

An Evening with Jens Jensen

Performance Packet

CONTACT INFORMATION

Author & Performer

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PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Title: An Evening with Jens Jensen

Genre: Performance monologue, dramatic/comedic play

Cast: Roger James Kuhns

Rating: PG

Runtime: 1 hour 15 minutes

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Target Audience: Young adult & adults who are interested in nature, conservation, environment, landscape design & architecture, history, parks, urban green space, and sustainability.

Synopsis:

Jens Jensen, the father of native plant landscape architecture and the founder of Door County's The Clearing Folk School, was a pillar in the landscape architecture and environmental movements in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In this performance piece, Roger Kuhns takes on Jensen's personality, mannerisms, accent and ethic to convey to the audience the innovative and conscientious nature of the man. It is a very personal, moving and engaging glimpse of this amazing person. In the show, Jensen is in the twilight of his career and at 86 years old he was still spry and driven to help people realize the importance of respecting nature.

Jens Jensen

Jens Jensen was born in Dybbol, Denmark in 1860. He came to America as a young man and became the father of landscape architecture using native plants in landscaping design. Jensen was responsible for many of Chicago's parks and was a leader in the preservation and environmental movements. He worked with famous architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and his clients in his private practice included Henry Ford. In 1935, he founded The Clearing Folk School in Ellison Bay and inspired a generation of landscape architects, along with many others who attended the folk school. Jensen died there in 1951.



Roger performing "An Evening with Jens Jensen" monologue



Roger with Jens Jensen's granddaughter "Jensen Wheeler Wolfe" taken at The Clearing in Wisconsin.

Booking Information

Required Equipment/Technology: 1 wireless mic, 1 chair, simple lighting

Ideal Frequency of Shows: Flexible, preferred 2 shows

Ideal Start Date: Flexible

List of Past Shows:

2017 | Woodwalk Gallery, Wisconsin (72 people)

Reviews:

"I can say that your performance was excellent and entertaining. You gave me an intriguing introduction to Jensen, truly enhancing my appreciation of The Clearing and its mission. Your period costume, realistic mannerisms and reading of Jensen's own writings made his story and contributions to Door County come alive!"- Karen Schudson

"I am not alone in singing your praises. Other people who were at Woodwalk were impressed, and we've all told others that they missed a great evening. So the county will be hungry to hear you next year." - Nancy Rafal

“A gifted writer and musician, Kuhns has used his life experiences to craft monologues that are as culturally and scientifically enlightening as they are emotionally moving. Kuhns employs a unique form of presentation, using areas of the stage and minimal props to differentiate between locations and/or characters. He slips smoothly between his own narrative voice and the voices of the many characters that populate his monologues. Subtle changes in posture and facial expression also effectively convey differences in age, physical stature and cultural backgrounds... Like most good artists, Kuhns has a gift for finding what resonates with his audiences. Although the locations and cultures he explores may be outside our experiences, he ultimately guides us to see our own struggles and triumphs mirrored in their stories.”

- Judy Drew, Exec. Dir., Third Avenue Playhouse, Sturgeon Bay, WI (2012)

“I had the privilege of seeing Roger perform one of the monologues in his book at The Clearing in Wisconsin. An absolute pleasure! Roger’s adventures will take you to places you never imagined with a colorful cast of characters to guide the way. His attention to detail paints a vivid picture to spark your imagination, allowing you to travel to extreme and desolate ends of civilization without leaving the comfort of your favorite chair.”

- Sara A. Noe, Writer (2018)

“One of these days someone will write a book about the fascinating Roger Kuhns or maybe he’ll finally get around to doing one himself. In the meantime . . . Roger performs as a one-man show ala Spaulding Gray . . . His performance can certainly be compared to that of Mr. Gray’s . . . Roger’s performance is a favorable comparison. The key for the monologist is to keep the audience interested and wanting to hear more . . . Roger’s animation and energy along with really interesting transitions (keeps) the ball in the air and focuses the attention of the audience. Roger’s facial gestures and comic timing really aided in completing a sense of the characters that we meet and travel with throughout the experience. It was particularly fun when he would rapidly switch from one to the other. Roger is a true Renaissance man.”

- Sheila Sabrey-Saperstein, The Peninsula Pulse (April 8, 2005)

“In the way of a travelogue, Roger’s monologues take you there; in the way of a scientist he immerses you in the unique microcontext of what makes the place special . . . spell binding, fascinating, unbelievable hilarious, Roger delivers it all . . . no matter what the subject matter. Never miss an opportunity to “travel” with him.”

- Allin Walker, Lockwood Gallery & Theatre, Sturgeon Bay, WI (2018)