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Democracy Dies in Darkness



Alan Paul of Shakespeare Theatre dreams of a day with lots of food and a little drama

By Sadie Dingfelder

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In D.C. Dream Day, our favorite people tell us how they would spend a perfect day in the district.

Born and raised in the D.C. area, Alan Paul thought he'd left for good when he moved to Illinois for college. But just a year after graduating from Northwestern University in 2006, Paul returned to D.C., having landed a coveted directing fellowship at the Shakespeare Theatre Company. Today he's the associate artistic director at the theater, where he most recently reimagined the Shakespeare play "The Comedy of Errors" as a musical. His next Shakespeare Theatre production promises to be similarly innovative: Set to debut in December, it's a new adaptation of J.M. Barrie's "Peter Pan" by feminist playwright Lauren Gunderson that puts girls at the center of the narrative. As you can see from Paul's dream itinerary, that show is clearly on his mind. "My day is a little bit nerdy, because I love what I do," he says.

I would begin on Capitol Hill, which is where the Shakespeare Theatre's offices and rehearsal spaces are. But before I go into rehearsal, I would go to **Little Pearl**. It's the offshoot of Pineapple and Pearls, and they have the silkiest Americano and a great little menu of sandwiches and pastries.

Then I would go into rehearsal because I just love being in rehearsal working with great actors. It would be for "Peter Pan," and we'd be working on the big Captain Hook-Peter Pan fight at the end of the show. I'd be sitting with **Lauren Gunderson**, the playwright, because there's nothing more exciting than collaboration, in having the playwright in the room.


For lunch, I'd go to **Rasika West End**. I like to sit at the bar with a friend and order, like, six small things. Their crispy spinach is incredible and all the versions of the lamb they have are incredible. I would break my low-carb diet to have a piece of garlic naan. And of course they have incredible shrimp there. So I guess my dream day means that calories don't count and that carbs are allowed.

Then I would spend the afternoon in rehearsal at **Sidney Harman Hall** downtown, and it would be the flying rehearsal. I have never done a play where there has been flying, so I'm really excited to try it. I'd be there with the choreographer and the actors, trying to figure out all of the wonderful things that you can do in the air.

After rehearsal, I'd go to my favorite bar in the city, the bar at **The Prime Rib**. It's an old-school steakhouse — you have to wear a sport coat if you're a gentleman. It's a big, dark bar and they have live music. Melvin, who is a bartender there, makes the driest Ketel One martini in town. They also have the best, largest raw oysters in the city.

I would end the day in my neighborhood, Logan Circle. I think the best-kept secret in all of Washington is the upstairs bar and lounge at Corduroy restaurant. Upstairs they have a \$30 fixed-price menu that is incredible. Or maybe I'd go all the way to Bethesda, to the **Woodmont Grill**. They have the best french fries and the most addictive kale salad. The other thing I love so much is, like, 15 minutes into the dinner, they will bring you a chilled martini glass and take your half-drunk martini and put it in a new, chilled glass. It feels like such an incredible luxury, to have this constantly chilled glass.

Sadle Dingfelder

I'm the "Staycationer," author of a column reviewing tourist hotspots in the D.C. area. I also write about a great variety of other things including science, travel and fun things to do around town. Follow 

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