

# AlvegoRoot Theatre

2024 Season



# SLATE SISTERS

written & directed by Adam Corrigan Holowitz

# A Note from Adam



AlvegoRoot's 2024 Season is full of boldly imagined worlds in which big ideas are explored, provoked and played with. The stories of London Ontario and Southwestern Ontario serve as the creative catalyst for all the plays in this season; you will see the city and region you know reflected and refracted in these works in surprising ways. The development of local plays and supporting local playwrights is the cornerstone of our theatre and this season. This season we present a world premiere and two new versions of plays we have been developing. You, our audience, have been part of these plays' journey, seeing them in their development, and now you get to see them anew, in all their glory because they have grown in numerous and beautiful ways. We are also excited that we are introducing a NEW festival to showcase the myriad of talented playwrights and theatre artists in London! Thank you for coming, your presence is essential, we are glad to have you joined us for the ride!

*- Adam C-H, Artistic Director*

Slate Sisters is supported by the London Arts Council through the City of London's Community Arts Investment Program.



London **Arts** Council



**London**  
CANADA

*AlvegoRoot creates work on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples as well as nations both recorded and unrecorded who have been caretakers of this land for time immemorial. These lands are connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.*

Front Cover: Kydra Ryan as Sylvia in Slate Sisters.

Back Cover: Sarah Hagarty in Slate Sisters. Photos by Richard Gilmore.

# **SLATE SISTERS**

written & directed by Adam Corrigan Holowitz

## **Cast**

*in order of appearance*

**Kydra Ryan**

*Sylvia Slate / Marla Benson / Heidi Klaus*

**Elizabeth Rodenburg**

*Iris Slate / Nancy Benson / Margot Klaus*

**Sarah Hagarty**

*Izzy Slate / Cherie Benson / Karen Klaus*

## **Artistic Credits**

**Adam Corrigan Holowitz - Director**

**Kydra Ryan - Dramaturg**

**Adam Corrigan Holowitz - Designer**

**Stephen Holowitz - Composer & Music Director**

## **RUNNING TIME**

**2 Hours and 15 Minutes**

*Including One Fifteen Minute Intermission*

## **SETTING**

**1935 in The Forked River City**

Special Thanks to Karen Harley, Rebecca Wolsley, Suzanne Edmondson, Mark Mooney, Teresa Corrigan



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# Playwright and Director's Notes

There were many different thoughts that contributed to writing *Slate Sisters*. My curiosity at this moment is in how the play will be received, interpreted and explored by you the audience. Here are some short contiguous notes that you may find helpful in understanding the writing process of *Slate Sisters*:

- Why did Shakespeare begin so many plays with a storm? Why do so many of these storms separate siblings? Inevitably one sibling finds themselves alive, alone, on dry, strange and foreign land. If plays are a little life rounded with a sleep, then the beginning of the play is birth, and birth is a storm. The play is life and the strange foreign land is the world into which they must acclimatize and learn to call home.
- Writing this play began as an exploration of the golden age of radio. This led me to the question of what is a golden age. One definition is an imaginary past time. This is where the inspiration for *Slate Sisters* was born. I have written a lot about London's history but this definition got me interested in imagining a history that never really happened. Why do we dream, why do we imagine and what do we hope to find when we dream? These are the questions at the centre of this play.
- Puns...a word that sounds like another word. Puns confuse, confound and conflate meaning. But the beauty of language is that it is meaningful, it is full of meaning. No word holds only one meaning, and that is what make language complex and rich. Can puns also reveal the multiplicity of language? Can puns reveal meaning? Puns make us laugh, they make us groan, can they also make us cry?

# Why A New Production of Slate Sisters?

Slate Sisters Premiered in 2022, so why is AlvegoRoot doing a new production just two years later?

At our core, AlvegoRoot is a new play development company. We strive to develop local plays that are strong in craft and powerful in their content. Workshops, dramaturgy and readings are all important tools in developing a new play, but plays are mysterious things, nothing can compare to seeing how a play reacts in the context of a production. Elements that don't appear to work on paper sometimes work magically on stage and things that read brilliantly on the page reveal themselves to need reworking when a play is on its feet.

I would love, with the support of our community, to be able to share successive productions of new plays we are developing. It is thrilling to see a play grow and mature before your eyes. This is how some of my favourite theatres around the world work. It is a rare, special way to make plays and the results are worth celebrating.



# Why A New Production of Slate Sisters? [Continued]

I promise you this...the word “revival” is not in our vocabulary at AlvegoRoot. When we present a new production of a play, you will experience a progression in that play’s development. If you saw the 2022 Slate Sisters, you will witness in this production how this play has shifted, and changed. We loved the 2022 production but this is a wholly new production. Some things worked in 2022 that we remember fondly but turned out differently this time. You can’t paint pots the same way twice.

I am delighted to imagine how your expectations will be surprised by some of the new turns the play takes. It is these kinds of creative surprises that occur in a play’s development that fulfill me as a theatre maker. I am so glad to share them with you.

- Adam C-H



**Sarah Hagarty as Karen and  
Kydra Ryan as Sylvia  
in Slate Sisters.  
Photos by Richard Gilmore.**



Elizabeth Rodenburg as Iris in Slate Sisters.  
Photo by Richard Gilmore.



# Theatrical Devices Used in this Production

**Slate Sisters uses some theatrical devices in the staging of the play, that may not be familiar to all audience members. Here are some tips for things to look out for.**

## Switching Characters

**This play is performed by three actors, and each actor plays three characters... meaning there are nine characters seen onstage in total! The play features three sets of sisters; the Slate Sisters (Iris, Sylvia and Izzy), the Benson Sisters, and the Klaus Sisters. For the majority of the play, the actors play the Slate Sisters. You will know when they change characters because along with the actors changing their mannerisms they will put on different jackets and hats. There are also two spoken word choruses where the Benson and the Klaus Sisters are introduced.**

**On the following pages are photo introductions to the characters.**

## Locations

**This play takes place in five locations.**

**The large red square is the playing space and when different pieces of furniture are inside the square, that transforms the square into different locations:**

**The microphone - the Slate's radio studio**

**The flower vase - the Benson's clubhouse**

**The red office chair - the Klaus headquarters**

**The cart with the table and suitcases shows we are in the dressing rooms.**

**The dressing room table is moved around the stage when the characters travel to another second theatre.**

## The Ending

**This play concludes with an intentionally ambiguous ending. Don't worry, you didn't miss anything. You can enjoy interpreting where reality and metaphor meet.**

# The Characters

**THE YEAR IS 1935...**

**PAMELA J RUPERTS IS PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

**THE KLAUS SISTERS RULE THE DAY**

**THE BENSON SISTERS RULE THE NIGHT**

**AND**

**THE SLATE SISTERS RULE THE AIRWAYS**



# The Characters



## IRIS SLATE

A newly discovered 1935 photo of noted radio comedy writer and humorist Iris Slate. Slate was an influential figure in the Golden Age of Radio, transforming the medium with highly irreverent scripts that used word play to a decadent extreme. Dismissed in later decades for being old fashioned; in the 1980s Slate's body of work was rediscovered by media studies academic Dr. Joyce Leah, who revealed how one could trace details of Slate's personal life in the many scripts and the one novel

“Rock As I Roll”.

# The Characters



## SYLVIA SLATE

A recolorized photo taken of Sylvia Slate backstage while on tour in 1935 with her hit radio show, *The Slate Sisters Comedy Hour*, which she performed live with her sisters. In her lifetime Slate was one of the most highly regarded celebrities with a manufactured image calculated by her benefactor Karen Klaus.

# The Characters



## IZZY SLATE

A rare 1935 candid photo of famed radio actor Isabella "Izzy" Slate. Known as the woman of a thousand voices, Izzy Slate began her acting career at the age of sixteen, voicing the role of Captain Arrow on the superhero serial *The Great Ones*. Later she starred alongside her sisters on *The Slate Sisters Comedy Hour*. At one point she was appearing on five radio shows a day. Miss Slate struggled with debt throughout her life due to gambling and she frequently associated with organized crime syndicates.

# The Characters



*The Benson Sisters  
Marla, Nancy and  
Cherie*

The Benson Sisters were one of the most feared and respected crime families of the complex 1930s underground economy. In the following decades the Benson's moved into politics.

Kydra Ryan as Marla, Elizabeth Rodenburg as Nancy and Sarah Hagarty as Cherie in *Slate Sisters*. Photos by Richard Gilmore.

# The Characters



*The Klaus Sisters  
Heidi, Karen and  
Margot*

By 1935 the Klaus Sisters were among the richest people in Canada, thanks in part to their visionary and avant-garde investment schemes. They also made a lot of money from suing people.

Kydra Ryan as Heidi, Sarah Hagarty as Karen, Elizabeth Rodenburg as Margot in *Slate Sisters*. Photos by Richard Gilmore.



Elizabeth Rodenburg as Iris, Kydra Ryan as Sylvia and Sarah Hagarty as Izzy.  
Kydra Ryan as Sylvia and Elizabeth Rodenburg as Iris in Slate Sisters.  
Photos by Richard Gilmore.





Kydra Ryan as Marla and Sarah Hagarty as Izzy in *Slate Sisters*.  
Photos by Richard Gilmore.



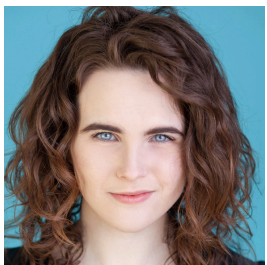
Kydra Ryan as Sylvia and Marla, Sarah Hagarty as Izzy and Elizabeth Rodenburg as Iris in Slate Sisters. Photos by Richard Gilmore.

# The Ensemble



**Adam Corrigan Holowitz (he/him), Founding Artistic Director**  
**2024 Season: Director & Playwright of Slate Sisters, Director of County Fair, Co-director of The Fig Tree, Writer and Performer for The Manor Park Evening Post.**

Adam works as a dramaturg, director and playwright. One the past sixteen seasons productions Adam has directed for AlvegoRoot include: Gyroscope by James Reaney, Slate Sisters (playwright), The Bicycle Play (co-creator), Pirates of Long Point (playwright), Harvest, Fools and Lovers, The Wind in the Willows (playwright), The Boy with an R in His Hand (playwright), Sixty-Seven (playwright) The Cheese Poet (playwright), The Big Lad, The Angel of Long Point (playwright), Running Rude, Press Cuttings, Colleening (creator). Adam co-wrote and performed The Lawyer of La Salette and Sweet Marie with Kydra Ryan. He also performed february: a love story and Tales for a Reaney Day with Kydra. In 2011 he performed his solo play Manor Park which began AlvegoRoot's current mandate of creating plays based on local stories. For Village Opera Adam has directed: John Beckwith and James Reaney's The Great Lakes Suite, Menotti's The Telephone, Shaw's Village Wooing. For Fridge Door Theatre he directed Lawrence Station. For Theatre Aezir he directed Gary Kirkham's Falling: A Wake. Adam holds a BA Honours from York University where he studied Dramaturgy. He is the recipient of The Iris Turcott Memorial Award for dramaturgy from York University.



**Sarah Hagarty, 2nd Season**  
**2024 Season: Izzy Slate in Slate Sisters.**

Sarah is a creative human completely incapable of committing to one medium; an actor, writer, musician, (emerging) producer, and as many other hats as she can balance atop her head. Past roles include Miss Stacey (Anne of Green Gables in Concert, Kiwanis Festival), Gertrude (Lawrence Station, Fridge Door Live Theatre) and Mrs. Cassilis (The Cassilis Engagement, University Players). Endless thanks to Adam, Kydra, Elizabeth, Eve, Keith, and the two very special heartbeats at home in Stratford.

# The Ensemble



## **Elizabeth Rodenburg (she/they), 1st Season**

### **2024 Season: Iris Slate in Slate Sisters.**

Selected credits include Antonio in Twelfth Night (Louie the Goat), performer and creator of Party Games (Buddies in Bad Times), Girl in Joyce and Florence (Alumnae Theatre), Deirdre in I Hate Hamlet (South Simcoe), Procne in If We Were Birds (University Players), Molly in The Smell of the Kill, Claudio/Margaret in Much Ado About Nothing, Brutus/Esther in Portia's Julius Caesar (University of Windsor). Elizabeth is a 2022 graduate from the University of Windsor's BFA in Acting program, and recent participant in Tarragon Theatre's Young Playwrights Unit.



## **Kydra Ryan (she/her), 8th Season**

### **2024 Season: Sylvia Slate in Slate Sisters, Playwright & Performer in County Fair, Co-Director of The Fig Tree, Writer & Performer of The Manor Park Evening Post.**

Kydra is the associate artistic director of AlvegoRoot as of 2022. She's an actor, writer, and director. Selected acting credits with AlvegoRoot include: Buster in The Lawyer of La Salette, her in february: a love story, Hilda in Gyroscope, Sylvia Slate in Slate Sisters (2022), Marie in Sweet Marie, Sylvia in Tales for a Reaney Day, Annie Pixley in Shall Not Be Taken, and Elsie in Elsie: Dreams and Sketches. Outside of AlvegoRoot: multiple characters in Lawrence Station (Fridge Door Live Theatre Company), and Portia in Pandemic Julius Caesar (Western Shakespeare). She was the assistant director of Six Characters in Search of an Author and Timon of Athens as a returning graduate of Fanshawe College.

AlvegoRoot Theatre

# COUNTY FAIR

by Kydra Ryan



July 17-20

directed by Adam Corrigan Holowitz  
Fanshawe Pioneer Village - 1424 Clarke Road



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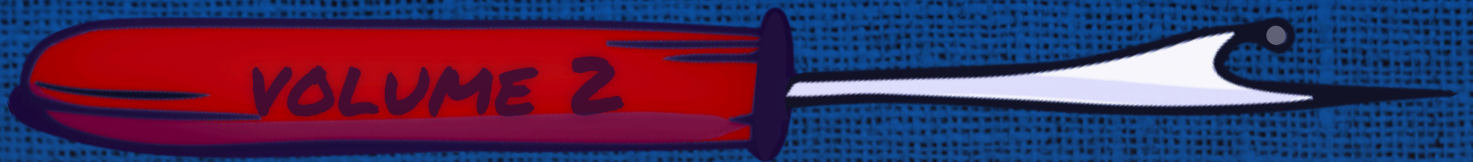
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- Deborah Walker
- Bronwyn Wilson
- Marie Wilson
- Richard Allan Yake



Sarah Hagarty as Karen Klaus in *Slate Sisters*.  
Photo by Richard Gilmore.

## ***Telling Local Stories, Creating Local Theatre***

AlvegoRoot Theatre is based in London Ontario. AlvegoRoot produces plays about London and the surrounding area. AlvegoRoot develops new plays based on local stories and people. With one eye to the world and another on Southwestern Ontario, AlvegoRoot has created a specific style of theatre that carries on the Souwesto theatre and arts tradition. 2024 marks AlvegoRoot Theatre's 16th Season.

**Artistic Director - Adam Corrigan Holowitz**

**Associate Artistic Director - Kydra Ryan**





**2024 SEASON**

**SLATE SISTERS COUNTY FAIR THIS HOUR HAS 10 MINUTES  
THE FIG TREE THE MANOR PARK EVENING POST**