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**Utopia Theatre Project Presents… *Three Sisters***

Adapted by Ella Ruth Francis.Directed by Angie Higgins

**February 14 to March 8, 2019**

Fridays and Saturdays @ 7pm (and Sunday March 8 @ 1:30pm)

The Bindery, 1727 Haight St, San Francisco, 94117

Tickets: $20-$25: <https://three-sisters.bpt.me/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2608118016091541/>

San Francisco, CA… Utopia Theatre Project presents the world premiere of Ella Ruth Francis’ immersive adaptation of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* that weaves music, movement, and mythology into this classic tale of family and fate.

The three Prozorov sisters long to return to Moscow. Schoolmistress Olga wishes for a husband, while bored Masha will do anything to escape from hers, and the hopeful Irina dreams of romance. With a company of soldiers in town, the stage is set for love, laughter, philosophy, and heartbreak. Led by Silicon Valley Shakespeare’s Artistic Director, Angie Higgins, our audience will be right in the action, drinking and sitting with the cast as they navigate their way through the story. We are so happy to be collaborating with The Bindery as we embark on this new innovative theatre project. Our fantastically talented, diverse cast of 13 features some of the Bay Area's best talent.

**Director’s Note:**

There is something magical about a work of art that has staying power… a piece that can last through time and resonate with us over a hundred years after its inception. This is what I love about Chekhov’s *Three Sisters*. The premiere of *Three Sisters* may have been in Moscow in 1901, but the rich tapestry of the character’s longing, hopes, desires, and even their flaws are so relatable that they could have been written in 2020. The world of the Prozorov sisters can be harsh and uncertain- not unlike the world we live in today. While some of our characters hope for a brighter future, many feel trapped in their circumstances yearning for what is seemingly out of their grasp. Each layer we uncover as the play progresses reveals more and more of the human experience, as they all face the same question: What is it you long for? Is it love? Respect? Power? Or is it simply knowing you have a purpose? And in the end… how do we keep pressing forward with hope in our hearts? True to life; *Three Sisters* takes us on a journey through both laughter and tears, joy and heartache, victory and defeat.

The movement and music in this production are designed to give our audience a different lens to experience the joy, longing, and desperation of the characters right along with them. As these additions in Ella Ruth Francis’ adaptation of Chekhov’s classic are deliberate, so is our choice in venue. In a play that is all about relationships and the human condition, being able to be close enough to the storytelling to notice the subtlety and nuance of the character’s connections (or loneliness) is vital in entering their world and caring about them. Our hope is the intimacy of The Bindery will provide you with the ability to feel a part of the Prozorov home and come to know those who walk through their threshold in a personal way.

119 year later, the sincerity, mindset, and heart of Chekhov’s characters remind us that some things never change. After all, we are all just trying to find our own path to happiness. “Either know why you live or nothing else matters.”

**About Utopia Theatre Project**

**Utopia Theatre Project**,founded in 2014 by Bay Area actor Anne Yumi Kobori, uses new works and re-imagined classics to create experiential theater which inspires social change, human creativity, and actor-audience connection. Utopia supports emerging playwrights and directors in the development of new plays through staged readings, talk backs, and fully staged productions. The company incorporates dance, music, and visual media into its productions and encourages the expansion and diversification of theater audiences. A core value of Utopia is representation for minority voices. Kobori says, “I would especially like to create an opportunity for women and artists of color to have a voice and to have a platform to say what needs to be said.”

Utopia’s first season began with Chekhov’s *The Seagull*; Kobori’s new adaptation was a gender-neutral examination of Chekhov’s classic characters. Following that, *Stories from Silence: An American Dream Play*, an evening of short plays focused on the #MeToo movement. Utopia wrapped up its first season with the world premiere of *Seeds*, a new play, written and directed by Kobori. Set in World War II, *Seeds* wove together the stories of women and men reckoning with wartime secrets. Utopia’s second season began with a staged reading of the one-woman show, *Natural Shocks,* by America’s most produced playwright, Lauren Gunderson. Next, *Demos Kratos Theatro: Plays by and for the People* was an evening of short plays investigating democratic engagement in a Saturday Night Live style review. The season concluded with the world premiere of *Every Day Alice*, written by Kobori and directed by Maryssa Wanlass, explored the dreams and struggles of young artists living with mental illness.

**Bios:**

**Angie Higgins (Director)** is thrilled to be working with this fabulous cast! Most recently, she directed the TBA recommended production of The White Snake at Silicon Valley Shakespeare. Other favorite directing credits include: Hamlet (SVS: all-female production) Art (Northside Theatre Company), I Hate Hamlet (Broadway West), The Woman in Black (NTC), The Comedy of Errors (SVS: all-female production), and The Taming of the Shrew (SVS). When not directing, Angie can be found on stage, serving as the Artistic Director of Silicon Valley Shakespeare, and utilizing her MA in Theatre Arts Education teaching Theatre and Dance.  [www.angiehiggins.com](http://www.angiehiggins.com)

**Ella Ruth Francis (Playwright/Choreographer/IRINA)** was previously seen at Utopia in the world premiere of Seeds. Additional credits include Juliet in Romeo and Juliet (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival & Half Moon Bay Shakespeare Company), Pamela in Head Over Heels (New Conservatory Theatre), and La Ronde (Cutting Ball Theater).  She received a 2019 Theatre Bay Area Award for playing Natalie in Next to Normal (Los Altos Stage). Ella is a resident artist with the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and a proud graduate of the Pacific Conservatory for Performing Arts. See more at <http://www.ellaruthfrancis.com>

**Anne Yumi Kobori (Artistic Director/Choreographer/Masha)** is delighted to return to Chekhovian Russia, after adapting Chekhov’s The Seagull and playing Nina in Utopia’s inaugural 2014 production. Her original plays Seeds (Director) and Every Day Alice (Alice) have also premiered at Utopia. Performance credits include the title role in Hamlet, Desdemona in Othello, Ariel in The Tempest (Silicon Valley Shakespeare), Celia in As You Like It the musical (SF Shakespeare Festival), Peggy Maruyama in Allegiance (CCCT), and numerous ShotzSF comedy shorts. Anne founded Utopia because she believes in artist-produced theatre as a unique and powerful medium for human connection and social justice. [www.AnneYumiKobori.com](http://www.AnneYumiKobori.com)

**Marcia Aguilar (OLGA)** is a bilingual teaching artist and Registered Drama Therapist. She specializes in playful encounters with Developmental Transformations and Full Spectrum Improvisation. Among her favorite productions are Orlando with A.C.T, Don’t Rock the Boat with Theatre for Change, and The Vagina Monologues.

**Ambioris Bautista-Garcia (FEDOTIK)** is from Loiza, Puerto Rico. He is a working actor that recently moved to the Bay Area. Currently is a senior at The Academy of Art University. Ambioris is a full-time student. He works full-time for a local non-profit as well, Hands on Bay Area. You might have seen him in other shows like Cinderella with African American Shakespeare Co. where he played Zonita. Or, In the Heights by Lin Manuel Miranda, as the Ensemble. You might’ve even seen him in Six Degree of Separation by John Guare as Trent.

**LeighAnn Cannon (NATASHA)** is thrilled to be making her Utopia debut! She has been performing all over the Bay Area since she was a young child and holds a BA in acting and directing from Muhlenberg College. Recently she was seen portraying Sally Ride and Virginia Apgar in the world premier of She Persisted the Musical (Bay Area Children’s Theatre) based on the book by Chelsea Clinton. Other favorites include: Ilsa in Spring Awakening (Left-Hand), Varuca Salt in Willy Wonka (BACT), Katherine in What You Will (Pear), Chava in Fiddler on the Roof (Hillbarn), Justine / Deena in Besties (Left Coast), and The All-Female Cast of Jesus Christ Superstar (ROLT).

**Kyle Dayrit (TUZENBACH)** is thrilled to be making his Utopia Theatre Project debut in this riveting adaptation of Chekhov's Three Sisters! Kyle is a recent graduate at Foothill College, hoping to pursue his undergraduate degree elsewhere. His recent theatre credits include in The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley (CLTC), The White Snake (SVS), Red Scare at Sunset (NCTC),  and Shakespeare in Love (PAP).

**Eduardo Esqueda (ANDREY**) is excited to be in Utopia Theatre’s production of Three Sisters. He was last seen in the Theatre Lunatico production of Titus Andronicus.

**Jacob Henrie-Naffaa (FERAPONT)** is ecstatic to make his Utopia Theatre debut! Jacob has been acting throughout the Bay Area since Berkeley Playhouse's 2009 production of Peter Pan and now choreographs and teaches theatre at SFArts Education and the Berkeley Playhouse Conservatory. He was most recently seen in Berkeley Playhouse's A Christmas Story (Fantasy Villain) and PCRT's West Side Story (Snowboy/Mouthpiece).

**Bezachin Jifar (VERSHININ)** hails from San Jose and is a writer actor who enjoys being creative whenever possible. He is currently working on publishing selections of his work from the past four years as a book. Keep an eye out for it by following him on Twitter @BezachinJifar.

**Bobby Kiner (SOLYONY)** is a graduate of the PCPA acting conservatory and is a Bay Area focused actor. He is currently on tour with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival’s tour of Macbeth and can be seen in Marin Shakespeare Company’s upcoming Romeo & Juliet. Recent credits include; D’Artagnan, The Three Musketeers (CCSF), Webster, Shakespeare In Love (PCPA), and Ensemble, A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder (PCPA).

**Gabriel Ross (KULYGIN)** is in his first Chekhov production since appearing as Pischek in Cherry Orchard in a college production back in a forgotten prior century. He recently played Roderigo in Othello with AASC. Other classical roles include: Antony in Julius Caesar (Silicon Valley Shakespeare); Charles/Ladvenu in Saint Joan (Jewel Theatre); Torvald in Doll's House (Marin Onstage); Laucelot Gobbo in Merchant of Venice (Custom Made Theatre Co.); Lennox in Macbeth (Town Hall Theatre); Edgar in King Lear and Geoffrey in Lion in WInter (Festival Theatre Ensemble). He was a TBA Finalist for his role as Jason in Action Hero last summer. He earned his MFA in Classical Acting from George Washington University.

**Ron Talbot (CHEBUTYKIN)** is thrilled to be joining the Utopia Theatre Project and to be working with such a talented cast. Favorite roles include: ‘Enemy of the People’ (Thomas Stockman) for The Pear, ‘As You Like It’ (Duke) and ‘Sherwood’ (The Sheriff of Nottingham) for SVS, ’Twins’ (Zeus) for Piano Fight, ‘The Philadelphia Story’ (C.K. Dexter Haven) for Western Stage, 'The Three Musketeers’ (Rochefort) and ‘Lysistrata’ (Socrates) for City Lights, 'Romeo and Juliet' (Friar Lawrence) for Los Gatos Shakespeare, 'Twelfth Night' (Sebastian) for Marin Shakespeare, 'Much Ado About Nothing' (Don John) for Pacific Repertory, and ‘Taming of the Shrew’ (Petruchio) for San Leandro Shakespeare.

**Marsha van Broek (ANFISA)** is excited to be working with the talented director, creative team and actors of Utopia Theatre Project.  She has been performing in theatres around the Bay Area and was most recently seen in “Escaped Alone” for Anton’s Well Theatre Company. Next up will be “The Packrat Gene” at Ross Valley Players.

**For Calendar Editors**

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TICKETS:  $20 - $25

$25 Advance and at the door

Students and Seniors (over 60): $20

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