Jenifer Presto, UO REEES Director
Judith Baskin, CAS Associate Dean of Humanities
Kevin Hatfield, UO Housing Assistant Director of Residence Life
Heghine Hakobyan, UO Libraries Slavic Librarian
Amanda Garcia, UO Libraries Exhibit & Imaging Specialist
Jason Stone, UO Libraries Interim Strategic Communications and Writing Specialist
Brooke Cagno, UO REEES Undergraduate Program Specialist
Hope Marston, Oregon Consortium for International and Area Studies
Stacie Irvin, Director of Conference Services
Brittany Nefcy, Residence Life Coordinator
Vadim Vologdski and Julia Tikohov
Marjorie Taylor and the Velvet Edge
Janet Rose, Alexandra Bonds, Vicki Vanecek-Young, UO Theater Department
Rick Moore
Conger Street Clock Museum of Eugene

Marita Talbott, whose spinning wheel has been lent to our production, Suzie Liles of Eugene Textile Center and Linda, a customer in Joanne’s Fabrics.

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, with support from the UO College of Arts and Sciences, UO Libraries, and UO Housing, presents:

The Queen of Spades
A Bilingual Russian-English Play
Based on A. Pushkin’s 1835 Novella
Performed at Global Scholars Hall 123
March 7·7:30pm
March 8·2:30pm
The show is free and open to the public.

In collaboration with the UO Department of Art and Theatre Arts.
"What's your favorite author?" may be answered differently by different people in the US or elsewhere, but in Russia the answer would be unanimous: "Pushkin." Pushkin is the creator of the modern Russian language and even a household name. "Who will wash the dishes? Pushkin?" a tired woman may ask her partner. When the Nobel Prize winner, Russian poet Joseph Brodsky came to Eugene, Oregon to lecture at the invitation of the UO Professor James Rice, he noted that this city's name would be dear to any Russian: "Eugene Oregon" --- close enough to the most famous piece of Russian literature, "Eugene Onegin" by Pushkin.

"Eugene Onegin" and Pushkin's other poetry is virtually untranslatable --- even a virtuoso Vladimir Nabokov who devoted two volumes to an attempt to translate "Eugene Onegin" word for word, admitted that. Luckily, Pushkin wrote a few prose pieces, among them the famous 1835 novella, "The Queen of Spades." In Tchaikovsky's opera its original plot was changed to accommodate a more sentimental attitude that was prevalent half a century after the original was written. Changes to the plot occurred almost every time "Queen of Spades" was staged as a play, too. The original text is too short, ironic and dry. There is no apparent moral lesson in it --- it's not known for its flowery style or sentimentality --- and it is very bare. In his translation of the novella into French, Prosper Merimee added adjectives!

Later Russian authors, like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, offered the readers their moral vision, philosophy, political views, and ideas of history. The change from Pushkin to Dostoevsky can be seen in two works devoted to a murder of an old woman. In "Queen of Spades," Hermann wants the magic cards' secret to get rich, inadvertently kills the old woman who keeps the secret then becomes insane. In "Crime and Punishment," Raskolnikov kills an old woman out of highest principles: he considers himself a superman and in hope to later serve humanity kills an old woman with an axe. When he realizes he is not a superman, he turns himself in and learns to love. The author here defeats his hero's ideology from a moral viewpoint. Now if we look at the pieces by the 20th century modernist Daniil Kharms that also focused on the death of old women, we notice their total absurdity. According to Russian history, they lived through three periods of their modern history. In early 19th century, they looked for pragmatic Western-style solutions to societal ills; in mid- and end-19th century philosophic and political passions were boiling and Russians looked for their own unique way; early to mid-20th century there was social experimentation, then terror under a mask of absurd social optimism.

**Director's Note**

Julia Frederick is a graduate from the UO Theatre Department. She has designed the lighting for the show. This is her third year working with the Russian Department on the play. She really enjoys working with the wonderful cast and crew, and hopes you enjoy the show! Насладитесь шоу!

Nik Ligett works at the University of Oregon Libraries as the coordinator of the Aerial Photography Collection. This is his third year doing the sound effects and first year doing music for the Russian Through Theater production.

**Music Credits:**
Waltz No. 3 in D Major—Mily Balakirev
Tarantella in B Major - Mily Balakirev
Valse from Ivan Susanin—Mikhail Glinka
Variations On a Theme from the Opera Faniska By Cherubini In B major—Mikhail Glinka
Pushkin Waltzes, Op. 120: No. 2. Allegro Meditativo—Sergei Prokofiev

Alexander Kashirin received a Ph.D. from the Department of History at the University of Oregon in 2010, and has taught classes at UO for several years. He has developed artistic interests and talents for a long period of his life, and he has applied these skills to also painting our set. He has enjoyed being the assistant director for Queen of Spades this year, and is looking forwards to next term when he will be teaching the "Russian Culture" course.

University of Oregon Instructor, writer and playwright, Dr. Julia Nemirovskaya, a talented dramatist, regularly stages bilingual Russian-English plays that she adapts or writes herself.
Our cast is joined by a crew of talented kids who perform a small play of their own!

Anastasia Savenkova received her MA in Art History from St. Petersburg State University. She is a GTF and MA student in the UO REEES. She teaches art to children at the Little Owl School of Arts in Eugene. For a number of years, Ana has designed beautiful costumes for UO Russian Theatre productions.

Lisa Schultz Tucker has been intrigued by her Russian heritage since she has was a small child. She is crashing the party this year with the party favors— as the props manager.

Pushkin, the most "normal" of the Russian authors, was followed by a whole constellation of geniuses who were also dangerous dreamers. Yet even though literature is Russian national sport like opera in Italy or hockey in Canada, writers cannot be credited for all its social upheavals. It is hard to say who was the real author of the script of the Russian historical drama then and today. That author could well have been insane. What makes Pushkin so special is that in reading his work, you regain your normalcy. Hermann becomes a madman but you stay perfectly sane because you know he violated the rules of the game: a game of chance has to be a game of chance, and he wanted a sure win. Therefore, there are rules. And if you follow them, you stay a normal human being-- or government.

In the script, I tried to keep every line by Pushkin intact. I even included epigraphs as random conversations. Yet one thing I changed. In Pushkin's novella, the old woman is cold, egotistic, ugly and living in stale inertia. Pushkin was killed in a duel as a young man. He saw old people but never was one. A friend who is ninety-seven told me she never had as many erotic dreams and extravagant thoughts as after she turned ninety: old people retain the emotions, hopes and idiosyncrasies of the young -- it is only their slowing bodies that aren't as expressive. So I cast a South Eugene High school sophomore as the Queen of Spades. She has a lifeless mask but she often takes it off. The Old Countess becomes the same lively girl who captivated the imagination of the French King's court. She becomes a symbol of blithe, young spirits living in prisons of aging bodies.

In a moment, you will see the brilliant cast who, out of love for Pushkin and his culture, spent hours memorizing lines and sewing lace collars to Goodwill garb -- who rehearsed songs in a foreign language on the nights when they could have been going on dates or sipping lattes at cafes -- who believe in the miracle of a live show and have joyful energy they hope to share with you. They are supported by a similarly gifted and devoted crew. You will see small children, heritage speakers reciting a Pushkin poem about witches, mermaids and forest spirits. Like all players in all times, the cast will be peeking at you through the holes in the curtain in hopes that you enjoy the show -- doing their best to make sure you do -- for they are not seeking any other reward.

-Julia Nemirovskaya
Cast in Order of Appearance

The Countess is a legend; when she was young, she lost a million during a game of cards, then won it back in a day. Now she spends her time leisurely bossing around her ward, Lizaveta Ivanovna, and remembering her past glory days, until a young officer decides to win by obtaining her secret. Lizka Vaintrob is also somewhat of a legend, having been involved in Russian theater longer than anyone can remember.

Serafima plays Three of Clubs and Secret Ill-will: These characters are very similar in nature, both are very sarcastic and love to gossip. They don’t really think of the consequences that gossiping about people may have and are amused by people’s shocked reactions to when they say something scandalous. Secret Ill-will is more cruel while Three of Clubs is very benign in her mischief. While they both switch back and forth between Russian and English, both like Serafima have a native tongue of sarcasm.

Lizaveta Ivanovna’s life is already pitiable, made even worse by the fact that she has to then translate her situation to the audience in English. Perhaps she is simply too shy and awkward—Liza wonders if the entire situation is her own fault? Gwyn Snider however, is a much less complicated character. Gwyn’s main life struggle is telling her character apart from the other two Lisa’s in the cast and crew.

Sasha Stepanova plays the second maid. You can tell her apart from the other two maids by her flirty personality. Her main job is to tend to the Countess. She also plays the part of a Roma person and is part of the choir in this year’s play. Her real life differs drastically from that of her characters—Sasha is a Human Physiology major and a heritage speaker of Russian.
**Katya Campbell** is a Russian major participating in Russian theater for the first time. As the Queen of Diamonds - She's sarcastic and a little moody (perhaps she's jealous of Queen of Hearts?). She is proudful as well, and doesn't really like to associate herself with the other Queens except Queen of Clubs. As the First Maid, she plays someone who's a little dumb and "happy", and even a little energetic and clumsy. She gets distracted easily, but tends to her countess very well just like her other maids.

Maid #3 enjoys fussing, fretting, snooping, and scolding. When not engaged in lengthy naps, she can be found raiding her mistress's snuffbox and pinching her colleagues. She is portrayed by **Lara Ravitch**, who does not take snuff and rarely pinches anyone at the UO American English Institute, where she coordinates the Intensive English Program. Lara would like to thank her boss, Alicia Going, for supporting her involvement in this show! The 10 of Spades is thrilled to be onstage at Global Scholars Hall and only regrets that her unparalleled glory has gone unrecognized and she is forced to share the stage with so many inferior artists. Lara Ravitch, on the other hand, enjoys learning every day from the talented cast and crew of this production! Lara is eternally grateful to her wife, Britt, and son, Kijan, for putting up with her crazy Russian drama shenanigans.

**Atticus Kazarian** is a Linguistics major playing several diverse role in this year's production: The King of Diamonds is a proud man whose favorite activities include drinking, gambling, and joking around with his friends - who all happen to be other gambling drunks. Meanwhile the Doctor is a stuffy, no-nonsense man who practices medicine. His hobbies might include chess and reading his impressive collection of encyclopedias.

**The Crew**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Julia Nemirovskaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant directors</td>
<td>Lara Ravitch, Sasha Kashirin, Denis Nikitin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistants, technical support</td>
<td>Gwyn Snider, Stephanie Harlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Managers</td>
<td>Jonathan Miller, Lara Ravitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art, stage design</td>
<td>Anastasia Savenko-Moore, Sasha Kashirin, Lizka Vaintrob, Jonathan Miller, Rick Moore, Emily Jesch, Giulia Arcuri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music director</td>
<td>Nicholas Ligett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>Lara Ravitch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costumes</td>
<td>Anastasia Savenko-Moore, Lisa Schultz Tucker, Gwyn Snider, Britt Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choreography</td>
<td>Serafima Cunningham, Giulia Arcuri, Stephanie Harlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Props Manager</td>
<td>Lisa Schultz Tucker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program and poster</td>
<td>Lizka Vaintrob, Heghine Hakoby, Gwyn Snider, Clayton Davis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Relations and Social Media</td>
<td>Gwyn Snider, Lisa Schultz Tucker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language tutoring</td>
<td>Denis Nikitin, Lara Ravitch, Heghine Hakoby, Lizka Vaintrob</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makeup</td>
<td>Stephanie Harlow, Lizka Vaintrob</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lights and Special effects</td>
<td>Julia Frederick, Megan Bashor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choir</td>
<td>Lacey Whitwer, Nick Lutton, Atticus Kazarian, Jonathan Miller, Serafima Cunningham, Emily Jesch, Sasha Stepanova, Crystal Brown, Clayton Davis, Lizka Vaintrob</td>
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</table>
The Cards take a break from their gossiping and backbiting to stage a production of Pushkin’s “Queen of Spades.” The story begins in a St. Petersburg gambling hall, where a group of reckless young officers and ladies try their luck at cards, wine, and love. Between games of faro, Officer Tomski tells the peculiar tale of his grandmother Countess Anna Fedotovna, who has not touched a card in over six decades. All those years ago, when she was known to Parisian high society as the “Venus of Moscow” for her grand beauty and decadent lifestyle, the Countess lost her fortune in a game of faro with the Prince of Orleans. Her husband refused to cover the debt, and the despondent Countess turned to the eccentric noble St. Germaine for help. Instead of loaning her the money, St. Germaine taught her the secret of the three cards that would win back her fortune. Like most stories told in gambling halls, it’s a ridiculous story, a fairy-tale of magic and fortune, a joke. And yet, Hermann wonders, what if the story is real?

Hermann is a hard-working and economical young engineer wise enough to avoid gambling or chasing fairy-tales, but the story ignites his fiery imagination. He develops an obsession with learning the secret of the three cards and becoming rich. Tormented by this obsession that he cannot comprehend, Hermann wanders the city aimlessly until he finds himself standing before the estate of—who else?—the old Countess Anna Fedotovna. Now 87 years old, she spends her days flitting between aristocratic parties, recounting her former glories, and harassing her young ward Lizaveta Ivanovna (Liza). Liza finds herself uncomfortably fascinated with the young engineer who has taken to standing before her window every day. Is this a grand romantic gesture like in the novels she reads, or some dark and obscure obsession? Hermann and Liza begin to secretly exchange love letters, and his writing grows more passionate—and more unstable—with every day. Finally, Liza gives into Hermann’s pleas and arranges a rendezvous: while she and the Countess are at an ambassador’s ball, Hermann sneaks into the manor and approaches Liza’s room to wait for her return. Inside, Hermann is tormented by a choice: Liza and romance? Or the Countess and the secret of the three cards? He chooses the latter.

**15 Minute Intermission**

**Lacey Whitwer** plays Princess Nina, a modest lady with an overall disinterest in humanity. She is majoring in Political Science with a focus on Securities Studies and Russian Studies with a focus on Russian History, while learning German as well. Partaking in this play has allowed her to experience Pushkin’s novella in a way no simple read through could have permitted.

In the words of Julia Nemirovskaya, the character Mademoiselle is a young healthy woman with red rosy cheeks. So don’t be thrown off by the redness of my face, I’m fine guys. It’s all part of the show. **Yulia Krasnova** is a Sophomore this year and it’s her first time performing in a Russian theater play.

Both of Emily Jesch’s characters, Volskaya and the Six of Clubs are similar in one way: both like to mess with people. Volskaya is a very improper high society lady, who could care less what others think about her. She juggles, shares chairs with officers, and talks to people she shouldn’t. The Six of Clubs likes to mess with everyone (by pretending to be an important card). The Six likes to misdirect everyone, but mostly Hermann. These are very fun characters to play, especially since Emily can really let out her love of fooling people.

**Brittany Dobos** plays Princess Polina, a passionate young woman who was born into royalty, but would gladly give away all of her wealth to be with her true love a poor cavalry officer. Alas, she is tragically destined to marry a man of royalty—a man she truly despises. As the Seven of Diamonds, Brittany plays a silly, cute and playful card who adores the art of dance. The Seven of Diamonds possesses some sort of mysterious spark that’s hard to pinpoint.. some might even call her magical.
This is Nathan Whitwer’s third play with the Russian department and he is happy to be rejoining such a fun program. One of Nathan’s characters St. Germaine, is an interesting character because even though he is a rich guy, he doesn’t bail out the countess in her time of need. Instead he resorts to more “mystical” means.

Stephanie Harlow is a junior Business Administration student playing the Queen of Hearts, a vulnerable and loving character who loves true romance. She loves when someone finds their price charming. The Queen of Hearts works behind the scenes to encourage people to step out of their typical role and give in to their true emotions. Stephanie is from Calabasas, California, where she loves spending time with her family.

Crystal Brown plays a stunning Roma (Gypsy) fortune teller. She comes from a powerful line of Gypsy royalty. Although she may appear fickle, she is a cunning business woman looking to profit from her gift. In real life Crystal is a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Oregon who is obsessed with everything from Eastern Europe.

Giulia Arcuri, is Political Science major participating in Russian Theater for the first time as the Ace of Spades, a particularly cunning card. She likes to make trouble when she can and is smart enough to know when that is. In addition, she is an observer. She doesn’t speak often but takes action when she sees fit.

Act II : Three, Seven, Ace!

The Cards take a break from the story. In order to prepare the actors for their next scenes and show the audience what usually happens to cruel old women in Russian literature, the Joker invites Crime and Punishment’s Raskolnikov and the absurdist author Daniil Kharms. Raskolnikov gives many reasons for why it is morally just to murder a cruel woman who wastes her wealth, while Kharms gives no reason at all for the series of old women who plummet from a window near his apartment. Back in the manor, Hermann confronts the Countess and demands that she reveal her secret to him. She refuses and tells him that the secret of the cards is nothing but a joke. Furious, Hermann draws his pistol and frightens the Countess to death. Hermann runs to Liza’s room to give her the news and confess that he came to her home in order to learn the secret of the three cards, but never planned to murder the Countess. Outraged at this deception but terrified of Hermann, Liza helps him escape. Troubled by his conscience, Hermann goes to the funeral of the Countess. As he approaches her casket, the dead Countess opens her eyes and winks at Hermann. Distraught and shocked, Hermann drinks himself into a stupor and is visited by the ghost of the Countess. She reveals the three secret cards to him in exchange for his promise to marry Liza. When he wakes, Hermann sees the three cards—three, seven, ace—everywhere he goes. At the salon of the great gambler Chekalinski, Hermann bets all of his life savings on the three and wins. He returns the next night to bet his money on the seven and wins again. On the third night he bets again and the ace comes up, but Hermann finds that he has bet instead on the Queen of Spades, and he loses everything. Whether this is accident, chance, magic, or cheating, Hermann cannot tell. As he looks into the face of the Queen, it takes on the appearance of the Countess and winks at him. He leaves the parlor, crushed. Time passes. Tomski marries Polina, Livanova marries a young a nobleman, and the Joker is engaged to the Queen of Hearts. Hermann is committed to an asylum and spends his days doing nothing but muttering “Three! Seven! Ace! Three! Seven! Queen!” He has lost his inheritance and his sanity, but gamblers in every hall have gained another ridiculous story, a fairytale of magic and fortune, another joke.
Clayton Davis on playing Hermann: two fixed ideas cannot occupy the same place, Pushkin writes, and as if in demonstration of this maxim he composed a novella about the ironies, oscillations, and confusions of a man hosting two conflicting identities. On the one hand you’ve got Hermann the German: economical, industrious, chaste, calculating; but then you’ve got Hermann the Russian: romantic, brooding, impetuous, reckless. The duality is intensely uncomfortable: Hermann is an antagonistic protagonist at best and a protagonistic antagonist at worst, mysterious to himself most of all. Don’t worry if you’re having a hard time guessing what he’s about to do next, because Hermann probably couldn’t tell you, either.

Gersh Botvinnik is acting as a Beggar Kid and the Nine of Diamonds in the play. He is nine years old and in the fourth grade at Adams Elementary School. He has acted for a number of years in the Russian Theater program.

Denis Nikitin engaged and studied theater at the Peoples’ Theater of Youth (ТЮЗ) in Saint Petersburg, Russia, in 2004. He came to Eugene, Oregon six months ago. In the play he has several roles. As the Ace of Diamonds, he is close to the Joker, and has some authority. As Surin, Denis is not the luckiest soldier of fortune, but is not discouraged and continues to gamble.

Nick Lutton, a 3rd year Russian language major is playing Narumov, a poor cavalry officer, a carouser, and an avid card player who has a penchant for following his heart. Nick is also playing the Prince D’Orleans, who is a proper and stylish prince of the French court.

Jonathan Miller is a 21 year old Russian major. Among his roles are Minski, a young, strikingly handsome officer, who is also ironic, humorous, and a fan of Pushkin. Another of his characters is Raskolnikov, crazy ideological poor aristocrat, who believes his superior moral convictions are above the normal laws of society.

Tomski is the brown-nosing officer played by Dalton Roberts. This Drunkard officer is likely to be found playing cards with his fellow elite. Dalton is in the midst of his second year at the University Of Oregon studying Eastern European Studies and Linguistics. You may recognize him from last years Russian Theater production as Henrik.

The Soothsayer is played by Dr. Jenifer Presto. Jenifer Presto is an Associate Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature and the Director of Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Oregon.