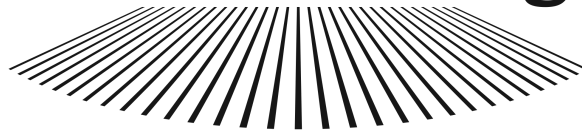


# The Western Stage



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CONTACT**

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Written by Jeffrey T. Heyer

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### ***The Selfish Shellfish***

by David Wood

Lovable sea creatures and one selfish shellfish are at risk of losing everything when The Great Slick attacks!

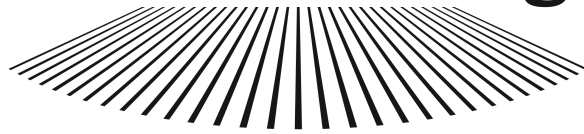
### **THE STORY:**

In a rock pool not too far from here, a tough but friendly Mussel spends his days working for the crabby and selfish Hermit Crab, H.C. Humans, not so affectionately known as “Big Ones” literally trash their habitat, littering the sea floor with debris. Worse yet, a tidal wave washes newcomers into the rockpool that these two shellfish share. Mussel befriends the newly homeless Urchin and Starfish, but H.C. demands that they leave on the next tide. The hungry but good-hearted Seagull arrives with a warning that two ships have collided, spilling tons of oil into the sea. Now, The Great Slick is coming their way, gleefully choking everything in his path. H.C. drives off Seagull, convincing himself that the warning is just a dodge to allow the others to stay in what he considers to be HIS rockpool. New dangers arise, due to the actions of the unpredictable Giant Anemone and The Great Slick's mean advance scout Sludge. Can these appealing rockpool denizens pull together to survive all these threats, or will H.C.'s selfishness and close-mindedness doom them all?

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

As a program of Hartnell Community College, The Western Stage offers as many programs for as many age groups as possible. Theater, after all, is an activity from which people of all ages benefit. During her decades of intensive involvement with TWS, Melissa Chin Parker rose from chorus member to her present position as Interim Artistic Director. She created a division called Young Company. Of it, she says:

# TheWesternStage



We expect the highest standards of artistic excellence and professionalism, even from our youngest members. We believe in preparing young artists to develop the stamina, confidence, and ambition that will not only help them “grow” up through the ranks of the company, but will give them an advantage in anything in life they wish to pursue. We view our young Company Members as future Western Stage professionals and future stewards of the arts.

Under her guidance the Young Company grew to include Spark Camp! A short summer program including forty activities over fifteen days taught by theater professionals to engage children in the many kinds of creativity that go into making theater. Then there is the Camp Assistants program in which young folk with a little experience under their belts help younger children with Spark Camp! Activities. A Backstage Crew experience for youngsters in which they “Get up close and personal with what happens backstage during a performance.” Apprenticeships mentored by TWS professionals and guest artists in production, costume, scene ship and administration. Outreach with touring shows, student matinees and teacher training.

Unfortunately, with the loss of the Woman's Center in 2005, Young Company has not found a dedicated space in which to perform. Then COVID-19 struck and seriously curtailed enrollment. Melissa envisioned this production of “The Selfish Shellfish” as a way to restart the Young Company program after Shelter-in-Place and get youngsters working again with oldsters and middlesters. At the same time, it allows Staff members a chance to work together.

As for the play, there have been several foreign productions, including in South Africa, and the play is popular with amateur companies.

## **THE AUTHOR:**

“The Selfish Shellfish” was written by David Wood, who was commissioned by The Redgrave Theatre, Farnham, England. Its world premiere was in 1983. The author notes that the play is intended to look in an entertaining, though not flippant, way at the serious contemporary issue of pollution. He hopes that young audience members' concerns about ecology will be encouraged by seeing the effects of an oil spill from the perspective of shellfish.

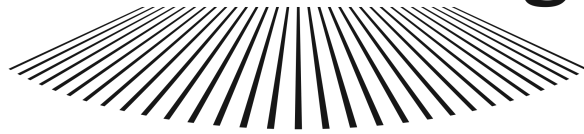
## **PRODUCTION TEAM:**

Directed by: Interim Artistic Director Melissa Chin Parker

## **CAST:**

In this production young performers work with seasoned TWS Staff members in bringing puppets to life and experiencing live performance.

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SEAGULL is played by Olivia Crane and Layla Guitierrez

MUSSEL by Sam Sullivan and Camilla Vazquez

THE GIANT ANEMONE, by Zalissa Johnson

H.C., a Hermit Crab, by Jeffrey T. Heyer

URCHIN, a Sea Urchin, by Anders Lindstrom and Jayden Guitierrez

STARFISH by Kathy Cusson and Anabelle Olivia

SLUDGE by Jeffrey T. Heyer

and THE GREAT SLICK by Ensemble with voiceover by Paul Sallabedra

In addition to the performers, young audience members will be invited to respond to occasional vocal participation

## **WHEN:**

4/15 and 4/16 - Saturday 2:00 pm and 4:30 pm, Sunday 2:00 pm and 4:30 pm

## **WHERE**

Steinbeck Hall on the Hartnell College Main Campus, 411 Central Avenue, Salinas, CA.

## **TICKETING INFORMATION**

Adult \$18; Students \$16 (Hartnell Students FREE); Youths (5-15) \$12; Group tickets available by contacting the TWS Box Office.

Online tickets and more information: [westernstage.com](http://westernstage.com) or call **(831) 755-6816**.

TWS Box Office is open Wednesday-Saturday 5:00-8:00pm. and one hour before curtain time on matinee Sundays. Leave VM to get callback within 24 hours.

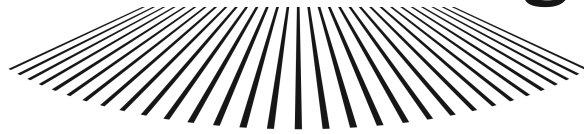
## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

This event is wheelchair accessible. Individuals requiring other accommodations should contact the ticket office at least one week prior to the event.

## **CURRENT COVID-19 INFORMATION**

The Western Stage is not requiring COVID vaccine or proof of a negative test result at this time. Ticket holders are asked to not attend the event if they have COVID-19 like symptoms and have **not** tested for COVID-19, have been recently exposed to COVID-19 or have recently tested positive for COVID-19. This policy is subject to change based increase infection rates and or Hartnell College policy updates.

# The Western Stage



Mask policy in The Studio Theatre - In order to keep our unmasked actors healthy, we are requiring all patrons to wear masks while in the Studio Theatre due to the close proximity of the audience to the stage.

## **ABOUT THE WESTERN STAGE – ESTABLISHED 1974**

The Western Stage (TWS) is a professionally managed, community-based theatre company and educational program that provides opportunities for the creative process and high-level artistic experiences. Led by its educational mission and believing that strong arts experiences are important for building innovative, creative, and resilient communities, The Western Stage endeavors to offer a robust variety of programs designed for personal growth and skill development that address the need for a safe space where students and theatre enthusiasts may engage in theatre production while working side-by-side with theatre professionals. Through its annual production season, The Western Stage endeavors to provide strong pathways and development for artists throughout the continuum of a career in theatre and its related performing arts. The Western Stage develops new works that speak to the history and culture of the Salinas Valley and provides educational opportunities for students of all skill levels to explore and develop their unique talent. [www.westernstage.com](http://www.westernstage.com)

## **ABOUT HARTNELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT – ESTABLISHED 1920**

The Hartnell CCD serves more than 17,000 students annually through its main campus in Salinas, the Alisal Campus in East Salinas, and education centers in King City, Soledad, and Castroville. Hartnell College is a Hispanic Serving Institution that provides associate degrees and certificate programs. It prepares students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities and to enter the workforce with necessary skills. Hartnell College is known for its innovative public and private partnerships that support world class education for STEM, career technical education, fine and performing arts, humanities and social sciences, nursing and health sciences, and athletics. We are proud to be winners of the 2015 Innovation Award for CSin3 –a Computer Science collaboration with CSU Monterey Bay that leads to a bachelor’s degree in three years. **We are growing leaders through opportunity, engagement and achievement.** For more about Hartnell CCD, visit [www.hartnell.edu](http://www.hartnell.edu).

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