

## Stover Theatre's "Supporting Cast"

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## Stetson University

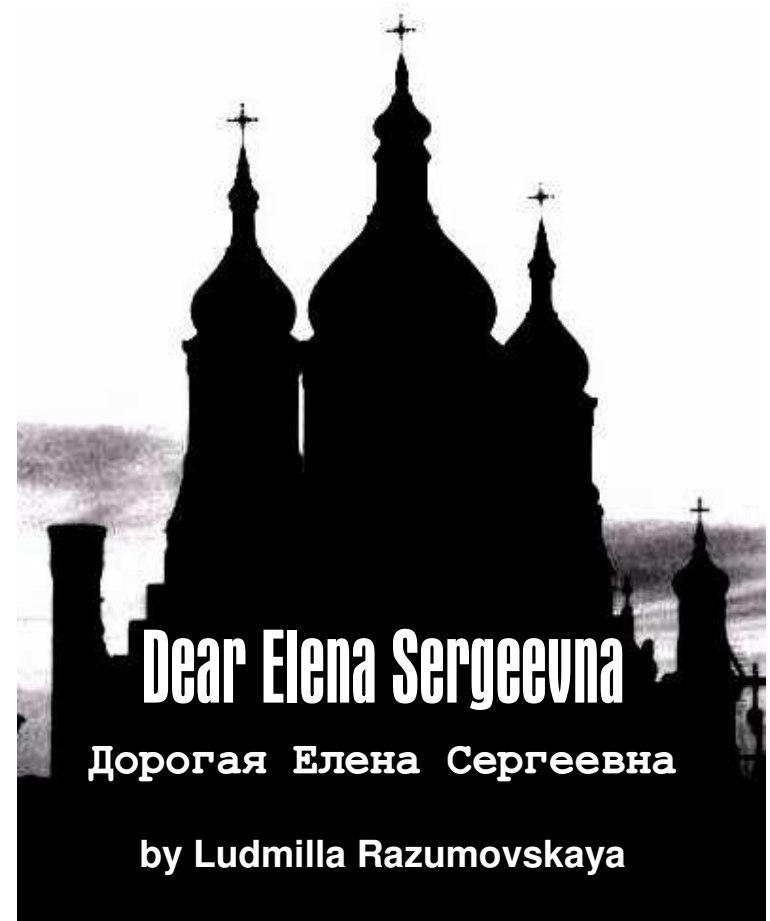
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Mr. William Elliott..... Production Manager,  
Stover Theatre

## Theta Alpha Phi (National Theatre Honorary)

Vanessa Aranegui ..... President  
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Erin Lett ..... Historian  
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(based on the English translation "Dear Miss Elena"  
by Zoltan Schmidt and Roger Downey)

*November 15-18, 2001*  
*Stover Theatre*

**STETSON**  
UNIVERSITY

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**Directed** by Sergei Tcherkasski, St. Petersburg State  
Theatre Arts Academy, St. Petersburg, Russia

**Movement** by Galina Kondrashova, St. Petersburg State  
Theatre Arts Academy, St. Petersburg, Russia

**Scene/Lighting Design** by William Elliott

**Costume Design** by Jenna Durst

**Sound Design** by Erika Thompson

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## cast

Elena Sergeevna..... Kim Eddins  
Lalya ..... Jamie Collyer  
Pasha ..... William Phillips  
Vitya..... Eric Johnson<sup>†</sup>  
Volodya..... Dan Pasquini  
Understudy (Elena) ..... Maryalice Phillips<sup>†</sup>

## setting

### Act I

The apartment of Elena Sergeevna, a schoolteacher, Russia.  
1980. Evening.

### Act II

Several hours later.

*There will be a 10 minute intermission between the acts.*

## warning

**This production contains scenes of extreme violence  
and strong language which may not be suitable for  
younger or sensitive audiences.**

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<sup>†</sup> denotes member of Theta Alpha Phi, national theatre honorary.

## production staff

Production Manager/TD ..... William Elliott  
Stage Manager ..... Hanna Miller  
Asst. Director ..... Vanessa Aranegui<sup>†</sup>  
Asst. Stage Manager ..... Maryalice Phillips<sup>†</sup>  
Asst. Lighting Designer ..... Amanda Akins<sup>†</sup>  
Master Carpenter ..... Vanessa Aranegui<sup>†</sup>  
Workshop Crew ..... Cshainoan Ellis, Gerald Durst,  
Heather Journell, Takeata King Pang,  
Jennifer Driver, Sara Collins, Crystal Coutrino,  
Toni Chandler, Eric Pilger, Rebecca Biddinger,  
Mary Amber Osmun, Ashley Stutzman,  
and students of TE 101, TE 222, and TE 345  
Master Electrician/Light Board Op ..... Rebecca Biddinger  
Sound Board Op ..... Erika Thompson  
Video Editing ..... Shaun Whalen  
Research Assistant ..... Mary Rodgers  
Props Master ..... Heather Journell  
Props Running Crew ..... Heather Journell, Erin Lett<sup>†</sup>,  
Ashley Stutzman  
Electrics Running Crew ..... Takeata King Pang  
Publicity ..... Ken McCoy

## special thanks

Mark Miller and Arabian Nights Dinner Theatre; Stetson  
University Russian Studies faculty and staff; Sands Theatre  
Center, James Hargrave, Ronnie's Florist, Daytona; Muse  
Bookstore, DeLand.

*Dear Elena Sergeevna* is produced by special arrangement with  
the author, Ludmilla Razumovskaya, and the translators, Zoltan  
Schmidt and Roger Downey. Their English translation was first  
performed in 1992 at the Seattle Group Theatre.

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## a note from the department

On behalf of the Stetson University Department of Communication Studies and Theatre Arts, I am happy to welcome Professors Sergei Tcherkasski and Galina Kondrashova to the Stover Theatre production program. After meeting Sergei during his visit two years ago, I was extremely excited by the prospect of his returning to direct a show for us. We are very fortunate that Russian Studies was again able to support his visit, and even more fortunate that he was able to bring his wife Galina, whose expertise in movement has proved indispensable in preparing this production.

The St. Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy, where they both teach, is a major conservatory training institution in Russia that has over 1200 theatre students—a few more than we have here at Stetson! It is indeed an honor for us to welcome these two theatre professionals to share with us the benefits of their knowledge and experience, and we hope to foster an ongoing relationship between our two theatre arts programs.

- Dr. Ken McCoy, Chair  
Department of Communication Studies and Theatre Arts

## a note from the director

This play was written near the end of the 1970s by Ludmilla Razumovskaya—an alumna of St. Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy (then Leningrad Institute of Theatre, Music, and Cinematography), where I now reside as a professor. In those days I was a student at the same institution, and I remember that our theatre world was rife with rumors about the unsuccessful efforts of the most progressive Russian theatres to stage this play. Their attempts were made unsuccessful—indeed, impossible—because of play's strong social criticism of official Soviet Russian life of that period. I also recall one of the play's first major productions in Leningrad in the early 1980s—a great encouragement to us all, even though the production was restricted to a censored version of the text. Accompanied by many of my fellow theatre students, I attended a dress rehearsal in support of the author.

When I received the kind invitation of Stetson University to direct a play here and began discussions with Dr. McCoy over our choice, we considered several plays suitable for production with students. After 20 years, I re-read Mme. Razumovskaya's play and although many circumstances of social life in Russia had changed, making some of the circumstances presented in the play may seem rather dated, I was surprised to find that the play still has a great deal of universal appeal. This is due mainly to the fact that it deals with one of the main moral dilemmas of our time on this earth: whether it's possible to justify immoral actions in light of the demands placed on us for survival in our imperfect and unjust world.

Although our choice was made in Spring of 2001, the tragic events of September 11 shed unexpected light on the themes of violence and the struggle for ideas of right and wrong. It seemed that this Russian play which was written over 20 years ago might transcend its original political and social environment to arouse important moral issues for a world-wide audience—and of course, that includes those here in central Florida. The fact that Dear Elena Sergeevna has been widely produced on many of the world's contemporary stages is fast earning it a place as a classic in the repertoire of the 20th century theatre.

I am very grateful to so many people who made this production possible. First on the list are the student actors and technical staff who were involved in the production, who I thank for their enthusiasm, patience, and commitment during the exhaustive rehearsal process—our many urgent and fruitful discussions immensely enriched the process. I am also grateful to the faculty and staff of Stetson's Russian Studies and Theatre Arts programs for their support and participation. This process was challenging for all, not the least for Stover Theatre Production Manager William Elliott, who was forced to design the scenery through transcontinental telephone conversations and faxes. (Of course, the complete transcript of email conversations between Dr. McCoy and myself would fill three volumes). Finally, I would like to especially thank Dr. Eugene Huskey and Susan Bradford, who were sufficiently encouraged by my previous visit to the Stetson campus in 1999 to bring me back for this project.

-Professor Sergei Tcherkasski  
St. Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy