



The Semi-Circle Basel proudly presents
Directed by Scott Holland



VANYA and SONIA
and MASHA and SPIKE
A comedy by Christopher Durang



Performances at 19:30 on 4, 5, 6, 11 & 12 November
Fachwerk, Baslerstrasse 48, 4123 Allschwil
Doors open at 19.00

A welcome from our president.....



Alison Bolton

I am delighted to welcome you all to our wonderful Autumn production "Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike". I have laughed out loud and had moments of quiet reflection whilst watching rehearsals. I hope you enjoy the show as much as I have.

I had the pleasure of being the (novice) production manager for the show and now have a much deeper understanding of the role, and how important and rewarding it is! You may recall that we originally planned to hold the production in the Fachwerk garden, but in the end accepted that the challenges of creating an environment that worked for both actors and audience were too great. The increasing number of planes coming into the Allschwil flight path after COVID was a particular concern! We took the decision to move inside and to do so at a date when performing would be comfortable for all involved. We will continue to use the garden for social events but not for performances!

These changes were challenging for the cast and directors, and I want to thank both for their fortitude and determination to bring the production to you. We had a wonderful number of people - both members and non-members - volunteer to help with front of house, back stage, costumes, props, set building. We are a voluntary organization and on behalf of the Semi-Circle I offer my sincere thanks to everyone involved for giving their time, energy and creativity to bring these performances to you. Although we are in the last quarter of 2022, we still have an exciting programme of events and would love you to join us. Please scan the QR code below or go to www.semicircle-basel.com for more information.

My final thanks are to you, the audience, for your ongoing support and encouragement.

Enjoy the show.

Alison



A word from our director.....



Scott Holland

I loved this play the moment I read it.

I hope you will respond to its comedy which comes in various styles - observational, situational, satirical, parody, and farce (and possibly a few more). I hope you will also respond to the humanity of the characters which I find very touching. Of course, it was a challenge to mount a full-length play and production during an international health crisis. We have had our challenges and had to postpone the production from performing outdoors, but above all the commitment of this cast and crew has endured.

We started wearing masks and keeping to ourselves in March but over time we were sharing snacks and laughs. We took a long break in summertime and came back at the end of August with a renewed energy to get this play on stage and in front of an audience. As a team, we found these characters who were all flawed but searching for hope. Our protagonists were assessing their past decisions and looking for a change. Needing reconnection. There are obviously other very relevant subjects to discuss in this play but for me, reconnection is the most interesting in this modern era. How do we find reconnection today?

I would like to thank all of the team, from the Semi-Circle committee to the backstage crew and, especially, Canan, Susan and the wonderful cast, for their commitment to keeping our show alive. Special thanks to Vasiliki Mourgela who was unfortunately unable to perform in the role of Cassandra for personal reasons. The directors and cast would like to express their appreciation to Vasiliki for her time, talent and dedication to the role.

I hope you, the audience, enjoy our play

Scott Holland





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Rehearsal notes from the assistant director



Canan Adams

Fun, laughter, upbeat, hard work and team! These words are how I would describe our backstage journey from casting to performance. It was a wonderful experience to cast each of the characters and we believe that the harmony of the cast has made this production come alive.

Vanya's repression and boiling points, Sonia's depression and search for hope, Masha's self-centricity and insecurity, Spike's narcissism and positivity, Cassandra's craziness and parental nature, Nina's earnestness and artistic soul - all were developed by the cast beautifully. I still don't understand how I could laugh out loud every time I watched the same scenes in rehearsal. I believe it's because the play and characters developed organically since we started. Rehearsing this play together with Scott has been such a fun learning experience for me. I hope you enjoy watching the performance!





Cast (in order of appearance)

Vanya.....	Kenner Estes
Sonia.....	Magda Bednarska
Cassandra.....	Zuzana Cox
Masha.....	Eleanor Low
Spike.....	Adrian Oettli
Nina.....	Elif Arikan

Setting - A lovely country house in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, USA, in August 2013

ACT I:

Scene 1: The Morning Room, early

Scene 2: Same, later that afternoon

ACT II:

Scene 1: Same, after the party

Scene 2: Same, the next morning

Scene 3: Same, around noon

Scene 4: Same, later that day



Kenner Estes - Vanya



Kenner Estes is an on-again, off-again actor who is thrilled to collaborate for the first time with The Semi-Circle Basel. A small selection of previous favorite roles includes Garry in Noises Off, Chris in All My Sons, Demetrius in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and of course his sincere, biting portrayal of "man in background" in a handful of films. Much love to Agnes, Emily, Ada, Evie, and Holly, without whom he'd probably get a lot more sleep.

Adrien Oettli - Spike



This is Adrian's first play with Semi Circle, having previously been involved in a few Gay Beggars productions, some of which fell victim to the pandemic and some of which were "staged" on Zoom. Previous roles include Lionel in Intimate Exchanges (not staged), as well as couple of roles in The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon and Bad Auditions. He has co-written and co-directed a Shakespeare parody on Zoom.

Magda Bednarska - Sonia

Magda was born in Poland and raised in New Zealand and is now celebrating her 5th year living in Basel. She is a complete theatre amateur in every sense of the word, having only discovered her passion for stage performance in 2019 whilst joining the Semi-Circle production of 'Sweet Expectations'. You might have also seen her in 'Twosomes' in 2021. This will be Magda's third theatre performance and first full length play. She has greatly enjoyed working with such a dedicated team under the guidance of Scott Holland.



Zuzana Cox - Cassandra

Zuzana is a familiar face on the stage, both with Semi-Circle and other English speaking theater groups in Basel. Over the years she has been seen in a diversity of roles including wicked stepmother, bereaved widow and retiring headmistress (a role pretty much mirroring her real life!). Having never played a psychic cleaning lady before, she very much looks forward to bringing Cassandra to you this evening.



Eleanor Low - Masha



Eleanor made her first debut here on stage in Basel 2001, performing in the production of Sleeping Beauty. Since then she has got bitten by the acting bug and has performed in the musical RENT, Avenue Q, and numerous plays and musicals. When not playing a glamorous, self-centered movie star, you can find Eleanor still on stage sometimes performing improv. She is a mother, fitness wannabe, digital content creator, and a TEDx Basel volunteer.

Elif Arikan - Nina



Elif has always been interested in performing arts. She attended acting classes in different techniques, and she took part in many plays in Istanbul. Since she moved to Basel in 2019, she has pursued her passion both backstage and on stage, made her directorial debut with 'Twosomes', and her acting debut in English with 'VSMS' for Semi-Circle! Still dreaming about more as 'Nina' doing... Life is wonderful, isn't it?

Crew

Director
Assistant Director
Production Manager
Production Co-Manager
Costume Designer
Make-up Coordinator
Prompter
Set Design Director
Set Design/Dressing/Props

Set Construction
Lighting Designer
Light Board Operator
Sound Consultant
Sound Effects
Sound Board Operator
Backstage

Photos

Scott Holland
Canan Adams
Alison Bolton
Billy Gilbert
Sarah Thomforde
Canan Adams
Susan Aeschbach-Jagger
David Cox
Jeanne Darling, Russell Coburn,
Valentina D'Alessandro, Scott
Holland
Wieger Van Laer, Jon Apted
Donald Brun
Jon Smolders
Daniel Billingham
Matt Billingham
Toby Royal
Ivan Semashev, Jeanne Darling,
Julia Brosi, Lea Hohn, Mark
Gahan, Susan Aeschbach-Jagger,
Canan Adams
Martin Spedding

Front of House

Bar Manager
Bar

Tickets

Publicity
Programme Coordinator

Chris Jones
Heena Khatter, Nely Gualea,
Sarah Nevill-Stinson, Tim
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About the playwright.....

Christopher Durang is an American playwright whose plays have been produced on and off Broadway, around the world.

Among his plays: *Beyond Therapy*, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, *Baby with the Bathwater*, *Laughing Wild*

He has written 1,455 one act plays (or perhaps 40), including *The Actor's Nightmare*, *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, *Naomi in the Living Room*, and *'dentity Crisis*.

He's had small but fun parts in a number of movies, and acted in some of his own plays. Some mornings he feels grateful and bitter at the same time, which is a complicated feat.

Final keywords: cursor, satire, parody, glaucoma drops, dog, dog food, bread,

Christopher Durang on the play *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*
"I live in a stone farmhouse with my partner in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. I choose to live here for the quiet and the trees, and there is a small pond where a blue heron comes and sees what is available to eat. I started to think to myself, What if I didn't live with my partner here, but with my adopted sister, and the two of us spent fifteen years taking care of our elderly and eventually incoherent parents. What if we never left the house we lived in as children and felt jealous of our older sister who was a glamorous stage and film star? What if my life had been closer to a Chekhov play?
The play is not a parody. Once I finished the first draft, I started to say to people, "The play takes Chekhov characters and themes and puts them into a blender."

In 2013, this play won the Tony Award for Best Play and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play.

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Basel Life

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