

# Review: THE LAST MATCH at 1st Stage

Running through July 2 2023

By: Naomi Ducat Jun. 18, 2023

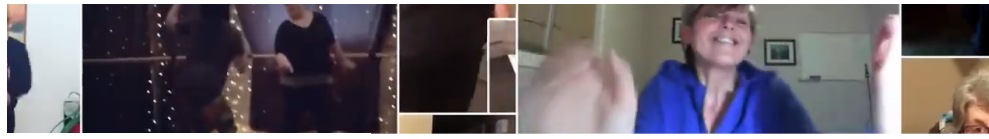


*The Last Match*, written by [Anna Ziegler](#) and directed by [Alex Levy](#), provides an intimate look into the tribulations of two tennis titans, Tim (Drew Kopas) and Sergei ([Ethan Miller](#)), who are fighting to achieve greatness both on-and-off the court. The performance takes the audience to various points within Sergei's and Tim's careers, showcasing how the two characters confront alarmingly similar challenges despite their differences and their rivalry. This non-chronological story inspires the audience to reflect upon existential struggles that are persistent and timeless, including experiencing conflicting motivations to achieve personal satisfaction while endlessly striving for superiority.

Written masterfully, the script is rich with imagery. This is especially evident when Sergei delivers monologues that transport the audience to wherever Sergei's mind wanders, whether to the court during a memorable loss or to the eyes of his partner Galina (Fabiolla Da Silva).

While Miller and Kopas capture the audience with a wonderfully animated performance, the highlights of the performance are when Galina, Sergei's girlfriend, takes the stage. Galina's strong character and Da Silva's stronger delivery adds notable spice, giving us insight into who she is despite the limited information revealed about her. Similarly, Tim's wife, Mallory ([Lynette Rathnam](#)), though light on character development, offers spice during a painful and powerful moment when Mallory learns of the loss of an unborn baby. That moment, fantastically delivered by Rathnam, takes place at the end of the performance. The contrast between barely knowing Mallory and observing an exceptionally personal and painful moment at the end of the performance reveals an imbalance in character development. The story uncovers more depth about the journeys, perspectives, and values of Sergei and Galina, whereas Tim's character development feels slim, and Mallory's is barely existent.

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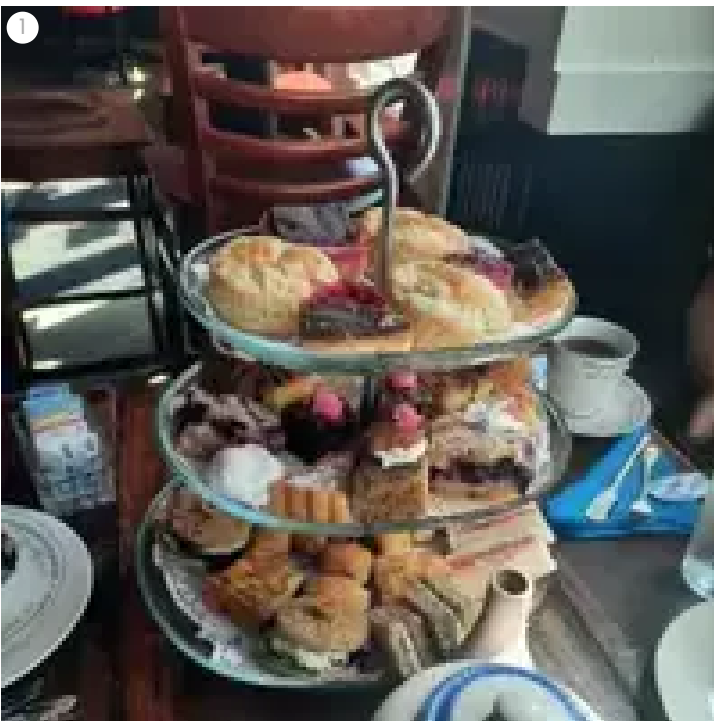
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Despite this limitation, the performers and the set are sure to draw you in. The two-level stage and strategic positioning of each character pulls the audience into two distinct but intertwined plots. The well-placed bursts of sound and light (Alberto Segarra and Kenny Neal) heightens intense and critical moments. And the fabulous accents delivered by Sergei and Galina with coaching from Adrienne Nelson are impeccable.

It's unclear whether Sergei or Tim will ultimately reach the pinnacle of success, but what is clear is that *The Last Match* is a winning performance. *This production is performing at the 1st Stage Theater in Tyson's VA until July 2 2023.*

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