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THE MORNING CALL

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Theater: Bucks County Playhouse gets Nerdy



Gavin Lee as Axel Hammond (left), Kyle Cameron as Willum, Joe Kinoshian as Rick Steadman and Clea Alsip as Tansy McGinnis in the Bucks County Playhouse production of 'The Nerd', running through July 15. (Mark Garvin / CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

By Daniel Friedman

The Bucks County Playhouse invites you to dust off your finest pocket-protector and enjoy Larry Shue's comedy "The Nerd," running through July 15.

In "The Nerd," Willum Cubbert, an aspiring young architect in Terre Haute, Ind., tells his friends often about the debt he owes to Rick Steadman, a fellow ex-GI who saved his life, but whom he never actually met. He had written to Rick with an oath that as long as he is alive, "You will have somebody on earth who will do anything for you."

Willum is delighted when Rick shows up unexpectedly at his apartment on the night of his birthday. However, it all takes a twist when it becomes apparent that Rick is a bumbling oaf with no social sense, little intelligence and less tact and apparently has no plans to ever leave.

“When we first read Larry Shue’s play we found ourselves laughing out loud,” says producer Josh Fiedler. “It is outrageously funny — some reviews have even called it one of the funniest plays ever written. We are truly excited to bring this play to the Bucks County Playhouse, with an extraordinary cast headed by Joe Kinosian as The Nerd.

For Kinosian, the part has been a life-long dream, dating to his personal history with the original production at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre in 1981.

“When I was 13, my hero was James Pickering,” says Kinosian, writer and star of the musical “Murder for Two.” “He not only was the first to play Rick in The Nerd’s premiere production, but the script also is dedicated to him [Playwright Larry Shue played opposite James Pickering as Willum.]. One of my middle-school teachers was friends with Mr. Pickering, and got him to autograph his copy of the script for me. He wrote ‘Dear Joe, Best wishes for a career in the theater!’ and signed it.

“I’ve held on to this script through, oh, 15-ish apartments over more than 20 years. From time to time I would read it again, look at the inscription and think, I sure hope I get to play this part someday. And now, this summer, I’m going to get to.”

“The Nerd” is directed by Marc Vietor (Off-Broadway’s “School for Scandal”). The cast also includes Kyle Cameron as Willum Cubbert, Grant Shaud (Miles from the Emmy winning “Murphy Brown”) and Zuzanna Szadkowski (“Gossip Girl” and “The Knick”) as Warnock and Clelia Walgrave, Clea Alsip as Tansy McGinnis, Gavin Lee as Axel Hammond and Avey Noble as Thor Waldgrave.

“**The Nerd**,” Tuesday through Sunday, through July 15, Bucks County Playhouse, 70 S. Main St., New Hope. Tickets: \$40-\$75. www.buckscountyplayhouse.org, 215-862-2121.