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'The Nerd' has its day at Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope



"The Nerd" stars Joe Kinosian as Rick Steadman and Kyle Cameron as Willum Cubbert. It continues through July 15 at the Bucks County Playhouse.

Photo by Mark Garvin

Actor and playwright Joe Kinosian said he grew up idolizing James Pickering, the actor the play "The Nerd" was written for.

"My middle school teacher was friends with him. She got him to autograph a copy of 'The Nerd' script with an inscription that says, 'Dear Joe, best wishes for a career in the theater,'" said Kinosian, who stars in a production of the play at the Bucks County Playhouse. It runs through July 15.

"I've been carrying that script around everywhere, hoping to do the part. Now it's happening," he said.

Back in December, Kinosian wrote and co-starred in the holiday production of "Murder for Two," a musical comedy adapted just for the playhouse.

"I saw the poster advertising 'The Nerd,'" he said. He mentioned to playhouse producers Alex Fraser and Josh Fiedler his lifelong desire to play the lead. They gave him a shot.

“It’s rare in life when you have the freedom to say and do what you’re feeling in the moment,” he said of his nerdish character. “It’s so fun being the person who’s the provocateur, who gets to say and do horrible things. Hopefully that will be fun for the audience.”

Written by Larry Shue, "The Nerd" chronicles the relationship between Willum Cubbert, an aspiring architect in Terre Haute, Indiana, who owes a debt of gratitude to Rick Steadman, a fellow ex-GI who saved his life, even though the two had never met. He promises to “do anything” for Rick in a letter and is delighted when Rick shows up unexpectedly to make good on it. Hilarity ensues when it becomes apparent that Rick is a bumbling oaf with no social sense, little intelligence and less tact.

“The character is a wonderful oddball from Wisconsin. I’m from Wisconsin,” Kinoshian said, dusting off his former Midwestern accent, which he lost shortly after moving to Georgia for college. Today, he lives in New York City.

Kinoshian performs alongside Grant Shaud, best known for the character Miles in the Emmy-award winning television series "Murphy Brown," and Zuzanna Szadkowski, who played Dorota Kishlovsky on the drama series "Gossip Girl."

“They’re great,” said Kinoshian. “Grant could not be more fun to good around with. He’s willing to look ridiculous. I love them all. “