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"DEAR SANTA" IS PERFECT REMEDY FOR XMAS BLUES

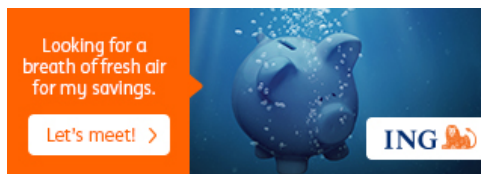
NEWS (/NEWS) • LIFESTYLE (/LIFESTYLE) • 07.12.2017 • WENDY WINN



Photo: Actors Rep

SHARELINES

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A review of the play in the epistolary style of Actors Rep's seasonal offering, "Dear Santa".

Dear Santa,

I know I should be looking forward to the weeks ahead, the annual hunt for the funny pair of boxer shorts I always give my husband and the festive but not too revealing dress to wear for the office party, going to wolf down a sausage and sauerkraut at the Christmas market, but to be perfectly honest with you, I would rather stay in, binge watch Stranger Things and eat Dr Oetker pizzas till the reindeers come home.

I know you must be terribly busy right now, but could you give me an early present to get me through? Something that will lift my spirits? Please don't suggest Valium or the complete series of Mr Bean. Been there, tried that.

With love and in desperation,

Virginia

PS Is there really a Santa Claus?

Dear Virginia,

Yes, there is a Santa Claus. And yes, my dear, I have just the remedy. I'd like you to head to a cosy little café and watch "Dear Santa". It's a two-hander play about a couple wrestling with just the same sort of holiday angst. Well, the husband is wrestling. The wife is sort of in his corner. She lifts his spirits and she'll lift yours, but he's fun to sympathise with and his reminiscences will make you think as well as smile. At the very least, your own family will look good by comparison. But that's not why I want you to go. This play is Dickens meets Neil Simon--it'll put the spice back in your egg nog and the sprinkles on your sugar cookies.

I have a knack for knowing what people would like, and I know you'll enjoy this little play, starring Erik Abbott as the grumpy hubby forced to write to me against his will and Christine Probst as his optimistic wife, who is actually excited about the idea of writing to me as a kind of couple's therapy.

He's a doubting Thomas--he's been on my naughty list--but he ends up opening up to me like he's talking to his closest confident. Abbott works himself up into a tangle of Christmas tree lights torment, then softens like the first downy snow fall--his performance is as strong as his character tries to be. She's always been on my nice list. Christine Probst is perfect as the wife who sees the good in things and is as bubbly as crémant and yet as down to earth a corny Christmas sweater. We believe in her; and she's never stopped believing in me...or in her husband. And like the elves in my workshop, this couple, despite their differences, works together well.

Director Peter Zazzali flew here from NYC to polish this little gem. His expert eye and ear ensured the performances undulated with changing pace and temperament. It's not a given that a play where the cast sits at a table the whole time is going to continually hold attention, but it does. Zazzali brought out the best of the actors and of this play, just as I think seeing it will help bring out the best in you, Virginia.

I can't encourage you enough, Virginia, to take my advice and go see "Dear Santa". Tickets are only €10, so it won't even take a bit out of your boxer short budget. And there's more good news--this play is transportable. "Dear Santa" will be performed at several corporate parties and it may still be available for your private event too.

"Dear Santa" by Actors Rep (<https://actorsrep.lu/>) is performed on Friday 8 December and Thursday 21 December at 7:30 and 9 p.m. on both evenings. Café Rocas (<https://www.facebook.com/RocasPage/>),

Luxemburger Wort

Review

Theatre Review: Can Santa help your marriage?



Can writing a letter to Santa help your marriage?
Photo: Sarita Rao
(#)

Published on Saturday, 2 December, 2017 at 10:33

How long has it been since you wrote a letter to Santa and if you did, would it make you re-evaluate your loved ones?

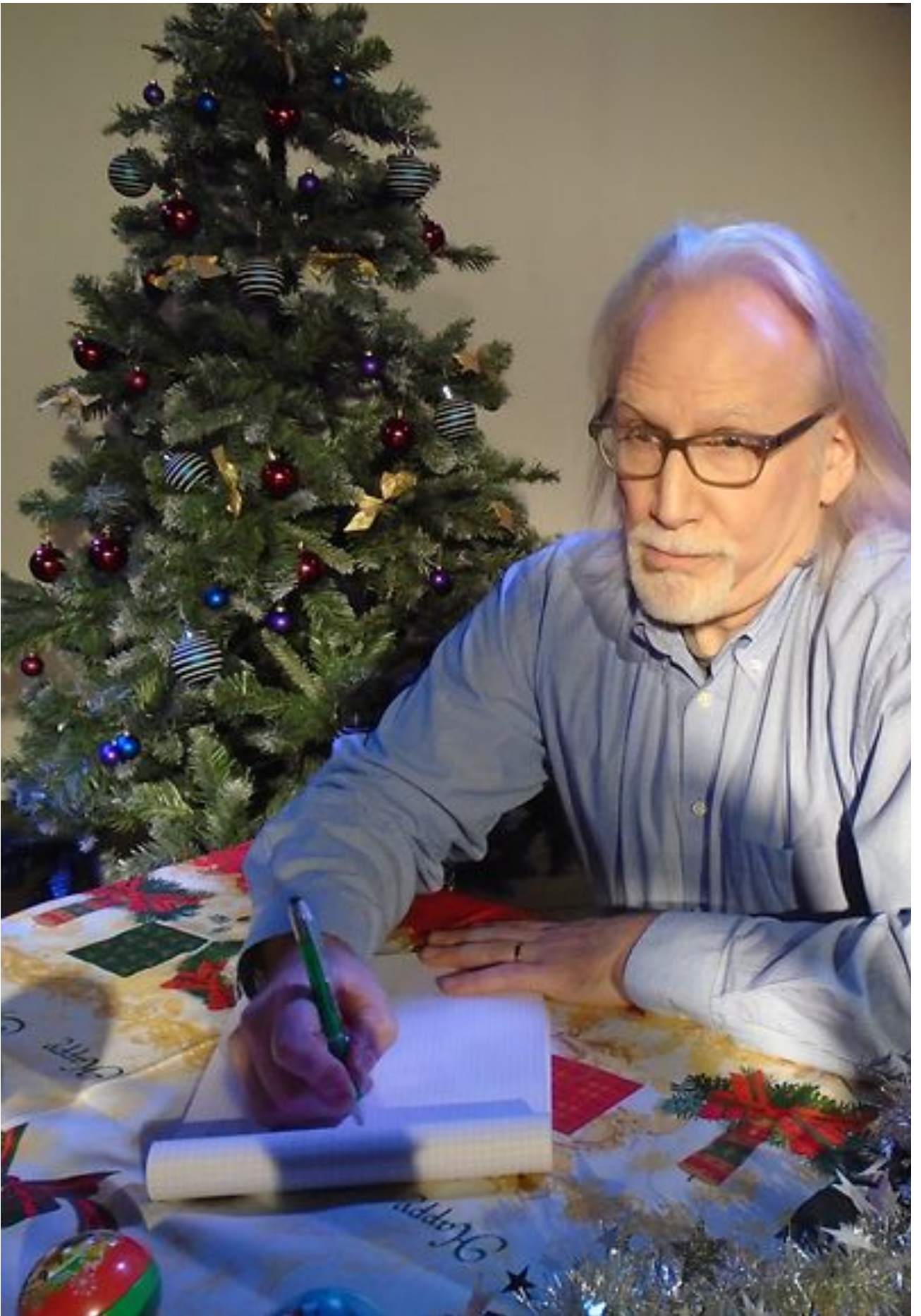
This is the premise of the delightfully witty short theatre play "Dear Santa..." written by Erik Abbott from Actors Rep who also plays the husband.

Piped Christmas music fades as the stage lights illuminate a table set with tinsel and a snow globe. HE (the husband) is thinking about what to write in his first letter to Santa in 40 years. It's at the request of a couple's counsellor, after his wife won a free session in a raffle at work.

He deliberates on an 8-year old child for whom "the world's rules are not complicated", and wonders if Santa gets emails in today's technology age. As a grown-up his list comprises a new boss and a holiday season without having to visit his in-laws and his own family.

SHE (the wife) played by Christine Probst feels guilty for not having written to Santa since she was 21 years old: "It's not you, it's me. I got my priorities mixed up."

She wonders if Santa has kids and whether it's politically correct these days to refer to the Elves as the "Christmas toy making community".



What to ask for this year? (Sarita Rao)

Sarita Rao

(#)

Her list is mostly about everyone else from her kids to her relatives, but in the end, what she most misses is that she fell in love with her husband because he was silly. He made her laugh. She's hoping that writing letters to Santa will bring a bit of silly frivolity back into their lives.

Peter Zazzali directs this 45 minute play in the intimate setting of Cafe Rocas, with an eye to facial expressions as well as monologues, giving the audience the feeling that they are looking in through a house window, as in turn the couple write their letters to Santa.

It's thought provoking humour, as you peep inside the minds of what two people feel about Christmas, about family, and each other, with a sentimental happy ending. You'll walk home wondering just what you'll be asking Santa for in your letter.

"Dear Santa..." will be performed at **7.30pm and 9pm on Friday 8 December and Thursday 21 December** at Café Rocas, 33 Rue des Capucins. Tickets cost €10 and can be ordered at ActorsRep.tickets@gmail.com (<mailto:ActorsRep.tickets@gmail.com>), or by phone at (+352) 35 63 39. It is also available as an entertainment at seasonal parties and events. For more details contact ActorsRep.Erik@gmail.com (<mailto:ActorsRep.Erik@gmail.com>).

(By Sarita Rao, wort-en@wort.lu, +352 49939721)

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