Northwest, having developed as a comic for years in Seattle. “The idea of having an audience that can let you expand your repertoire, that lets you take risks, that’s a really big deal,” says Kondabolu. “I feel like Northwest audiences have always given me that.” Politically minded Olympians, meet your new favorite comedian. 0



## WHAT

Hari Kondabolu (with Elicia Sanchez)

## WHERE

Capitol Theater,  
206 Fifth Ave. SE, Olympia

## WHEN

8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2

## HOW MUCH

\$8-\$12

## LEARN MORE

360-754-6670  
[olympiafilmsociety.org](http://olympiafilmsociety.org)

# A New Location for Ricardo's Restaurant

by JENNIFER CRAIN

Ricardo's Restaurant moved to a new location this summer, with a larger dining room and options for private events. Rick and Marie Nelsen's popular Lacey steakhouse is known for its beef, dry-aged in house. The Nelsens serve rib eye, New York strip and filet mignon. "We also have our steaks for two," Marie Nelsen says, referring to the Dijon-mustard-crust chateaubriand and the showy, long-bone tomahawk prime rib. "Those have been a big deal."

The beef served at Ricardo's is from Pacific Northwest ranches, sourced through the Okanogan-based Double R Ranch. Greens and select vegetables come from Mari's Farm in Yelm. The Nelsens buy clams from Olympia Seafood Company and eggs from Stiebrs Farms.

The menu includes upscale entrées like lamb, lobster and shrimp, made-to-order pastas, elegant appetizers, soups and organic salads. Chefs create daily specials; this fall, those specials included roasted corn risotto and grilled Alaskan sockeye. The bar opens daily for happy hour. Ricardo's bartender recommends the Astoria Bianco, an updated martini made with Geranium Gin.

Rick Nelsen grew up working in Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor, founded and operated by his grandfather. In 2003 after stints at Olympia Farmers Market and two local restaurants, he opened Ricardo's with his mother, Toni Wilson. The place was originally a pasta house, but when his interest in dry-aged steaks took root, the Nelsens visited spots that specialize in the craft to sample meats and quiz the chefs. After this pilgrimage, they began dry-aging their meats and turned their restaurant into a steakhouse.

The new banquet hall can seat up to 200 and is a full-service venue, with in-house catering and preferred vendors for everything from cakes to décor. There are already weddings on the books for next summer. Unusually for a steakhouse, Ricardo's also offers Sunday brunches from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. 0

## WHAT

Ricardo's Restaurant

## WHERE

676 Woodland Square Loop, Lacey

## WHEN

Open 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. weekdays,  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Sunday,  
4-10 p.m. Sunday - Thursday,  
4-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday

## HOW MUCH

happy hour \$5-\$10, appetizers \$11-\$15, entrées \$17-\$85

## LEARN MORE

360-413-9995  
ricardosrestaurant.com



# 30





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Sponsors: Mbox 96.1 KXXO; Sitecrafting; South Sound Wedding & Event Magazine; ThurstonTalk.com



**National Geographic Live**  
**Steve Winter**  
FEB 2 / Thursday, 7:30 PM

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FEB 17 / Friday, 7:30 PM

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**The Irish Rovers and We Banjo 3**  
FEB 23 / Thursday, 7:30 PM

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MAR 3 / Friday, 7:30 PM

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Mar 14 / Tuesday, 7:30 PM

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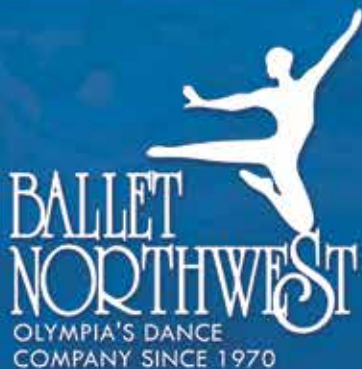




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