

BY EAN MONTAGUE

ART FROM DESTRUCTION

Explore Post-apocalyptic life in Dog Act at the Wharton Center

Photo courtesy of Kristy Allen

The world has ended. Only little of what once was remains, and the few survivors struggle to find meaning in the rubble.

This is the world of *Dog Act*, the unique stage performance being performed by the 2018 master's degree acting candidates this month. The play, written by Liz Duffy Adams, follows a theatre troupe as they navigate the apocalyptic wasteland that was the U.S., searching for China where they are set to perform.

"It's more about the relationships between characters and what is revealed on their journey," third-year MFA candidate Kristy Allen said. "In a world where everything has been lost, these individuals are trying to establish what is still valuable."

Allen plays Vera Similitude, who joins protagonist Zetta Stone, her companion Dog and others on their journey through the wilderness to perform their vaudeville act.

"She is razor sharp," Allen said of her character. "[She] has learned how to survive in this post-apocalyptic world using her wits."

While the play may be set in a dismal future, many of the themes from the production are relevant to modern life in America.

"It highlights the value of art," Allen said. "Without art, what is the point of survival?... What kind of world would we have if people can't see the value of art?"

Today, when art programs are being cut from schools, Allen says this message is as crucial as it has ever been. "If the scavengers can see the value in [art] certainly we should be able to," she said.

The production is the capstone thesis project for the MFA candidates led by director and professor Christina Traister.

"She is a very... heart-oriented individual," Allen said of Traister. "It's going to be a gutsy production."

There are 10 performances of *Dog Act* scheduled starting Friday, March 16, and ending Sunday, March 25. The performance on Sunday, March 18, will be preceded by a discussion with Traister, and there will be a second discussion following the performance on Thursday, March 22. With nine days of performances, there are plenty of chances to "come see how you would behave if the world was destroyed and you were left to fend for yourself," as Allen puts it, adding, "Which character would you be?"



Ean Montague is a junior majoring in professional writing and minoring in film studies. Outside of his studies, he enjoys soccer, rock music, sleeping and breakfast food. He also edits content on the website for the Impact student radio station.