

Crowded Kitchen Players on audio during the COVID period

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the July 14, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the Arts in Bethlehem 

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The Crowded Kitchen Players

“Twelveness: A Play in Three Scenes” by the Crowded Kitchen Players

Legendary American pianist and songwriter George Gershwin and Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg volley tennis balls, music theory, and musings on the meaning of art on a Beverly Hills tennis court and over dinner and drinks in a series of entertaining and provocative conversations that may never have taken place. But, they should have.

from Dave Howell, “Curtain Rises: Crowded Kitchen Players’ ‘Twelveness’ audio recording sound move for theater troupe.” Bethlehem Press, July 11, 2020.

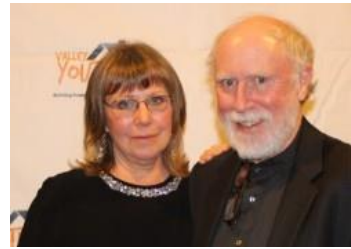
The Crowded Kitchen Players release of “Twelveness: A Play in Three Scenes” by Charlie Barnett as an audio file retains the dramatic impact of the original stage production.

Plus, it has the advantage of portability and convenience. You can listen to it wherever and whenever you want.

Ara Barlieb and Pamela Wallace, cofounders of Crowded Kitchen Players, co-directed the audio version, recorded at Westwires Recording

USA, Allentown, a few days before the coronavirus (COVID-19) shutdown.

The recording creates a three-dimensional sound that takes advantage of stereo and speaker separation. In the play's opening scene, you can hear a tennis ball moving from channel to channel. The sound shifts as two tennis players talk to each other across the court.



Barnett recommends listening with headphones, preferably good ones, making sure you have the left and right channels set to the proper placement.

Barnett, an Easton native who lives in Washington, D.C., is better-known as a musician than a playwright. He has performed with his band, Chaise Lounge, at State Theatre Center for The Arts, Easton; Miller Symphony Hall, Allentown, and Musikfest and Godfrey Daniels, both Bethlehem.

Barnett has recorded numerous albums, including the recently-released “Charlie Barnett All By His Own Self.” He has composed music for TV shows, including “Saturday Night Live,” “Weeds,” “Royal Pains” and “Archer.”

The Crowded Kitchen Players has been performing at the Charles A. Brown Ice House, Bethlehem, but its recent productions were postponed because of the coronavirus shutdown. “There is no indication when it will be back up,” Barlieb says of the Ice House.

Barlieb is rehearsing the two plays that were postponed, “Book of Revelation: The Comedy” and “Dogcatcher,” and plans to present each as 10-episode videotape versions on YouTube and other social media platforms.

Barlieb is establishing a Crowded Kitchen Players' YouTube channel.

from Dave Howell, "Review: 'Twelveness' anyone? Audio play matches Gershwin, Schoenberg." Bethlehem Press, July 11, 2020.

George Gershwin and Arnold Schoenberg did not seem to be natural tennis partners. Gershwin was 37 and Schoenberg was 62 when they met.

Although both were musical geniuses, Gershwin was a popular favorite while Schoenberg's 12-tone method of composing was too academic and experimental to be embraced by the general public. It was called "atonal." Schoenberg said it should have been called "pan-tonal."

Schoenberg visited Gershwin weekly for tennis, which is the basis for the Crowded Kitchen Players audio drama production of "Twelveness: A Play in Three Scenes" by Charlie Barnett.

The Crowded Kitchen Players presented "Twelveness" in 2017 as a stage play that switched scenes between the first and second floors of the Charles A Brown Ice House, Bethlehem. It had a different cast than that for the audio version, except for Stauffer as Gertrud.

The audio version, "Twelveness: A Play in Three Scenes," is one and one-half hour in length and is directed by Ara Barlieb and Pamela Wallace. It is much different than the stage version, drawing more attention to the theoretical music arguments, and requiring more imagination from the listener regarding character interaction.

With only four actors and an emphasis on dialogue, it works in the audio format. Oswald and Stauffer use light accents, so they can be understood, and can be distinguished from the other two characters.

The portrayals seem historically accurate and they perfectly fit the play, The story builds as Gershwin is portrayed by Ferry as gradually more and more neurotic. Schoenberg is portrayed by Oswald as unemotional except concerning music, Rogers is portrayed by Cipoletti as flirtatious. Gertrud is portrayed by Stauffer as slowly finding herself as a person.

“Twelveness: A Play in Three Scenes” by the Crowded Kitchen Players can be downloaded at: www.ckplayers.com/audio-theatre

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