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Curtain Going Up

Pooh Comes to Scoundrel & Scamp
by Kathleen Kennedy



(left to right) Lanza Guzman as Chris, Robbie Voigt as Piglet, Tanisha Ray as Kanga, Tyler Gastelum as Pooh, and Carlisle Ellis as Rabbit in Scoundrel & Scamp Theatre's *Pooh*

A brand-new adaptation of A. A. Milne's beloved *Winnie-the-Pooh* comes to **Scoundrel & Scamp Theatre** this month. Millions of children have enjoyed the sweet stories since the book was first published in 1926, and now Scoundrel & Scamp's own Betsy Labiner, director of education, as well as director of development, and Raulie A. Martinez, associate producer and resident lighting designer, have created *Pooh*, an original adaptation of the story for the Scoundrel & Scamp stage.

Originally presented last November, *Pooh* is being reprised this month with the same cast: Tyler Gastelum plays Pooh, Lanze Guzman plays Chris, and Wesley Geary plays Robin (Christopher Robin is two separate characters in this adaptation), Robbie Voight plays Piglet, Carlisle Ellis plays Rabbit, Samantha Severson plays Eeyore, Abigail Dunscomb plays Owl, and Tanisha Ray plays Kanga, with direction by Dawn McMillan, and costumes by Gretchen Wirges.

Though the Pooh stories were written as children's stories, they have been and continue to be loved by people of all ages.

"Because I'm a therapist by trade, one of the lenses I look through is mental health," explains McMillan. "In this play, everyone is accepted. Everyone is allowed to be who they are, and they're still loved by their friends and their community, and for me that's a big message." She adds, "One of the main points I wanted to make is acceptance and belonging, so even when the characters are in 'conflict,' I wanted to make sure that their relationship was intact and always make it clear that they are just misunderstandings."

Gastelum says of his role as Pooh: "I had this idea of Pooh as a very joyful character in a very joyful show, but he also has his ups and downs as he tries to get what he wants. No matter what happens, though, Pooh is not going to give up, and he's going to keep maintaining an optimistic spirit. My favorite thing about working on this show is that it allowed me to get in touch with my own lighter side, and I was able to find more of Pooh's optimism in myself than I originally thought I had. That was a really, really pleasant surprise. Honestly, working on this show was almost like therapy in a lot of ways, because it helped me

Tom Fuller

lighten up and reminded me to have fun even when I wasn't in rehearsal. I was so excited to go to rehearsal and live in this world and be what I consider to be the best version of myself."

"Everyone should come see Pooh because it's heartwarming and delightful," says McMillan. "The day-to-day stress of life can be overwhelming, and taking a moment of your time to connect with these sweet stories will do your heart good."

Gastelum adds, "These stories from over 100 years ago show us perfectly how to look at the other side of life, as well, and help us remember what it feels like to feel joy and want something good, and to make positive connections with other people and build a community."

This story speaks to the heart of what matters, what endures: kindness, acceptance, forgiveness, love. Come take a moment or two of your time to live in that world. May 11-21 at The Historic Y, 738 N. 5th Ave. (scoundrelandscamp.org or 520-448-3300)

Arizona Theatre Company presents Noël Coward's witty romantic comedy *Private Lives*. A divorced couple, while honeymooning with their new spouses, discover they are staying in adjacent rooms at the same hotel, and rediscover old passions. May 11-28 at the Temple of Music and Art. (arizonatheatre.org or 520-622-2823)

The award-winning musical *Rag-*

time continues at **Arts Express Theatre** through May 7. In a melting pot of cultures after the Civil War and before World War I, rampant racism, xenophobia, and sexism converge in a clash of the new against the status quo. At Park Place Mall, Suite 214. (arts-express.org or 520-319-0400)

Robin Hood continues at the **Gaslight Theatre** through June 4. Cheer for hero Robin Hood, boo and hiss at the villainous Sheriff of Nottingham, and swoon over lovely Maid Marian. (thegaslighttheatre.com or 520-886-9428)

Live Theatre Workshop presents *Lungs*, about a young couple's debates around the ramifications of bringing a child into a troubled, tumultuous world of climate change, overpopulation, and instability. The play is funny, jarring, and honest. May 11-June 10 at 3322 E. Ft. Lowell Rd. (livetheatreworkshop.org or 520-327-4242)

A Midsummer Night's Dream, a magical tale of fairies, foolish lovers, feuding Greek gods, and funny thespians, continues at **The Rogue Theatre** through May 14. At the Historic Y, 300 E. University Blvd. (theroguetheatre.org or 520-551-2053) 🌟

Kathleen Kennedy is a local freelance writer. Send theater news to her at curtain@desertleaf.com. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.



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