Spring 2-2005

Lysistrata Program

University of Southern Maine Department of Theatre

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Department of Theatre presents

Lysistrata

by Aristophanes

directed by Ariel Francoeur

Friday, February 11-Sunday, February 20, 2005

Russell Hall
Main Stage
USM Gorham Campus
Director's Note

It is a great challenge to direct a play that is over two thousand years old. Theatrical conventions of style, language, acting, and costuming were very different when Lysistrata was written. The world in which the playwright lived is largely a mystery to us, and civilization has evolved so rapidly that it is almost impossible to comprehend life without modern advances. However, this play is performed again and again because the story is universal and timeless. It is a response to war and sex, to death and life. True to the Old Comedy style, these themes manifest in humorous and risqué situations, and poignant messages are disguised beneath the laughter. It is because of this unique combination of style and content that Lysistrata has survived through the rise and fall of empires, and thrived during oppressive regimes.

After sifting through endless translations and adaptations, I chose this version because it is ambiguous. The writing excludes ancient references to people, places, and politics that no longer have any meaning for the common audience member, lines that would have separated us from the action rather than included. I approached the entire production as a student of theatre and history. As I read through Aristophanes' repertoire and studied what little is known of him, I was amazed at how distinctive his voice has remained. Although the words I read were not in his native tongue, I always had a sense of his peculiar personality. For this reason, as you will see, I have emphasized his role in the story. Due to my study of ancient Greek society and theatrical tradition I have chosen to present this play in the manner in which I perceive it was performed in 411 BCE, with a modern twist.

Lysistrata was written twenty-one years into the Peloponnesian War, which involved nearly all the city-states of what we now call Greece. The result of this war was the permanent decline of the Greek Empire. This must have been a frightening, desperate time for all those not making a fortune at the expense of the sufferers. Placed in this context, we have to wonder what Aristophanes was really trying to say, and to whom. Could it be so simple to put an end to killing forever? Or is war a force of human nature that we can only pretend to control...

-A. Francoeur

Warning: Please be aware that there is adult language and mature subject matter involved in tonight's production. Please, no photos are allowed during the performance. Also, please turn off beepers and phones as a courtesy to the actors and other audience members.
Composer's Note

The most important moment in the compositional process usually takes place before a single note is written; it is the moment of decision as to how to approach the work. With Lysistrata I was presented with an interesting challenge in this regard. The play's setting in ancient Athens demanded that the music be in some way "Greek," although there are many different conceptions of Greece. There is some scholarship on what ancient Greek music sounded like, but this idiom would in no way resonate with modern audiences in the same way as it did for the ancients. On the other hand a more vernacular or even a more strictly classical approach would harm the exotic flavor of the play. Thus I decided to borrow a page, inspired in part by Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for Lysistrata, from the 19th century conception of "the Greece of our dreams." Writing a score for an imaginary Greece, I attempted to present music that would make sense to a modern audience, while capturing the strangeness, the lyricism, the gravity and the playfulness of the dream that is ancient Greece. I hope that I have succeeded, and that you enjoy this interpretation of Lysistrata.

-Angus Francisco McFarland

Artistic Staff Biographies

Ariel Francoeur, Director
Ariel is a senior theatre major and history minor from the tiny town of Orwell, Vermont. Throughout her college career she has had many opportunities to explore both acting and directing. Favorite performance roles include "Louise" in Haiku, Malcolm in Macbeth, and the title role in Pinocchio. She is currently a member of the sketch comedy group The Escapists, and of the Two Lights Theatre Ensemble. She has been nominated three times as an Irene Ryan acting scholarship candidate, and her junior year received the Bronwyn Millard Scholarship for excellence in the College of Arts and Sciences. That year she also directed her first Lab Theater production, the expressionist play Machinial. Next she directed a staged reading of Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and this past summer was the assistant director for Into the Woods with the L/A Arts summer theatre program. Special thanks to this wonderful cast for fully trusting a fellow student to lead them, and to the understanding staff at PortTix. This production is dedicated to her grandfather, Noble Francoeur.

Charles S. Kading - Scenic Designer
Charles has taught design and stage craft at USM for 25 years. His professional credits include Titanic, Hans Christian Andersen, Ragtime, and Scarlet Pimpernel for Maine State Music Theatre; Big River, My Fair Lady, She Loves Me, Cabaret, and Annie for Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theater; Noises Off! and Blithe Spirit at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. He worked extensively at The Alley Theater in Houston where his credits include the US premiere of Alan Ayckbourne's Henceforward. Charles has also designed scenery for the Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Cabaret Repertory Theatre and Portland Stage. He is currently chair of the Theatre Department.
Jodi Ozimek, Costume Designer
Jodi Ozimek is delighted to return to USM for her second academic year as costume designer and lecturer. Select USM credits include: Six Characters In Search of an Author, The Laramie Project, Company, and Shakuntala. Over the summer Jodi returned to American Players Theatre in Wisconsin to assistant costume design Cymbeline. She received her BA in theatre from Michigan State University and her MFA in costume and design from Purdue University. Jodi would like to thank her husband for his endless love and support.

Brian Hapcic, Lighting Designer
Brian Hapcic joins the faculty at USM this year, relocating from a position at the University of Southern Mississippi. He holds a BA in English from Ohio University, and an MFA in Design and Technology from the University of Montana. His specialties are lighting and sound.

Angus Francisco McFarland, Musical Composer
Angus is a senior student composer living and working in Portland, Maine. He has had many of his works performed on diverse instruments, and has performed as a guitarist in several theatrical productions. In 2003 he won the Nordica Trio Student Composers' Competition with a trio for piano, violin, and clarinet entitled Aetas Doloris. Lysistrata is his first composition for a theatrical production.

Matt Meeds, Technical Director
Matthew Meeds joined the Department in September of 2000. Matthew came to us from the local theatre community where he has worked at the Mad Horse Theatre, the Public Theatre, and the Theatre at Monmouth, as well as "away" theaters such as George Street Playhouse in NJ, Syracuse Stage, and Pennsylvania Centre Stage. Most recently he designed the set for last year's production of The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man-In-the-Moon Marigolds.

Kris Hall, Costume Director
This is Kris Hall's fifth season as the Costume Director. This year she also enrolled as a Masters degree candidate in Studio Art at Maine College of Art. Last summer she designed Pump Boys and Dinettes at Maine State Music Theatre.

Jillian Shapleigh, Stage Manager
Jillian is a senior theatre major from Bridgewater, MA. Her most recent accomplishment is designing costumes for SPA's production of Once On This Island. Other shows she has worked on include Dance USM!, Company, Multimediation, and Cabaret.

Cast Biographies

I. Carlsten, Lysistrata
I is a theatre major here at USM originally from Waterboro, Maine. Past Shows include: Six Characters in Search of an Author, The Bald Soprano, The Shape of Things, End of the World Missouri, A Christmas Carol, Our Town, Twelfth Night, and A Curious Savage.

Jill Kofman Bradbury, Calonice
Jill is new to Gorham and USM. She is returning to live theatre after fifteen years. Jill actively participated as a Portland Cable Access Producer, actress, and camera-woman on the N2 show. From teaching over the past ten years, she has consistently used drama and video as therapeutic and educational tools.

Mia Perron, Myrrhina
Mia is excited for this opportunity to work on the USM Main Stage. This is her second Main Stage performance, following Shakuntala last fall. Mia is a sophomore theatre major. Favorite roles include "Vi" in Footloose and "Ruth" in The Silver Lining. Mia also received a playwriting award for her co-written piece The Adventures of Pirate Bob at the Maine One Act Festival in 2003.

Michelle Sawyer, Lampito/Woman #3
Michelle is currently a freshman musical theatre major here at USM. She graduated from Windham High School. She has appeared in shows such as West Side Story, Grease, Footloose, 42nd Street, and Children of Eden. Michelle is currently studying voice under Ed Reichert and Judith James. This is her second production with USM.

Michele Lee, Theban Woman/Police Woman/Woman #1/ Peace
Michele is from Bridgton, Maine and she is a freshman theatre major. Although this is Michele's first play at USM, she has been in many professional shows around Maine - such as Les Acadiens and A Thousand Cranes at The Children's Theatre of Maine. Michele has also had previous training through Acorn School of the Performing Arts, her agency Talent Management Associates, and The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City.

Jessica Savory, Female Slave
Jessica, originally from Methuen, Massachusetts, is a second semester theatre major here at USM. Most recently she was on the deck crew for Six Characters in Search of an Author. She had the female comedic lead in her high school's senior class play, Stardust. This is her first Main Stage role at USM.

Anthony J. Teixeira, Male Chorus
Anthony, from Sandwich, Massachusetts, is in his final semester as a musical theatre major. His previous USM productions include Company, Children of Eden, Songs for a New World, and A View From the Bridge. He would like to thank Ariel and the cast and crew for this unique experience.
Travis Curran, Male Slave
Travis is a freshman theatre major debuting in Lysistrata. His past experience includes some of his high school’s productions and doing some playwriting/directing at the theatre program at Camp Wigwam Summer Camp.

Josieda M. Lord, Female Chorus
Josieda is a junior theatre major originally from Hope, Maine. This is her sixth USM production and her second show under the direction of Ms. Francoeur.

Jae Rodriguez, Magistrate
Jae is a junior theatre major who is originally from San Antonio, Texas. He originally got his break when he portrayed "Seymour" in Little Shop of Horrors. In his first production at USM he portrayed three characters in the production of Shakuntula. His technical credits are in the Dance USM! production and Six Characters in Search of an Author.

John Sargent, Police Man/Woman#2/Spartan Herald
John is from York, Maine, but originally from Turkmenistan. He migrated here at the age of the thirteen with the dream of someday becoming an actor. Lysistrata is his first play of his life.

Nick Cyr, Cinesias
Nick is a freshman theatre major from Bangor, Maine. This is his first USM production on the Main Stage, but he has worked on many productions with the Penobscot Theatre Company. Some of his productions include The Nerd, A Christmas Carol, and Servant of Two Masters. Nick last performed as Javert in Bangor High School’s production of Les Miserables.

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