



**NATASHA,  
PIERRE &**

**THE**

# **GREAT COMET**

**OF**

**1812**

by Dave Malloy

Adapted from War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy

Directed by Ashley H White

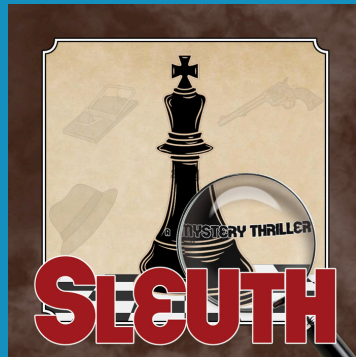
Music Directed by Scott A Eckert

Choreographed by Danielle Georgiou, PhD

**November 29- December 29, 2024**



# Our 24-25 Season



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*Natasha, Pierre, & the Great Comet of 1812*



*Photo by Jeffrey Schmidt*



# Natasha, Pierre, & the Great Comet of 1812

by Dave Malloy

Adapted from War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy

## ARTISTIC STAFF

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**Ashley H. White** †

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**Scott A. Eckert**

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PIERRE

**Ian Ferguson\***

NATASHA

**Bella Zambrano**

SONYA

**Laila Jalil**

MARYA

**Brett Warner\***

HELENE

**Laura Lites**

MARY

**Emily-Arden Seggerman**

DOLOKOV

**Kevin Solis**

ANATOLE

**Nick McGeoy**

BALAGA

**Laura Leo Kelly\***

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AUDIO ENGINEER

**Dylan Hearn**

*\*indicates members working under  
Actors' Equity Association contracts in  
this production*

† **SDC** The Director is a member of the  
STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS  
SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.



Photo by Jeffrey Schmidt

## SCENIC BREAKDOWN

### PROLOGUE

1. Prologue (Company)
2. Pierre (Aria and Chorus: Pierre, Company)

### PART I

3. Moscow (Trio: Marya D., Natasha, Sonya)
4. The Private and Intimate Life of the House (Duet: Bolkonsky, Mary)
5. Natasha & Bolkonskys (Trio: Natasha, Mary, Bolkonsky)

6. No One Else (Aria: Natasha)

### PART II

7. The Opera (Company)
8. Natasha & Anatole (Duet: Natasha, Anatole)

### PART III

9. The Duel (Quartet and Chorus: Pierre, Anatole, Dolokhov, Helene, Company)
10. Dust and Ashes (Aria: Pierre, with Chorus)
11. Sunday Morning (Trio: Natasha, Sonya, Marya D.)
12. Charming (Aria: Helene, with Natasha)
13. The Ball (Duet: Natasha, Anatole)

### PART IV

14. Letters (Company)
15. Sonya & Natasha (Duet: Sonya, Natasha)
16. Sonya Alone (Aria: Sonya)
17. Preparations (Duet: Dolokhov, Anatole, with Pierre)

18. Balaga (1)-io and Chorus: Halaga, Anatole, Dolokhov, Company)

19. The Abduction (Company)

### PART V

20. In My House (Trio: Marya D., Natasha, Sonya)
21. A Call to Pierre (Duet: Pierre, Marya D., with Chorus)
22. Find Anatole (Aria: Pierre, with Natasha, Anatole, Helene, Chorus)
23. Pierre & Anatole (Duet: Pierre, Anatole)
24. Natasha Very Ill (Aria: Sonya)
25. Pierre & Andrey (Duet: Pierre, Andrey)
26. Pierre & Natasha (Duet: Pierre, Natasha)
27. The Great Comet of 1812 (Aria and Chorus: Pierre, Company)



Photo by Jeffrey Schmidt

## Bios

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**Dave Malloy, he/him (Playwright)** is a composer/writer/performer/orchestrator. He has written fourteen musicals, including *Moby-Dick*, a four-part musical reckoning with Melville's classic novel; *Octet*, a chamber choir musical about internet addiction; *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, an electropop opera based on a slice of Tolstoy's *War & Peace* (12 Tony nominations, including Best Musical, Score, Book, and Orchestrations); *Ghost Quartet*, a song cycle about love, death, and whiskey; *Preludes*, a musical fantasia set in the hypnotized mind of Sergei Rachmaninoff; *Little Bunny Foo Foo*, a forest entertainment for small people; *Three Pianos*, a drunken romp through Schubert's "Winterreise"; *Black Wizard/Blue Wizard*, an escapist RPG fantasy; *Beowulf—A Thousand Years of Baggage*, an anti-academia rock opera; *Beardo*, a reinterpretation of the Rasputin myth; *Sandwich*, a musical about killing animals; and *Clown Bible*, Genesis to Revelation told through clowns

**Ashley H. White, she/her (Director)** is a multi-hyphenate artist, whose passion lies within storytelling. She is an award-winning director, fight and intimacy director, playwright and teaching artist, with international credits and decades of experience creating theatre. She is a proud member of SDC and has received nominations for the SDC Zelda Fischander and SDC Barbara Whitman awards for innovation in directing. Her work has been seen on stages across the globe, as well as on film and television. She is a certified Intimacy Director with IDC Professionals. She is an accomplished Fight Director, a Certified Teacher with the Society of American Fight Directors, and is a sought-after educator. Ashley is the recipient of five DFW Critics Forum Awards for Outstanding Direction, in addition to special recognitions from the Critics Forum for her fight and intimacy work. Ashley serves as the Artistic Director of Circle Theatre in Fort Worth, TX. Learn more at [www.ashleywhite.com](http://www.ashleywhite.com)

**Scott A Eckert, he/him (Music Director)** is a multi-instrumentalist with over 40 years experience in the DFW area. He has worked at T3, Dallas Summer Musicals, Casa Manana, Garland Summer Musicals, Broadway Dallas, WaterTower Theatre, Uptown Players, Mainstage Irving Las Colinas, Jubilee Theatre, Pocket Sandwich Theatre, and conducted/played with numerous national tours. He has been recognized by the Dallas Theater League and the DFW Theater Critics Forum for his work both as music director and playwright.

**Dr. Danielle Georgiou, she/her (Choreographer)** is a multi-disciplinary artist who is a director of theatre, dance, and opera and a choreographer of movement, fights, and intimacy. She has worked at numerous DFW theatres, including T3, Dallas Theater Center, Undermain, Kitchen Dog, Stage West, Second Thought, Echo Theatre, the Dallas Opera, and on films and commercials. She was the Associate Artistic Director of the Undermain Theatre from 2019-2022. Since 2011, she has been the Artistic Director of the Danielle Georgiou Dance Group. She is a Professor of Dance, Humanities, and Visual Art at Dallas College-Eastfield campus and is based in Dallas, TX.

**Jeffrey Schmidt, he/him (Scenic Design)** Recent credits include directing, designing and filming T3's *The Immigrant*, designing and directing *Deathtrap*. He has worked with many of the professional theaters in the metroplex including Dallas Theater Center, Casa Mañana, Shakespeare Dallas, Trinity Shakespeare, Kitchen Dog Theater, Undermain Theatre, Dallas Children's Theatre, Second Thought Theatre, StageWest, and WaterTower Theater to name a few. Jeffrey has worked professionally in broadcast, film, stage and behind the scenes for over 25 years. Recently, he's made appearances on *Queen of the South*, *American Crime* and worked on a live cinema project called *Distant Vision* with Francis Ford Coppola. He's Artistic Director of T3 and co-founder of the acclaimed The Drama Club.

## Bios

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**Jessie Wallace, she/her (Costume Designer)** has her Bachelor of Arts in Music and Theater and has worked in almost every realm of the theater. She was the Company Manager and Resident Costumer for IMPRINT Theatreworks from 2018 to 2022. In 2018 and 2020 she was awarded Outstanding Design or Creative Contribution from the DFW Theatre Critics' Forum Awards and Best Costume Design (Non-Equity) at The Column Awards for her work on IMPRINT's productions of *The Revolutionists* (2018) and *Lizzie* (2019). She lives in Dallas with her wonderful cats and will gladly share photos of them.

<https://www.jkwallacecostumes.com/>

**Aaron Johansen, all (LIGHTING DESIGNER)** is a Dallas based lighting designer for theater and live events. Aaron is thrilled to be a part of this production! Previous collaborations have included: Dallas Theater Center; Dallas Children's Theater; Second Thought Theater (Artistic Associate); Kitchen Dog Theater (Company Member); Theater Three; Circle Theater; Stage West; Uptown Players; Cry Havoc Theater Company; Cara Mía Theatre Co and Sweet Tooth Hotel Art installation. Aaron is the resident lighting director for the Dallas Opera and also the Lighting Director for the Drone Racing League where he designs lighting for drone racecourses around the country. These races are shown on NBC sports network and various streaming platforms. Follow my work and me on Instagram @Famoustrendywizard. Enjoy the show!

**Claudia Jenkins Martinez, she/her (Sound Designer)** is a Sound Designer based in Dallas Texas. Recent works include: *The Little Mermaid*, Dallas Theatre Center; *Pirates of Penzance*, T3; *Prisontown*, Savannah Repertory Theatre; *Native Gardens*, Stage Door Theatre; *Deathtrap*, T3; *A Tell Tale Heart*, Pittsburgh Public Theater; *I Wanna F\*cking Tear You Apart*, Stage West; *Steel Magnolias*, Pittsburgh Public Theater; *Trouble In Mind*, Dallas Theater Center, *Hamlet*, Shakespeare Dallas, *Stede Bonnet: A F\*cking Pirate Musical*, T3. Much love to Austin and Georgia. @claud\_jenkinmartinez

**Rayven Harris, she/they (Properties Designer)** is a DFW based artist, who is thrilled for the opportunity to work with T3! Credits include: Stage Manager for *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (Second Thought Theatre), *East Texas Hot Links* (Jubilee Theatre), *Ada and The Engine*, and *Intimate Apparel* (MainStage Irving). Sound Designer for *Thoughts of A Colored Man* (Jubilee Theatre), *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* (Jubilee Theatre), *Into the Breeches* (Stage West), *The Odd Couple* (WaterTower Theatre). Sound Designer/ASM for *A Gospel Black Nativity* (Jubilee Theatre). Assistant Stage Manager for *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Marjorie Prime*, *Cruel Intentions: The 90s Musical*, and *Church & State* (Stage West). Properties Designer for *Intimate Apparel* at (MainStage Irving), *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Circle Theatre).

**Noelle Smith, she/her ( Stage Manager)** originally comes to us from a great little city about two hours east, Tyler, TX. She received her MA in Theatre from Louisiana Tech University and has stage managed in theatres across the US in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, right here in the great state of Texas, and more. She has stage managed abroad for an international magic tour as well as on cruise ships. She is thrilled to share her talents for another wonderful show here at T3.

**Reagan Fitzgerald, she/they (Assistant Stage Manager)** is a DFW-based Stage Manager and also the Production Manager at Circle Theatre. Recent stage management credits include: *Khan!!! The Musical!* (Presented by MusicalWriters.com with Texas Wesleyan University), *Exit, Pursued By A Bear* (Texas Wesleyan University), *Christmas at the Southern Palace* (Six Flags Over Texas with WOW! Entertainment), *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Oklahoma City University); recent assistant stage management credits include: *Hundred Days* (Circle Theatre), High School Musical Theatre Awards (Broadway Dallas), *Head Over Heels* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma). She sends love and thanks to her friends and family!



## Bios Continued

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**Ian Ferguson, he/him (Pierre)** is grateful to be returning to the T3 stage. Previous T3 appearances include: *Next to Normal*, *Maytag Virgin*, *Once*, and *On The Eve*. Other selected regional credits include: *Once* (Casa Manana); *Hundred Days*, *Kodachrome*, *Sweeney Todd* (Circle Theatre); *Shape*, *POMPEii!!*, *The Arsonists* (Kitchen Dog Theatre); *Hood*, *A Christmas Carol* (Dallas Theater Center); *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson*, *Charles Dickens*, and *Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (Water Tower Theatre); *A Kid Like Jake*, *Bull*, *Booth* (Second Thought Theatre); *Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play* (Stage West); and more. Ian also wrote the music and lyrics (book by Michael Federico) for the new musical, *The Manufactured Myth of Eveline Flynn*, which premiered at T3 in 2019. Ian is a member of Actor's Equity Association and is represented by the Kim Dawson agency.



**Bella Zambrano, she/her (Natasha)** is over the moon (haha) to be a part of her first production at T3! Recent credits include *Sweeney Todd* (Lyric Stage), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Lyric Stage), *Olivia O* (SheDFW), and *Evita* (NTPA). She received a BM in Vocal Performance from SMU and has been teaching and performing in the DFW area for the past two years. All her love to her family, friends, and Mac, always.



**Laila Jalil, she/her (Sonya)** is thrilled to be performing in her first T3 production. She graduated this year from The University of Central Oklahoma with a BM in Musical Theatre. Her first and most recent production since returning to the DFW area was Rachel in *Escape to Margaritaville* at The Firehouse Theatre. Laila would like to thank her former vocal coach, Dr. Barbara DeMaio, for pushing and supporting her the past three years.



**Brett Warner, she/her (Marya/ DANCE CAPTAIN)** has appeared on the T3 and T2 stages as Woman 1 in *I Love You, You're Perfect...*, Annabell Armstrong in *Fix Me*, Jesus, Ensemble in *The Hot Mikado*. Some favorite DFW credits include: EKO in *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, Josh Cohen (and others) in *The Other Josh Cohen*, Pippin in *Fellowship! The Musical* (Circle Theatre); Mopsa in *Head Over Heels*, plus many Broadway Our Ways (Uptown Players); Woman 1 in *First Date* (Stage West); Sarah in *Murder Ballad* (Imprint Theatreworks); Mayzie LaBird in *Seussical!*, Lucy in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (Dallas Children's Theater). IG/TikTok: @thebrettandbutter

## Bios Continued

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**Laura Lites, she/her (Helene)** is so happy to finally be performing on the T3 stage! She has been performing in the DFW Metroplex for over 10 years now. Some memorable productions have been Pamela in *Head Over Heels*, Sister Mary Downey in *Disaster! The Musical*, Kate McGowan in *Titanic* and *Songs For A New World*, at Uptown Players, Francesca in *Bridges of Madison County* and Hedda Hopper in *Chaplin* at Watertower Theater, *Lizzie* and *Murder Ballad* at Imprint Theatreworks and Dallas Theatre Center's *Hair* and *Les Miserables*. Much love to Nate and Isla.



**Emily-Arden Seggerman, she/her (Mary)** is thrilled to make her T3 debut in the cast of *Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812*. She graduated from Baylor University in 2023 with a BFA in Theatre Performance and a Musical Theatre Concentration. She was last seen in *Once the Musical* (Reza/Girl understudy) and *35MM: A Musical Exhibition* (Photographer). She would like to thank her family, boyfriend, and friends for their support.



**Kevin Solis, he/him (Dolokov)** is extremely excited to be back at T3 this time upstairs!! Dallas credits include: T3: *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (Man 2), Dallas Theater Center: *In the Heights* (Piraguero), *The Little Mermaid* (Prince Eric), *Into The Woods* (Jack u/s, Rapunzel's Prince u/s, Steward u/s), *The Odyssey* (Featured Musician), and *Babalu: La Vida Es Muy Larga* (Orchestra), Casa Mañana: *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (Elf/Bumble/Birdfish), Cara Mía Theater Co: *The House on Mango Street* (Cousin Louie/Ensemble), and Shakespeare Dallas: *Romeo and Juliet* (Peter/Balthasar)! Regional productions include: Cleveland Playhouse: *In The Heights* (Piraguero), The Old Globe: *How The Grinch Stole Christmas* (Papa Who), La Mirada: *In the Heights*(Piraguero)! BIG s/o to his Family, and Friends for all the love and support! Proverbs 3:5-6.



**Nick McGeoy, he/him (Anatole)** is excited to make his debut at T3! Previously he was Zacky Price in *Big Fish* at Theatre Arlington, and Jack Kelly in *Newsies* at Granbury Theatre Company. He's currently pursuing a degree in musical theatre at Texas Christian University. He'd like to thank his mom and girlfriend for their continued support.

## Bios Continued

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**Laura Leo Kelly, they/them (Balaga)** is a trans non-binary performer based in New York or wherever the good theatre is. Most notably, Laura Leo became the first Anybodies to perform in countries around the world with the International Tour of *West Side Story*, directed by Lonny Price. Most recently, they made their NYC debut in the super well-known musical *Apocalypse Truck* (cast album out now!). Regional highlights: *Once* at CCAE Theatricals (Andrej), *Grease* at Musical Theatre West (Sonny), and *Jack & Aiden* at Ground Floor Theatre (Aiden) for which they received a B. Iden Payne Award nomination. Love you, Victoria :) Protect Trans Youth. @laukell\_



**Sinclair Freeman, he/him (Old Prince Bolkonsky/Andrey)** is thrilled to be making his T3 debut! Past credits include: Chad Deity U/s in *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Circle Theatre), *Thunder in Thunder Knocking on the Door* (Soul Rep Theatre), Male Swing in *A Christmas Carol* (Dallas Theater Center), and Mitch Mahoney in *25th Annual...Spelling Bee* (Theatre Arlington). For my incredibly supportive wife; for my first voice teacher- Mom. On deck: The African Company Presents *Richard III* at Soul Rep! IG@sinclairtheefreeman



**Colin Phillips, he/him (Ensemble)** is delighted return to T3, where he last performed in *Next To Normal* in 2023. Other acting credits include Sancho Panza in *Man of La Mancha* (Lyric Stage), Edward Lyons in *Blood Brothers* (Imprint Theatreworks), and Sam The Snowman in the national tour of *Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer* (Wishing Star Productions). Additionally, he is a Co-Founder of local songwriting collective, Rhyme & Reason.



**Peri Zachmeyer, she/her (Understudy)**. She is a student at Texas Wesleyan and has performed as Diana Goodman in *Next To Normal*, Helene in *Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812*, Nan Understudy for *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*, Christina in *Ramifications of a Changed Man*, Meredith Parker in *Bat Boy*, Understudy for *Wonder of the World*, Vibratta in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and Vern in *5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche*.

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In an interview with the American Theatre Wing, composer-playwright Dave Malloy remarked that he “always [wants] to start with something old and make it new in some way.” To Malloy, there is an excitement to watching time periods collide with one another on stage - since, in his view, it is apparent even in the oldest of stories “how little humans have changed.” Indeed Malloy has long been fascinated by the classics’ resonance with contemporary audiences, which he explores through his other great love: music.

Yet Malloy, by his own admission, didn’t start in musical theatre; to begin with he was an English major. But he combined his interests into a body of work that is at once dramatic, technically demanding, innovative, and rooted in classical literature. This includes works like *Three Pianos*, based on the compositions of Franz Schubert; *Moby Dick*, a musical based on Herman Melville’s novel of the same name; and *Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812*, adapted from Leo Tolstoy’s 1865 novel *War & Peace*.

The *Great Comet* comprises the fifth part of the second volume of *War & Peace* - which, for those who wish to read along at home, begins: “After Prince Andrew’s engagement to Natasha, Pierre without any apparent cause suddenly felt it impossible to go on living as before.”<sup>1</sup> Tolstoy began work on the book in 1863, pulling from his own experience in the Crimean War, which made him into a pacifist. *War & Peace* was published in serial form at first, beginning in 1865; it received full publication in 1869.

The complications in Natasha’s engagement to the prince - called “Andrey” in Malloy’s text - form the plot of the musical; meanwhile Pierre’s sections provide much of the story’s philosophical content. Along the way, the musical deploys an array of styles, from Russian drinking songs to electronic house and dance music.

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<sup>1</sup> From the 1922 translation by Aylmer and Louise Maude, which often supplies the text of *The Great Comet*.

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OF 1812

The Great Comet debuted in 2012 at Ars Nova, an off-Broadway venue, in a production directed by Rachel Chavkin and starring Malloy himself as Pierre. Audiences were captivated by the immersive, supper-club setting of the production - which Malloy channeled after watching a night of live music in Moscow's Cafe Margarita. This feeling, of a rowdy evening in the theatre, carried through each of Chavkin's productions of The Great Comet, augmented by a tight, winding set by Mimi Lien. The Great Comet was a critical darling, receiving nominations and awards for both its off- and on-Broadway runs; in the latter case, these included nominations for Denée Benton and Josh Groban, who had taken on the roles of Natasha and Pierre respectively. And since its premiere, The Great Comet has seen productions both across the United States - including right here, at Dallas's own Theatre Three - and worldwide.

It might be said that The Great Comet enjoys an audience as wide as Tolstoy's. We might ask, then, why the world is drawn to this story - that is, how could a book about the Russian aristocracy, caught in the Napoleonic Wars, capture the imaginations of so many, across such vast cultural, language, and generational barriers? After all, War & Peace is not an intuitive book, per se: in addition to its length, the book boasts a wide variety of subjects, from romance to military strategy to philosophy to history. And Tolstoy himself said that War & Peace could not easily be classified as one thing or another. What persists, therefore, might be what's lying beneath the above features, a humanity that binds all of them together. This humanity is not captured in the epic, sweeping events of history, but in the little moments that, in aggregate, form a perfect human life. We might see these moments in the way a character receives a letter from a friend, or in the sound of personal frustration - how Pierre, in anguish, repeats to himself "I used to be better." In his introduction to the Vintage Classics edition of War & Peace, translator Richard Pevear writes of this being the essence of Tolstoy: "the only significant actions are the insignificant ones."

• Dante Flores, Dramaturg