CHRISTIAN HEGE, EPYLLIONARD

PRESENTS

ALEXANDER KLAUS

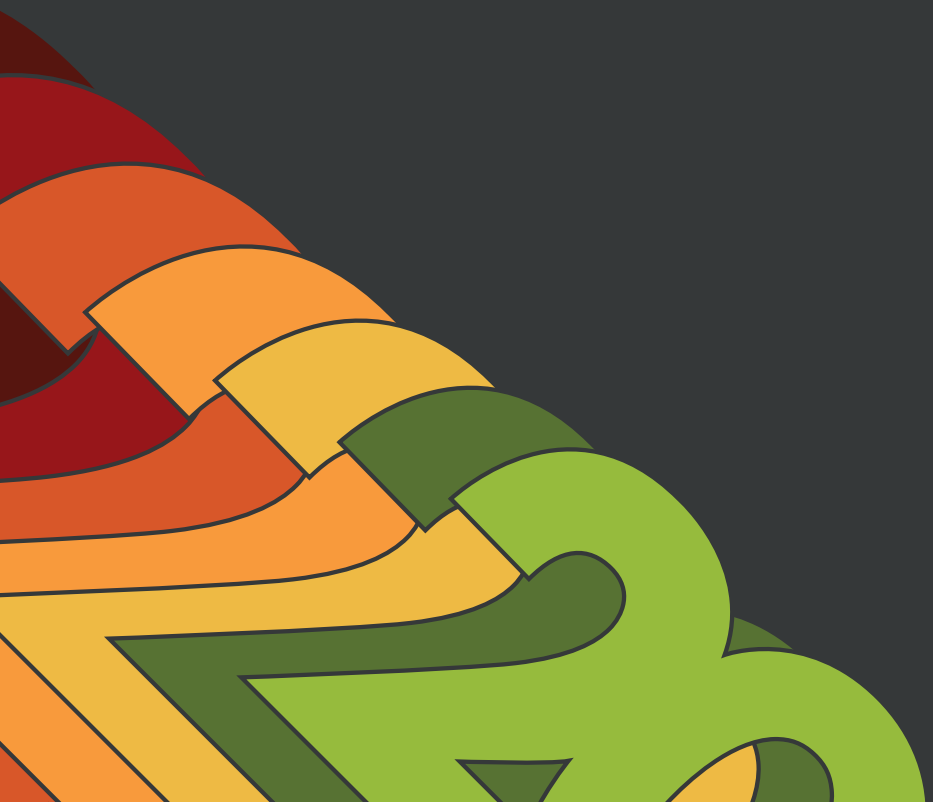
the ONE-LEGGED SHOEMAKER MAN

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

CHRISTIAN HEGE

DIRECTED BY

JENNY MERCEIN



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CHRISTIAN HEGE, EPYLLIONARD

PRESENTS

ALEXANDER KLAUS

the ONE-LEGGED SHOEMAKER MAN

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

CHRISTIAN HEGE

DIRECTED BY **JENNY MERCEIN**

—CAST —

Alexander Klaus ..... **CHRISTIAN HEGE**

—CREATIVE TEAM —

Playwright ..... **CHRISTIAN HEGE**

Director ..... **JENNY MERCEIN**

Costume Design ..... **ADAM STOCKER** †

Lighting Design ..... **JEFFREY D'AMBROSIO**

Sound Design ..... **CHRISTIAN HEGE**

Production Stage Manager ..... **RACHEL MESSBAUER**

Movement Advisor ..... **KYRA MILLER**

Dialect Coach ..... **KRIS DANFORD**

Run time: 65 minutes with no intermission

†Member of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). Local IATSE-764 TWU



A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

There are just a few moments that I can remember clearly, about how this character came to be.

The first was long before he had a name. I only knew he would be a Civil War veteran, and maybe he would live on the Lower East Side. So I visited The Tenement Museum, down on Orchard Street, to get a sense of... something or other, you know?

The first apartment in that tour had been preserved, as-discovered, when the building was purchased. And it reminded me – strikingly – of a place or two that I'd seen when I first came to New York in 1981, looking for somewhere to live in the neighborhood.

I stayed behind for a few minutes, after the group had moved on to the next apartment. And I felt him there. There was a magical almost-sadness in the space, a sense of having tried very hard, and of not being sure. That was all.

Some days or weeks later, I stumbled on an article in the *New York Times* about the Civil War diary of Napoleon Perkins, Fifth Maine Artillery, who lost his leg under an apple tree at Chancellorsville. I knew that, as a writer, if I didn't open with that scene, I could be sued for malpractice.

From there, so much of the story seemed to write itself. I found bits of it in *The Lancaster Intelligencer* (a local Pennsylvania paper), in the *New York Times*, in price data by the US government from the 1860s, in weather reports (really – go search for the weather on Christmas Day in 1873 – it's there, online), and even in O. Henry's story collection *The Four Million*. But my central source was Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (1888) which described life on the Lower East Side in withering detail, but also opened my eyes to the fact that New York, ever-changing, has ever been the same.

Oh, and the saloon keeper on the ground floor of the Tenement Museum? Yes, he served in a musical regiment in the war. I mean, really – all I did was put one bewildered, adolescent Union army veteran into the mix, and he practically told me the story all by himself.

And then eventually, he told me his name.



CHRISTIAN HEGE

(Alexander Klaus)



You almost certainly haven't seen Christian Hege before. Unless you happened to catch his ***Alexander Klaus, the One-Legged Shoemaker Man*** in the basement of a burrito shop at Edinburgh Fringe in 2023. Or his ***Grýla – Not for Children*** at Reykjavik Fringe in 2021, in... he's not really sure what that space was. Or just possibly, you heard him at the piano in Moscow in 1994, accompanying cellist Eileen Moon at the International Tchaikovsky Competition. (Eileen won the top prize awarded that year, and went on to be associate principal cello of the New York Philharmonic.) Or maybe, a very long time ago, you saw him as the pianist/musical director of ***I Do! I Do!*** at a small dinner theater in North Carolina, starring Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel... when she was barely Beth Leavel at all. (She was extraordinary to work with, even then.) Before he came to New York, Mr. Hege had played the scores of 25 musicals. Upon arriving in 1981, he vanished into thin air. This is how things go, sometimes. In 2010, after a many-year creative block, he began blogging in iambic pentameter about his life, writing daily as "Divorce Bard." That persona would continue for three years, and would long outlive depression. And this past June, you just might have heard the Long Island Choral Society perform his new lyrics, in English, for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Yes, really. ***Alexander Klaus, the One-Legged Shoemaker Man*** is his second show with director Jenny Mercein, who told him in Reykjavik that, no, he should not look for someone else to perform his works. He should perform them himself. Thanks, Jenny.

JENNY MERCEIN

(Director)

Jenny Mercein is an actor, teacher, director, producer, and writer currently living in New Orleans, where she teaches at Tulane University. She is a producer of *Roleplay*, a play and documentary film exploring student perspectives on love, sex, power, and consent. The documentary premiered at SXSW. Along with KJ Sanchez, Jenny co-created *X's and O's*, a docudrama about football and traumatic brain injury. Her solo show ***Two Elizas*** premiered at Luna Stage and subsequently played in Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Amsterdam. She previously collaborated with Hege on ***Grýla - Not for Children*** (Reykjavik Fringe).

www.jennymercein.com

RACHEL MESSBAUER

(Production Stage Manager)

Rachel Messbauer has done everything in theater from set construction to box office management to cleaning fake blood off the stage for a super-soaker-infused run of ***Titus Andronicus***. As an actor she appeared in the world premiere of ***Abortion Road Trip*** at both Capital Fringe (Best Comedy) and the Kennedy Center, and has been a frequent performer with the boundary-pushing theater company TBD Immersive. She was communications director for the award-winning Theatre Prometheus, and currently works full-time as a videographer and editor for baseball YouTuber Zack Hample.

ADAM STOCKER

(Costumer)

Adam Stocker is a union costume maker in NYC. He's worked in various costume shops, most notably at The Metropolitan Opera. Selected works include: Broadway: ***SIX, Head Over Heels, Diana, Frozen, TINA - The Tina Turner Musical, Tootsie, Macbeth, MJ the Musical***. TV/film: *The Crowded Room, Eric, The Blacklist, Joker: Folie à Deux, The Penguin, Dickinson, Better Nate than Ever, Fosse Verdon*. Other work includes The Glimmerglass Festival, numerous national tours and cruise ship shows, Radio City, Cher Farewell Tour, Alvin Ailey, ABT, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Disneyland, NYC's best drag queens and nightlife performers. Outside of costuming, he is a fervent workers' rights advocate. Adam is a proud graduate of Western Michigan University.

www.theboycostumer.com
@theboycostumer

JEFFREY D'AMBROSIO

(Lighting Designer)

Jeffrey D'Ambrosio is pleased to be joining the team behind ***Alexander Klaus, the One-Legged Shoemaker Man***. Based in New York City, Jeffrey balances many titles including lighting designer, lighting programmer, and production electrician for both theater and television. Recent works include ***Staff Meal*** (Playwrights Horizons), ***Russian Troll Farm*** (Vineyard Theatre), ***Buena Vista Social Club*** (Atlantic Theater Company), ***All The Devils Are Here*** (DR2), and ***Dig*** (59E59 Theaters). Additional work includes programming for MLB Network, SiriusXM, and NBC. When he's not in a theater you can find him biking around Manhattan or seeking out the latest board game café.

SPECIAL THANKS

The staff of Burrito'n'Shake in Edinburgh, Scotland,
who may have known that something was cooking downstairs.

CURATOR'S NOTE

A warm welcome back to Christian Hege and ***Alexander Klaus***!

I met Christian in July of 2023 when he debuted this show during our E2E Festival before taking it to Edinburgh. Christian Hege is an educator, a poet, a storyteller, and a performer of original verse. His deep appreciation and understanding of language make him an ideal fit for our commitment to hosting innovative and thought-provoking theater.

This production's ability to evoke the nostalgic and bittersweet feelings of the holidays makes it a perfect fit for December. We're grateful to have you here to share this timeless tale.



Val

VAL DAY
Artistic Director,
59E59 Theaters

59E59 THEATERS STAFF

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VAL DAY

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OUR MISSION

59E59 Theaters was established by the Elysabeth Kleinhans Theatrical Foundation in 2004 to grant professional space and expertise to non-profit theater companies premiering their work in New York City. Under the leadership of Val Day, Artistic Director, and Brian Beirne, Managing Director, 59E59 Theaters presents a year-round curated program of Off Broadway plays and musicals that are nurtured and supported by providing performance spaces and equipment as well as production, ticketing, FOH, marketing, and press support. As of January, 2025, these theater companies receive 80% or more of the ticket revenue and pay no weekly rent to 59E59.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

59E59 Theaters reside on the traditional homelands of the Lenni-Lenape People on the Lenape Island of Mannahatta. We acknowledge the Lenni-Lenape as the original people of the land who were forcefully removed during colonization resulting in erased and excluded peoples and culture. We are grateful for the opportunity to work on the land and honor their elders, past and present alongside future generations for their stewardship and continuing relationship with their territory.

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