

108th Season

CHESS



OCT. 20 – NOV. 19, 2023



VAGABOND PLAYERS



VAGABOND PLAYERS

The Best of Broadway on Broadway

806 South Broadway
Baltimore, MD 21231
410-563-9135
www.vagabondplayers.org

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Vagabond Players is a founding member of the Baltimore Playwrights Festival. For more information, visit <http://www.baltplayfest.org>.

VAGABOND PLAYERS PRESENT

CHESS

Music by Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus
Lyrics by Tim Rice
Based on an idea by Tim Rice
Directed by Stephen M. Deininger

Cast

Frederick Trumper **Jonathan Lightner**
Florence Vassy **Samantha McEwen Deininger**
Anatoly Sergievsky **E. Lee Nicol**
Alexander Molokov **Anthony Rufo**
Walter De Courcey **Andrew Worthington**
Arbiter **Elena Huang**
Svetlana Sergievsky **Tiffany Dennis**

Ensemble

Andy Belt, Jess Corso, Robert Emmett Dunham, IV, Daisy Hall,
Sarah Jacobs, Leslie Jay, Sydney Marks, Amy Taylor, Miles Weeks

Setting

The World Chess Championships in Merano, Italy,
and a few years later in Bangkok, Thailand

Time – The Cold War Era

There will be a fifteen minute intermission

CHESS is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.
www.concordtheatricals.com

Musical Numbers

Prologue

Prologue, Limbo: The Story of Chess Arbiter and Ensemble

Act I – Merano, Italy (1978)

Merano Freddie and Ensemble
Commie Newspapers Florence and Freddie
Press Conference Freddie, Florence and Ensemble
Anatoly and Molokov Molokov and Anatoly
Where I Want to Be Anatoly
Diplomats Molokov, Walter and Ensemble
The Arbiter Arbiter and Ensemble
Hymn to Chess Full Cast
Chess #1 – Freddie vs. Anatoly Instrumental
The Arbiter (Reprise) Arbiter
Quartet Molokov, Florence, Arbiter, and Anatoly
Florence and Molokov Molokov, Florence, Walter, and Freddie
1956 – Budapest Is Rising Florence and Freddie
Nobody's Side Florence and Ensemble
Mountain Duet Florence, Anatoly, and Freddie
Chess #2 - Freddie vs. Anatoly Instrumental
Florence Quits Freddie and Florence
Pity the Child Freddie
Embassy Lament Civil Servants (Leslie and Robert)
Heaven Help My Heart Florence and Svetlana
Anatoly and the Press Ensemble
Anthem Anatoly

Act II – Bangkok, Thailand (1981)

Golden Bangkok Instrumental
One Night in Bangkok Freddie and Ensemble
One More Opponent Anatoly and Florence
You and I Anatoly and Florence
The Soviet Machine Molokov and Ensemble
The Interview Walter, Freddie, and Anatoly
The Deal Arbiter, Molokov, Svetlana, Anatoly,
Walter, Florence, and Freddie
Pity The Child (Reprise) Freddie
I Know Him So Well Florence and Svetlana
Someone Else's Story Florence and Svetlana
Talking Chess Freddie and Anatoly
Endgame – Anatoly vs. Viigand Full Cast
You and I (Reprise) Florence and Anatoly
Walter and Florence Walter and Florence

Epilogue – London, England (December 26, 1991)

Finale Arbiter, Anatoly, and Florence

Director's Note

I love concept albums, the idea that several songs arranged together can, through combination, become more than just a great song. I hold a special place in my heart for the subgenre, the rock opera concept album, the likes of which seemed to largely be released between 1970 and 1984. They also almost always seemed to involve the work of Tim Rice, and, oddly, chart hit songs featuring the otherwise obscure singer Murray Head.

Before we settled on *Chess* as the project, I wanted to find a show where we could use modern music production techniques to update one of these albums to be performed live. The plan was to have something that was a play last, and was first and foremost a concert. The plan was to identify a show, and to reimagine the music using advances in both technology and rock music theory to take something that is aging and beautiful and make it feel as fresh as the day it came out.

We bandied around several titles for this project, and in hindsight we sure found a way to select the hardest one. *Chess* spans so many different musical genres, from classical, to opera, to rock, to pop, disco, electronica, and so on. Each song seems to be a different genre, some don't even stay put in any one place. What you are hearing are the songs given fresh and new orchestrations.

For the concept itself, *Chess* was written at the end of the Cold War, and it certainly hits differently today. For context, the concept album dropped a year before *Rocky IV*; it's definitely of an era. The show is known for having story issues which many directors have tried to solve by taking an ax to it, cutting music and replacing it with scenes, changing nationalities and locales, adding and cutting characters. This show is my attempt to get it right, and I think I've used a scalpel as opposed to an ax.

I took inspiration for this telling from the life of troubled genius Bobby Fischer, and the life story of Russian chess defector Viktor Korchnoi and his mistress and later wife Petra Korchnoi; I have drawn from their lives during the Cold War and the way their lives played out. These three people served as models for Freddie, Anatoly, and Florence, and people around them informed the other characters in the play. The oldest surviving of the three, Petra Korchnoi, passed away only two years ago, and I am struck by how a piece from the early 80's can be informed by the way a woman lived her life until 2021. This production is dedicated to their passion for intellectual competition and how their love made them an island that no state could restrain.

-Stephen Deininger

Cast and Crew Biographies

Andy Belt (Ensemble) is excited to be returning to Vagabond Players for his sixth show with the company. Last season, he was in *Stop Kiss*, *Broadway Bound*, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. In recent years at Vagabonds, Andy performed in *12 Angry Jurors* and *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. Other Baltimore credits include: Spotlighters Theatre: *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Mousetrap*; Fells Point Corner Theatre: *The Mineola Twins*. He holds a degree in theater from Wake Forest University.

Jess Corso (Ensemble) is undertaking her first production with Vagabond Players and she is so excited to be here. While going to college in Indiana for Math, she also held many roles in the local theaters– backstage, front of house, creative team, and even sometimes performing on stage. This is her first show since graduating and she is incredibly grateful that it has been with this lovely, wildly talented group of humans. Her thanks to all of them for giving her a place here. To everyone else, enjoy the show!

Samantha McEwen Deininger (Florence Vassy) is so excited to perform this bucket list role! A professional singer/actor, she has performed in over 40 musicals, plays, and operas throughout the country, receiving numerous awards. Notable roles include: Marianne Angelle in *The Revolutionists*, Nicki in *The Bodyguard*, Sour Kangaroo in *Seussical*, Queenie in *Showboat*, Sarah in *Ragtime*, Michaela in *Carmen*, Joanne in *Godspell*, Queenie in *The Wild Party*, Geneva in *1940's Radio Hour*, Erzulie in *Once on this Island*, Joanne in *Rent*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Jenny in *Company*, Reno in *Anything Goes*, Tituba in *The Crucible*, Suzanne in *Picasso at Lapin Agile*, Hallie/Marguerite in *Inventing Van Gogh*, Eisa in *Trojan Women 2.0*, and Reba in *You Can't Take it With You*. She hopes you all are having as much fun as she is!

Tiffany Dennis (Svetlana Sergievsky) is making her Vagabond Players' debut with this first time performing a lead role. Her first theater appearance was as an understudy for *The Wiz*. She is known for her singing and songwriting abilities and is one half of the singing duo T.W.O. Tiffany is also a worship leader at Real Church in Waldorf. She is excited to be a part of such a wonderful cast and is honored to be playing Svetlana.

Robert Emmett Dunham, IV (Ensemble) from Hanover, Maryland, is a multifaceted talent, concurrently pursuing degrees in Computer Science and Theater Studies. Despite his recent foray into theater - starting as a rehearsal pianist for his high school's production of *Footloose* during his sophomore year - his drive is unwavering. Robert is on a rapid trajectory, first aiming to take Broadway by storm and then venturing into the film industry. With a steadfast passion for storytelling, he is determined to make a name for himself and leave an indelible mark on the world of entertainment.

Daisy Hall (Ensemble, she/her) has seen *Chess* live in 5 different states, and is very excited to be here. She is wildly grateful to Marty and the Cherver for their constant love and support. Credits: Church Nativity Play (Baby Jesus) IG: yesiamdaisy

Elena Huang (Arbiter) first debuted at Vagabond Players as Antoinette in *God of Carnage*, and is delighted to return to the stage as the Arbiter. Beyond her theatrical pursuits, Elena is a devoted community advocate, serving on her local neighborhood board and passionately mentoring aspiring young musicians at Living Classrooms. When not in the limelight, you can find her musical talents on streaming services under the pseudonym Elena Gray, featuring tracks like "Steel" and "Pull the Trigger." Her versatile artistry extends to photography, vocal instruction, and college consultation, all available for booking at www.graygalstudios.com. Elena extends her heartfelt thanks to Vagabond Players for its enduring commitment to community theater (108 years strong!) and expresses deep gratitude to her loved ones for their unwavering encouragement of her artistic journey.

Sarah Jacobs (Ensemble) is thrilled to be making her Vagabond Players debut! Born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, Sarah was last seen on stage in Duke University's *Company* (Amy), *[title of show]* (Susan), *The Producers* (Ensemble), and *Cabaret* (Asst. Director). She is so grateful to the Vagabond family for the opportunity to continue her love of theater in Baltimore!

Leslie Jay (Ensemble) is a Baltimore native actress, singer and writer. She is excited to be performing in her first show with Vagabond Players. Some previous credits performed in Pennsylvania include: Camae in *The Mountaintop*, Ruth in *A Raisin in the Sun*, Deborah DuVal in *There's a Burglar in my Bed* and The Witch in *Into the Woods*. Leslie specializes in classical, opera and jazz music. As a special educator and psychology enthusiast, she enjoys exploring the range of human complexity to add depth to the roles she presents. Performing in *Chess* has been great! In learning about this musical, she's fallen for the musical compositions, it's so much fun musically! She hopes to have more great experiences working with this amazing theatre company.

Jonathan Lightner (Fredrick Trumper) is mildly enthused to be back at Vagabond Players after playing Scanlon in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Outside of Vagabond Players, you can find him making a fool of himself in the BMore Karaoke League and in venues all over Baltimore City.

Sydney Marks (Ensemble) was last seen on the Vagabond Players stage as herself in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, Sandra in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and Juror #7 in *12 Angry Jurors*. Favorite credits from the Appalachian Shakespeare Center include Peter Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Stephano in *The Tempest*. Other credits include Lyuba in *The Cherry Orchard*, Little Prince in *The Little Prince*, and Lucy the Slut in *Avenue Q*. Love to Steve, Mom and Dad.

Cast and Crew Biographies

E. Lee Nicol (Anatoly Sergievsky) makes his Vagabond Players debut, after recently performing Reverend Moore in *Footloose!* Lee started his musical career playing trumpet and became a World Champion with The Garfield Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps. After attending Towson University for Music Performance/Education, Lee pursued theater in NYC. After a few tours and sailing the Caribbean, he returned to his "hometown" of Baltimore. Favorite roles include Adam/Noah in *Children of Eden* – 2nd Star's WATCH Award nominated show, Bobby Strong in *Urinetown* – Ruby Griffith Award winner for Best Show, and Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*, – MD Theater Guide's Best Lead Actor. Lee would like to thank Vagabonds for the opportunity, Stephen for the call, and Bob and Leah for putting up with him every day. Enjoy the show!

Anthony Rufo (Alexander Molokov) is excited to be back at Vagabond Players. Last season, he appeared as Dr. Spivey in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and was an alternate for Jack and Ben in Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound*, taking the stage as Jack for two performances. Anthony took an extended break (over 20 years!) from performing, and could not be more pleased with his experience at Vagabonds.

Amy Taylor (Ensemble) is making her debut performance at Vagabond Players with her first musical theater production. Amy sings opera and has been teaching piano for 20 years. She studies the Meisner acting technique with Baltimore-based Douglas Farwell and has contributed to several short films with Keep Looking Back. In her spare time, Amy loves to dance salsa and bachata. Amy is working towards a bachelor's in social work at UMBC and is an aspiring trauma therapist specializing in cults.

Miles Weeks (Ensemble) is a newcomer to Vagabond Players, but he is no stranger to acting in the Baltimore theater scene. Previous credits include: Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*, The Narrator in *Into the Woods* and Prince Chulalongkorn in *The King and I* with Memorial Players. He is honored and excited to be welcomed onto the Vagabonds' stage.

Andrew Worthington (Walter De Courcey) is excited to return to the Vagabond Players' stage for the first time since *Avenue Q*. Andrew is a theater educator and curriculum writer for Baltimore County Public Schools. He would like to dedicate this performance to the memory of his father, Bill.

Stephen M. Deininger (Director) is a prolific director, actor, and pianist across the Baltimore area. He is a board member with Vagabond Players and has been onstage as an actor and pianist in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Fantasticks*, *The Pillowman*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Avenue Q*, *Cabaret*, *Our Town*, and has directed *God of Carnage*, *Talk Radio*, and *The Crucible*. He is the music director of Channing Memorial Church. He founded the Pandemic Players, an online theatrical performing group that raised funds to support local theaters during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, a project that spurred many similar regional companies and was covered by local media and theater trade publications around the world. During the early months of 2020, he and his wife started building a home recording studio to record hymns for churches adapting to online worship, and where they now record music under the group name Scotch and Lies.

Lou Otero (Assistant Director) is thrilled to be returning to the Vagabond Players backstage after previously directing *Shout: The Mod Musical*. Some of his favorite roles include Martini in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Vagabond Players), Victor/Gorilla in *Cabaret* (Vagabond Players), Oliver in *Puffs (ASOB)*, Col. Matterson in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Spotlighters), Back Half of Cow in *Gypsy* (Cockpit in Court), and Pirate in *Pirates of Penzance* (Suburban Players). When not involved in shows he enjoys late night workouts and multiple snacks throughout the day. He wants to thank his wife Jenn for all her support.

Katie Sheldon (Choreographer) is thrilled to be working with Vagabond Players for the first time, many thanks to Stephen for this great opportunity. Previous shows she has choreographed include: *Urinetown*, *Curtains*, *Anything Goes*, *Full Monty*, *Godspell*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Katie would like to thank the cast for their patience and hard work! Hope you enjoy the show!

Kerry Simons (Stage Manager) is so very excited to be a part of this stunningly brilliant production! Past Vagabond Players credits include: Assistant Director for *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*; Assistant Stage Manager for *Avenue Q*, *Cabaret*, *The Pillowman* and *The Odd Couple*; and Stage Manager for *Fallout* and *Constellations*. Her first love has always been performing. Favorite past acting credits include: The Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Jeannie in *Hair*, Frueline Kost in *Cabaret* and Rapunzel in *Into the Woods*. To the cast and crew...you are rock stars! Break legs, loves!!

Kaite N. Vaught (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be back at Vagabond Players in her normal role as a stage manager! She has a B.A. in theatre from Centre College, a J.D. from University of Baltimore School of Law. Selected theatre credits include: Stage Manager for *The Crucible*, *Twelve Angry Jurors*, and *God of Carnage* at Vagabond Players; *The Mineola Twins* and *Wit* at Fells Point Corner Theatre; and Cast: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* at Vagabond Players, *A Christmas Carol* and *Romulus* at Memorial Players.

Production Staff

Director Stephen M. Deiningner

Assistant Director Lou Otero

Choreographer Katie Sheldon

Stage Managers Kerry Simons
Kaite N. Vaught

Lighting Design Kaite N. Vaught

Set Design Stephen M. Deiningner

Set Construction Jay Demarco
Bruce Kapplin

Costume Design Audra M. Mullen

Sound Consultant Stuart Kazanow

Photography Shealyn Jae Photography

Marketing/PR Audra M. Mullen
Kerry Simons
Sydney Marks

Graphic Design Sarah Hepworth

Box Office Michael Kranick

Producers Michael Kranick
Audra M. Mullen



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Barbara Hawkins	Lauren Riley Sayles
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Anne Belcher	Linda McEwen
Peter Bodde	<i>One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest</i>
Candice Chesno	Cast and Crew
David Graham	Dana Senior

Vagabond Players is a recipient of grants from the Maryland States Arts Council and Mayor Brandon Scott and the Baltimore Office of Promotion and The Arts



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JAN. 5 – 28, 2024

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S

Witness FOR THE PROSECUTION

Written by Agatha Christie
Directed by Robert W. Oppel

A riveting story of passion, justice and betrayal from the queen of suspense! When Leonard Vole is accused of murdering a rich older widow, the courtroom becomes a scene of shocking witness testimony, impassioned outbursts from the dock and a trapped husband's fight to escape the hangman's noose. This startling thriller will keep you guessing until the very end — but please, don't reveal that ending to your friends!

FEB. 16 – MAR. 10, 2024

HOW I LEARNED *to Drive*

Written by Paula Vogel
Directed by Tessara Morgan Farley

A wildly funny, surprising and devastating tale of survival in which L'il Bit, now a woman in her 30's, comes to terms with the complex childhood relationship she had with her Uncle Peck. Vogel's Pulitzer Prize-winning thunderbolt of a play brings theatre back to its roots in storytelling and personal and social history.

APR. 5 – 28, 2024

DOUBT, A PARABLE

Written by John Patrick Shanley
Directed by Steve Goldklang

In this Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning 21st century American classic, Sister Aloysius, a strict, uncompromising Catholic middle school principal in the early 1960's, takes matters into her own hands when she suspects the charismatic and highly popular Father Flynn of improper relations with one of the male students — who happens to be the school's only African American student.

MAY 17 – JUNE 9, 2024

LOVE, LOSS AND *What I Wore*

Written by Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron
Based on the book by Ilene Beckerman
Directed by Belle Burr

An evening of hilariously funny and often poignant short scenes and monologues that depict how an item of clothing can hold a past identity, body shape, and hopes seized or abandoned. In this delightfully dishy trip down memory lane a dress, a shoe, a hat can serve as a jumping off point for bigger themes such as falling in and out of love, familial relationships, or a same-sex marriage.

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