

# Adult folklore show comes to KC Fringe

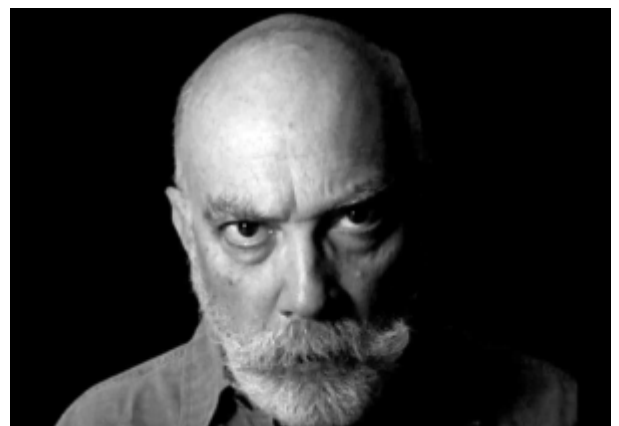
Posted by Bob Evans

## *Grýla- Not For Children*

Christian Hege's verse adaptation of the medieval Icelandic folktale comes to Kansas City Fringe Festival, July 18-August 1, 2021.

On the heels of a successful run in Iceland, Hege's "creepy delight" comes to Kansas City.

Courtesy of "Gryla?"



July 21, 2021: Hailed by KC Fringe reviewer Karen Staehling as a "creepy delight," Hege's "Grýla – Not for Children" is now streaming. A couple of years ago, New Yorker Christian Hege

discovered Grýla completely by accident, searching online for something he can't even remember. Now he looks for audiences everywhere, and tells her story in dimly-lit spaces (in person and online) to ruin Christmas a little for everyone. Why not.

(Really. He also has a story about Christmas cookies, but that's not the one he's bringing to the KC Fringe.)

Mr. Hege writes and performs long stories in verse – and “Grýla – Not for Children” rhymes, for over 30 minutes. But that's only the starting point. After memorizing his 30-minute poem (“It took a few weeks,” he says), he began working with New Orleans director Jenny Mercein to bring several characters to life: a little girl, a priest, a little boy and his mother, and the monster herself.

Grýla is not a nice person.

Director Mercein, Head of Performance at Tulane University, describes Hege as part of a centuries-old tradition of storytellers and orators who can thoroughly captivate an audience by the simple act of telling a great story.

“Grýla is a simple production, but with a writer-performer like Christian, you don't need a lot of bells and whistles. He spins an amazing tale with his words, his voice, and his commitment to the story.”

Mr. Hege spent two years creating the story, beginning in February 2019 with his first trip to Reykjavik. “Grýla – Not for Children” won the Act Alone and Best Online Production at the 2020 Virtual RVK Fringe. Awardwinning Icelandic literary critic Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir called the 2021 live performance “extremely free and fun.”

“Grýla – Not for Children” is streaming now through August 1<sup>st</sup> as part of the KC FRINGE Festival. For full schedule and details, see <https://kcfringe.org>.

**Christian Hege** began his career as a pianist in musical theater. After playing 25 shows before he had graduated from college, he moved to New York City and vanished into thin air. That was a long time ago. He went on to study composition at Manhattan School of Music. And still at the piano in 1994, he accompanied cellist Eileen Moon – now of the New York Philharmonic – at the Tchaikovsky Competition, in Moscow. She tied for the top prize that year, playing with the orchestra, after the competition had sent all the accompanists' home. Creative imagination is a funny thing. Mr. Hege moved to the suburbs in 1996, and went artistically silent for 13 years. One night after Christmas in 2009, he began writing verse. He has never stopped. At some point, people began hearing his stories. He is very happy to share.

**Jenny Mercein** is an actor, teacher, director, and writer currently living in New Orleans, where she is an Assistant Professor and Head of Performance at Tulane University. She is proud a producer of [Roleplay](#), a play and documentary film project exploring student perspectives on love, sex, power, and consent. The play won a

2020 Big Easy Award and will be published this summer by Dramatic Publishing. Along with KJ Sanchez, Jenny is the co-creator of the acclaimed docudrama *X's and O's*, about football and traumatic brain injury (Berkeley Rep, Baltimore Center Stage). Acting credits include "Your Honor," "NCIS: New Orleans," "30 Rock," "Blue Bloods," "Unforgettable," "Law & Order" and extensive theater credits spanning the country. Jenny received her B.A. from Yale and her M.F.A. in Acting from The University of Washington.

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