

## The Crew

Director	Julia Nemirovskaya
Assistant director	Miriam Lipton
Assistant director, technical support, language tutoring	Heghine Hakobyan
Assistant	Yelena Bogolyubova
Music director	Nikolai Valov
Choir Directors	Abby Grewatz, Autumn Sexton
Music Technology, Video and Technical Script	Nicholas Ligett
Music by	Nikolai Valov, Mikhail Kuzmin, Vladimir Dash- kevich, Aleksey Rybnikov
Choreography	Marilyn Pikovsky, Jonathan Bach
Art Directors, Costume and Stage De- sign	Jenny Kroik, Anastasia Savenkova, Lizka Vaintrob
Costumes and makeup	Anastasia Savenkova, Lizka Vaintrob, Becca Loewen, Marilyn Pikovsky, Julia Frederick
Public Relations, Poster and Program	Heghine Hakobyan, Sara Marruffo, Lara Rav- itch, Miriam Lipton, Julia Frederick
Editing and translation	Lara Ravitch, Chas Cassidy
Props	Marina Larson, Becca Loewen
Stage managers	Nick Gurevich, Nathan Whitwer, Greg Faber, Brian O'Donnell
Lights and show finishing	Kris Santoro, Youn Lee

## Special Thanks To...

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Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies with support from the  
 UO College of Arts and Sciences, UO Libraries, and UO Housing, presents:

# Balaganchik

## The Puppet Show

A bilingual adaptation of Aleksandr Blok's 1906 Symbolist play

March 9, 2013  
 Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

March 10, 2013  
 Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Free admission  
*Limited seating, first come, first served*



UO Global Scholars Hall  
 Room 123  
 1710 East 15th Avenue  
 Eugene, OR, 97403  
[russian-theatre.uoregon.edu](http://russian-theatre.uoregon.edu)



In collaboration with the  
 UO Department of Art and Theatre Arts.



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In 1906, a play by Russia's young and already highly esteemed poet, Aleksandr Blok, was staged by the controversial and innovative young director, V. E. Meyerhold, with music by M. Kuzmin, another young aspiring poet and musician, and stage set and costumes by N. Sapunov, a brilliant young painter.



The play was devoted to "real" and imaginary reality and their relationship. Blok was a Symbolist poet: he saw the visible world as a reflection of a different, fantastic, beautiful, and spiritual world that revealed itself only through the mystical experience of saints, prophets, poets, musicians and artists. He saw his own wife as the earthly embodiment of Eternal Beauty and Femininity, so he avoided corrupting her with beastly passions of flesh. As a result, she sought relationships with other men and he with other women, and their life together became unbearable. His wife wanted something "real," not otherworldly, but the real turned out to be even less real and satisfying.

Blok became disappointed both by his high ideals and by his life experiences, and he suspected there were other layers of reality behind the ones he explored. Scenery was unreliable. People were constantly changing or clad in cloaks and masks which might cover faces and bodies, strange phantoms, or nothing at all. The "terrifying world" would soon become the major theme of Blok's work.

However, in "Balaganchik", humanity and its existence was shown not yet as a tragedy, but rather as masquerade of puppets. Here, irony and humor were Blok's defenses against the unpredictability of life. Mystics who expected Death failed to see she was a character from Italian comedy. Maskers failed to see that their leader was taking them not to a happy future but to a paper window screen. Couples failed to notice that eternal happiness was unobtainable. A murder that occurred on stage ended up in the victim hemorrhaging cranberry juice. Ultimately, every reality proved to be fake and everyone turned out to be a puppet --- hence the play's title, "A Puppet Show." The audience was shocked, exhilarated, dismayed: people were shouting, whistling, stomping their feet or applauding like mad. Meyerhold even greeted one elderly lady who expressed her disapproval by whistling in her hollow door key. The show garnered rave reviews. Paired with his angelic poetic voice and exceptional physical beauty and poise, "Balaganchik" contributed to Blok's unheard of popularity in Russia.

Of course, Blok not only influenced Russian society, but was



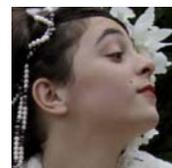
Autumn Sexton is a freshman at the UO majoring in Linguistics with a focus on French and Russian and minoring in music. She sings mostly opera, and is joining the school of music in the spring. She leads the choir in the play. She has been fascinated by Russian culture for a long time and is thrilled to be fully immersed in the beautiful and rich heritage.

Nikolai Valov is an undergraduate freshman majoring in Music. He is directing, arranging and composing the music to the play. He has enjoyed this opportunity to expand his abilities in composition of music for theater settings.



Lara Ravitch is an instructor at the UO's American English Institute. She helped to edit the English parts of the production and enjoyed attending occasional rehearsals. Lara was excited to be a part of the Russian play this year, as she has a lifelong interest in Russian and Theater. As a language teacher, she particularly enjoyed participating in the integration of language learning and drama.

Anastasia Savenkova received her MA in Art History from St. Petersburg State University. In the fall she will be a GTF and MA student in the UO REEES Program. She teaches art to children at the Little Owl School of Arts in Eugene. For a number of years, Ana has designed beautiful costumes for UO Russian Theatre productions.



Lizka Vaintrob is an eighth grade student at Roosevelt Middle School. She has been a part of UO Russian Theatre for the past few years. This year she helped with the stage and set design and costumes and makeup.

Jenny Kroik received her BFA from the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University in illustration and animation, and her MFA in painting from the University of Oregon, where she currently teaches art. She is also a painter and illustrator, and an avid nonsense enthusiast.





Greg Faber is a Senior Theatre Arts major at the UO. He is playing the part of Shrink/Devil. Participating in UO Russian Theatre has helped him connect to his Ukrainian heritage as well as develop as a professional actor.

Liz Prishchenko is in her second year at the UO. She is majoring in International Studies and Russian with a minor in Political Science and Geography. She is playing the Lady in Red and Harlequin 1. She decided to do the play again to connect with her Ukrainian heritage. She is delighted to be a part of the Russian Theater for the second time.



Gwyn Snider is a UO student majoring in International Studies and REEES. She plays the part of a Harlequin. She decided to join Russian theatre this year to supplement her love of all things Russian.

Nicholas Gurevich is a Junior, currently majoring in Russian Area Studies at UO. His roles consist of the Blue Lover and the nameless Poet, as well as being a member of the Choir. This is his second time in Russian Theater, taking great joy in both the historical background of the writer and the fun of acting alongside such great people.



Sara Marruffo is a graduate student in the UO Department of Linguistics Language Teaching Specialization MA Program. She plays the part of Abby and the Lady in Pink. She is thrilled to be a part of UO Russian Theatre, a unique language and culture learning opportunity.

Jonathan Bach is a UO undergraduate majoring in Russian. He has been dancing and performing for three years. He plays the puppet master in the masquerade and a robot in the computer dance.



also very much a product of his time. Blok's poetry was all written during Russia's Silver Age --- the first two decades of the 20th century; he was a central figure of that turbulent time, when real was indeed easily confused with unreal. In 1905, Russia was shaken by wars and Revolution; Russians anticipated more catastrophes ahead. They came in the shape of World War I and bloody revolutions. As educated Russians found solace in poetry, Blok came to be seen as a prophet, a seer of higher reality, a pure poetic substance in flesh. No wonder he played Hamlet on stage in his youth: as the Shakespearean character, he sacrificed himself, turning into a link of the chain of time, carrying in himself the tragedy of time. At first, he saw the revolutions as a purifying storm that had to shake the society, but after Lenin's Bolsheviks came to power, he "stopped hearing the music of time" and, himself being angelic music, voice and a vessel of higher reality, died of exhaustion one day before getting permission to go abroad. He saw Death as "immigration that does not require proper documents." Anna Akhmatova, Blok's contemporary, wrote about his death, "Our martyred sun has set: Aleksander, a pure swan".

It was exciting to go back to early 20th century, the "Silver Age" of Russian culture in search of a play --- and find its most famous and beautiful piece, "A Puppet Show," suitable for a very young and talented American cast. Our "Balaganchik" is devoted to everyone's tormenting struggle between "real" and "virtual." Our dreams and delusions are never ending, but still, as Blok's puppets, we jerk up again and again and look for real people and sceneries, for true love and valid art. As we read, studied and rehearsed "A Puppet Show," this amazing cast was real enough! We are very grateful to the very real people and Departments who helped us with big and small tasks. We were granted a real stage. Our set and costumes were done by real young artists. Our music was created by a real young composer. We became real friends. We invited real public, friends and families, to the show and hope they would really try to understand this enigmatic play. This is already not bad --- even if everything else is virtual and just a screensaver.

Julia Nemirovskaya



## Cast in Order of Appearance

First Mystic, First Mask	Becca Loewen
Second Mystic, Second Mask	Marilyn Pikovsky
Third Mystic, Third Mask	Julia Frederick
Seventh Mystic, Fourth Mystic, Clown 2	Miriam Lipton
Pierrot 1	Brian O'Donnell
Pierrot 2, Lover in Black	Nathan Whitwer
Fourth Mystic, Abby 2, Clown	Victoria Knudsen
Fifth Mystic, Sixth Mask	Marina Larson
Sixth Mystic	Heghine Hakobyan
Colombina 1, Knight	Chasmodai Cassidy
Colombina 2, Death	Abby Grewatz
Abby 1, Lady in Pink, Theatre Owner	Sara Marruffo
Eighth Mystic, Lady	Miho Kasama
Harlequin 1, Demonic Woman in Red	Liz Prishchenko
Harlequin 2	Gwyn Snider
Freud/Shrink, Devil	Greg Faber
Young Man in Blue, Poet	Nick Gurevich
Medieval Procession	Andrey Bindeman, Gersh Botvinnik, Tanya Ostriker, Valya Ostriker, Kirill Moore
Fifth Mask	Jonathan Bach

Choir: Toma, Abby, Chas, Becca

Music and songs by Mikhail Kuzmin, Zhanna Rozhdestvenskaya, Vladimir Dashkevich, Sandy Patti, Aleksei Rybnikov, and Nikolai Valov

Instrumental soloists: Victoria on saxophone, Miho on flute, Julia on violin, Nikolai on piano

## Music



Victoria Knudsen is a freshman at the UO and is double majoring in German and Russian languages. Tori plays a mystic, Abby, and Petrushka the clown. Tori is also part of the choir and the instrumental quartet. She has enjoyed the experience of Russian Theater immensely and is looking forward to the years to come.

Heghine Hakobyan has been involved with the UO Russian through Theater since 2008. This year her appearance on stage is very mystical: She is Mystic No. 6.



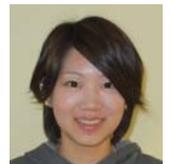
Marina Larson is a senior in the Russian and Eastern European Studies program. She is playing as a Mystic and a Doll. She has been a part of Russian Theatre for the past three years, and hopes to continue doing so as a community member after she graduates.

Chasmodai Cassidy is a senior majoring in Russian and Eastern European Studies. She plays an incarnation of death, a dashing knight, and an advice columnist. She joined Russian theater due to her interest in Russian language, futurism, and bilingual storytelling.



Abby Grewatz is a second year Master's student in the Folklore program. She is playing Colombina and Death and is singing in the choir. She loves Russian Theatre because it allows her to combine her interests in performance, singing, and speaking Russian. She is very excited to be a part of this production and knows it will be the highlight of her year.

Miho Kasama is a junior, majoring in Religious Studies at UO and an exchange student from Japan. She plays a mystic and a lady. In her last term as a UO student, she wanted to do something new and exciting. She has enjoyed the class very much and is very pleased to have been part of the play with such nice people.





Becca Loewen is an undergraduate senior majoring in Russian. She is playing the first mystic, one of the masks, and singing in the choir. Becca is using this opportunity to improve her spoken Russian skills. She is very happy to be a part of this play and work with such wonderful people.

Marilyn Pikovsky/Masha is a freshman pursuing a double major in REEES and Political Science. In tonight's performance she plays Mystic 2 and Mask 2 and dances. As a heritage speaker of Russian, she is excited to work with people who share the same love for Russian culture. Her favorite part about taking part in the play is meeting wonderful people, making hilarious memories, and dancing.



Julia Frederick is an undergrad in her third year at UO. She is a theatre major playing a mystic and a dancer. When she found out about Russian Theatre in her Russian class last term, Julia knew it would be the perfect place to practice Russian, which was new to her, and get to work on a production. She is really happy to be a part of this wonderful group of people.

Miriam Lipton is finishing her Master's Degree from the UO in Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies. In addition to being the GTF for the play, she is excited to be able to act and practice her Russian. She plays one of the Mystics and a Clown, two very fun and whimsical roles.



Brian O'Donnell is a Senior majoring in Russian and East European Studies and Chinese. He plays the sad sack half of Pierrot's personality. This is his second Russian Theatre production, and his only regret is not having taken it all four years.

Nathan Whitwer is a senior, majoring in the Russian Language at UO. He is playing the "boisterous" half of Pierrot in the first and third acts as well as the Man in Black in the second.

This is Nathan's second play with Russian Theatre, and he has enjoyed working with such a diverse group of people.



## Act I: Mystics

Mystics of all convictions wait for Death the Deliverer to save them from the major world cataclysm. They see a beautiful maiden and beckon her. They implore her to take them away from the world. Young Pierrot tries to persuade them that the lady they see is not Death but his bride, Colombina. Colombina and several street girls like herself try to seduce Pierrot and the mystics, but to no avail: after a shock brought about by their encounter with reality, mystics go back to believing that the girl they see is Death, and Pierrot believes she is his bride. The girl follows Pierrot and promises to never leave him, but as soon as she spots handsome and athletic Harlequin, she abandons Pierrot and has a passionate relationship with Harlequin. To his surprise, after their fun ride in a cabman sleigh Harlequin finds out that he is hugging a cardboard doll. Desperate Pierrot writes to Dear Abby column and eventually sees a shrink who offers his own version of the events: he claims that Pierrot makes the cardboard girl story up because he is in denial of what had really happened and on top of that has a homosexual attraction to Harlequin.



N. Ulianov. Meierhold as Pierrot. 1908

## Act II: Love Stories

To relieve the stress, everyone goes to a masquerade. Children do a puppet show about the Knight, the Lady and the King. Three pairs of lovers meet in the shadows of a tree while the rest are dancing. Each pair has its own trials. The Pink Mask and the Blue Mask are madly in love with each other, but the Blue Mask sees the Pink Mask as Eternal Femininity and Sofia the Feminine Wisdom of God and out of piety does not want to have sex and have a conventional marriage while the Pink Mask is afraid her family and friends would not understand her if she follows her lover's desires. The Black Mask is seduced by the Red Mask and betrays his bride but the Red Mask does not want to commit to the Black Mask and sees their union as open and free. The Knight and the Lady are in love but the Lady is only capable of repeating what the Knight says to her and has no words or thoughts of her own. All three pairs have a Dear Abby response to their troubles.

### 15 Minute Intermission



K. Somov. Harlequin and Death. 1907

## Act III: Masquerade

While they are sitting on a bench during the big masquerade, the Knight and the Lady are surrounded by a crowd of happy revelers with torches. One reveler dressed as a clown makes an indecent gesture and the Knight kills him with a wooden sword. The clown is hemorrhaging cranberry juice. The juice is covering the ground and spreading around. Everyone is trying to understand what is happening and discovers that it is real blood. Harlequin makes a big red banner and calls on everyone to follow him and fight the government in order to change the old conventional world forever and to found a free brotherhood based on equality. The crowd is excited. The Poet tries to stop the revelers but he fails. He sees Death; the Poet and Death fall in love. Meanwhile, the revelers understand that Harlequin is a puppet and that he is showing them not the bright future, but a screen saver on his laptop. They take their laptops and explore their own virtual reality. Then all computers show "Death" on their screens. People scream, throw away the computers and run to the shrink thinking they are hallucinating. The shrink turns out to be the Devil himself. He intends to prevent people from understanding what the "real" and the "fake" is and to constantly feed them with new delusions. He assigns Death to kill the Poet who can enlighten the crowd because he has prophetic visions. Then the Shrink, aka Devil, tells people who have Death on their screens to use a different browser. They switch to another browser, and Death turns into a picture of a happy couple walking in a paradise-like setting. Death writes Dear Abby that she fell in love with a Poet before finding out he is her new assignment and killing him. Abby suggests that Death quit her job. Death tells the Shrink aka Devil that, tormented by a very vivid memory of killing someone she fell in love with, a Poet, she can no longer do her job but fears she may lose the only job she can do. Death changes into Colombina. She and Pierrot are about to embrace happily. The crowd is demanding a happy end. However their Puppeteer pulls Pierrot's and Colombina's strings and they fall, unable to rise back.