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ur performing³!

a celebration of performing arts groups on river campus

oo Task!

a mouthful of birds

possession takes...
Caryl Churchill was born in London in 1938. During World War II, she and her family moved to Montreal, Canada. She returned to England to attend Oxford University. In 1960, she began writing radio plays for the BBC. She began her work in theatre as the resident dramatist at the Royal Court Theatre from 1974 to 1975. Over the next decade and a half, she collaborated with theatre companies to produce works (including A Mouthful of Birds, which she wrote with David Lan and the Joint Stock Theatre Company). Since the early 1990s, she has worked both on her own and with improvisational workshops to produce plays. Her other works include Objections to Sex and Violence (1975), Cloud 9 (1979), Top Girls (1982), Mad Forest (1990), The Skriker (1994), and Far Away (2000). She has won three Obie Awards (1982, '83, and '88), and a Society of West End Theatre Award in 1988. She is married to David Harter and has three sons.

David Lan was born in Cape Town, South Africa. He began his career in theatre as an actor at age 14. In 1972, he moved to London and began writing for theatre. Included amongst his early plays are Bird Child (1974), Red Earth (1979) and Sergeant Ola (1979). He trained as a social anthropologist at the London School of Economics and Political Science and received a PhD in 1984. His later work includes A Mouthful of Birds (with Caryl Churchill, 1986), Desire (1990), and The Ends of the Earth (1996), and two opera libretti, Tobias and the Angel (1999) and Ion (2000). He was the writer-in-residence for the Royal Court Theatre from 1995 to 1996. He is currently the Artistic Director of the Young Vic Theatre in London, appointed in 2000, and has since directed Julius Caesar (2000), A Raisin in the Sun (2001), and Doctor Faustus (with Jude Law, 2002). Aside from theatre, he has written award-winning films and documentaries for the BBC.

A Mouthful of Birds

The University of Rochester International Theatre Program presents

**a mouthful of birds**

by Caryl Churchill & David Lan

directed by Ian Belton
set & costume design by Tracy Otwell
lighting design by Paul Whitaker
sound design & original music by Brendan Connelly
special project & prop design by Casper Hargreaves
voice & acting coaching by Sally Goers Fox

**production staff**

production stage manager
Mike Caputo
assistant stage managers
Danielle Friedman/Lights
Venus Maldonado/Costumes
Daniel Mauro/Sound
Allison Rusgo/Props
run crew
Daniel Cramer
David Pascoe
Miya Sylvester
master electrician
Jeff Monheit
assistant master electrician
Kate Goddard
technical intern
Nils Madden
props mistress
Michelle Cohen
assistant director
Patricia Tehan

This performance runs approximately 1 hour & 40 minutes without intermission.
Please be aware that loud sounds, air horns, and theatrical smoke effects are used in the production.
cast
in order of appearance

Dionysus
Madeleine St. Marie

Spirit
Jonathan Wetherbee

Roy
Mike Riffle

Lena
Shannon Sapolich

Marcus
Ralph Germain

Receptionists
Effluah Alleyne,
Gaby Jones,
Shannon Sapolich

Colin
Ted Limpert

Derek
Matt Johnston

Man 1
Ralph Germain

Man 2
Nick DiCola

Weightlifters
Meredith Flouton-Barnes, Shannon Sapolich,
Jonathan Wetherbee

Mr. Wood 1
Matt Johnston

Yvonne
Amanda Ahrens

Mr. Wood 2
Ted Limpert

Paul
Ted Limpert

Paul's mother-in-law
Gaby Jones

Women in mourning
Emily Waller Nunes, Ryn Stilwell,
Kristin Volpicella

Kings
Ralph Germain, Mike Riffle

Queens
Amanda Ahrens, Meredith Flouton-Barnes

Dan
Nick DiCola

Woman 1
Emily Waller Nunes

Woman 2
Ryn Stilwell

Woman 3
Kristin Volpicella

Doreen
Meredith Flouton-Barnes

Ed
Mike Riffle

Bacchants
Amanda Ahrens, Gaby Jones, Emily
Nunes, Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella

Agave
Meredith Flouton-Barnes

Dionysus 2
Ralph Germain

Pentheus
Matt Johnston

Decima
Effluah Alleyne

Sybil
Gaby Jones

Margaret
Amanda Ahrens

Curzon
Ted Limpert

Pentheus-head
Mike Riffle

Prison Officer 1
Ted Limpert

Prison Officer 2
Matt Johnston

Victims
Amanda Ahrens,
Ralph Germain,
Ryn Stilwell

Pentheus-head
Nick DiCola,
Ralph Germain,
Matt Johnston,
Gaby Jones, Emily
Nunes, Mike Riffle,
Shannon Sapolich,
Madeleine St. Marie, Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella

Lap dancers

Colleague
Mike Riffle

Friend
Shannon Sapolich

June
Nick DiCola, Ralph Germain, Madeleine St. Marie,
Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella

Pigs
Emily Nunes

Dionysus 3
Nick DiCola, Jonathan Wetherbee

Herecline
Emily Nunes, Madeleine St. Marie, Ryn Stilwell,
Kristin Volpicella

Dancers
The Prozac & Zoloff Fairies
Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella

Yvonne's Mother
Gaby Jones

Death
Ralph Germain

Suzy
Jonathan Wetherbee

Lil
Nick DiCola

Tony
Mike Riffle

Mrs. Blair
Kristin Volpicella

Evans
Emily Nunes

Potters
Matt Johnston, Madeleine St. Marie

Manipulators
Ralph Germain, Ryn Stilwell

Cue givers
Gaby Jones, Ted Limpert
According to Greek mythology, Hermaphroditus was the son of the gods Hermes and Aphrodite. He was raised by nymphs until he was fifteen, when he left his home to set out on his own. One day, he found a clear, beautiful pool inhabited by the nymph, Salmacis. She saw him while he was picking flowers and, captivated by his god-like beauty, was enraptured. She made herself up and approached him with her desire, but he, being so young, became embarrassed and said he did not know what love was. She then requested a sisterly kiss, but he threatened to leave, so she backed off for fear of losing him. She told him she would leave him be at the pool, then went and hid herself in a bush. He took off his clothes and dove into the water. She, upon seeing his naked body, became mad with passion for him and dove in after him. She grabbed his body and held onto him, wrapping her legs around him and kissing him, threatening to rape him if he resisted. He struggled against her, so she prayed that they would never be separated. The gods received her prayer, and answered it by causing Hermaphroditus and Salmacis to inhabit one body that was neither male nor female, but both.

The common definition of a hermaphrodite, or intersex, is a person who is born with both male and female sex organs. However, this definition is not completely accurate. Some hermaphrodites have one of each sex of the sex organs; others have vestiges, a combination of both gonads in one organ; others still are genetically male or female with the genitals of the opposite sex. There are three main categories of hermaphrodites. They are true hermaphrodites, “male pseudo”, and “female pseudo”. True hermaphrodites are born with both ovarian and testicular tissue. Their chromosomes can be the female XX, the male XY, the mosaic XX/XY, or the extremely rare XO.

To this day, the medical community does not understand what causes true hermaphroditism, and there are fewer than five hundred known cases. Female pseudo hermaphrodites are genetically female and have internal female reproductive organs, but have masculine genitalia. This occurs most commonly because of a condition that causes the adrenal glands to produce too much testosterone. Male pseudo hermaphrodites are genetically male. They usually have testes in the abdominal cavity and either female or ambiguous external genitalia.

The Romans believed that there were human beings combining in one body both sexes. The Jewish Talmud contains several references to them. An old French law allowed them great latitude. The English law recognizes them. The ancient Athenians commanded that they should be put to death. The Hindus and Chinese enact that every hermaphrodite should choose one sex and keep to it. According to Plato, all persons who bathed in the fountain Salmacis, in Carea, became hermaphrodite.

Some think by comparing Gen. ii. 21 with Gen. ii. 20-24 that Adam at first combined in himself both sexes.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Gen. 2:21-24

The renowned hermaphrodite/ssexual, Adelaide Herculine Barbin (later known as Abel Barbin) was born in 1838. Her father died when she was very young, leaving her widowed mother and herself into poverty. When she was seven, she was accepted into a convent while her mother went to work as a maid for a noble family. Later, she was accepted into the convent of the Ursulines, where she resided as a boarding student along with many other girls, most of whom were of a much higher economic and social stature than she. However, she was treated as an equal and made friends amongst them. Here, she found that while she had no knack for crafts like sewing, she was a brilliant student, and spent much of her time reading. It was also in this convent, at the age of sixteen, where she met her first love, a girl named Lea who was five years her senior.

At the age of fifteen, Herculine left the convent to live with the family for whom her mother worked. She was hired as a lady’s maid for the daughter of the family, Clotilde. She and Clotilde became very close, and it was heartbreaking for her when she later got married. It was after Herculine entered a school of teaching that she noticed how, while the other girls had developed normally, she herself had not only remained flat-chested and skinny, but had hair growing all over her body. She struck up another relationship at this time with a girl named Thecla. The two would kiss in public, sometimes on the lips, and eventually were imprisoned for it.

She graduated at nineteen and accepted an assistant teaching position. Here, she met her true love, Sara. They became very close and eventually consummated their relationship. Herculine got very sick, and when the doctor who was called examined her, he was shocked by the sight of her body. Eventually, she confessed her intersexuality to a bishop. The bishop had his doctor examine her, and finally it was decided that Herculine Barbin should be re-declared a man. She left both her position and her beloved Sara.

Herculine, now under the name Abel Barbin, went to Paris. For seven years, he lived there, in and out of jobs, first on the railroad, later taking a position as a cook’s assistant on a ship sailing from Europe to America. However, Abel was able to fully adjust to his new identity, and the resulting confusion drove him to suicide. In 1846, he died by ingesting himself with the fumes from the charcoal stove in his apartment. A manuscript of his memoirs was found with his body.

The celebrated structuralist philosophers, Michel Foucault, later discovered these memoirs in the French Department of Public Hygiene. The published edition of the memoirs, with Foucault’s introduction, introduced Barbin to a wider audience.

“What strange blindness was it that made me hold on to this absurd role until the end? I would be unable to explain it to myself. Perhaps it was that thirst for the unknown, which is so natural to man.”

— Abel/Herculine Barbin
Voodoo, or more properly, Vodun, is etymologically related to an African word meaning “spirit”. The religion is directly traceable back through the 1700’s to parts of modern-day Benin, Togo, and Nigeria, though its roots may go back as far as 6,000 years in Africa. During the era of the slave trade, between roughly the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, slaves imported from Africa brought Vodun with them to the West Indies. Today, Vodun is most widely known as a series of evil, violent rites, involving “voodoo dolls”, zombies, human sacrifice, and cannibalism. 1930’s Hollywood helped aid the spread of this image, an image which had been started decades earlier by Western sensationalists.

Demonic possession is mythical; but the faculty of being possessed, more completely, by an idea is probably the fundamental condition of what is called genius, whether it show itself in the saint, the artist, or the man of science. Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-95), British biologist and educator.

In reality, Vodun is a multi-traditional worship of a supreme being and a pantheon of lesser spirits known as Lwa (“mysteries”). There are hundreds of Lwa, the idea of which resembles that of Catholic saints. During Vodun ceremonies, practitioners believe that the priests and priestesses can become possessed by the Lwa, who then deliver advice and warnings to the celebrants on the physical plane of existence. These rituals are celebrated in thanks for good luck, to avoid or end bad luck, to commemorate special days associated with members of the Lwa, such as healing, birth, marriage, and death rites. The ceremonies are preceded by a feast. Afterwards, a vevve, or drawing associated with one of the Lwa, is created on the ground using flour or cornmeal. This is followed by drumming, chanting, and dancing, as well as by animal sacrifice. Though there is an aspect of “dark” sorcery tied to the religion, the goal of which is to manipulate and control other people, most practitioners keep to following “white magic”, used to heal and bring about good fortune.

IAN BELTON (DIRECTOR) Directing credits include: The Better Times of Petra Van Koten (Fantabulous) - Off-Broadway premieres, two Drama Desk nominations; Bestiole in the Park (Singapore Rep). Retired by Robert Glaudini (L.A.), Contingent of the Night by Paul Guzzardo (St. Louis), The Prince (Junoeco) at CSC; The Secretaries (The Five Lesbian Brothers), Sexuality Forever (Wellman), Hench Möller Philistines, The Trojan Women (Eurupides), The Seagull (Chekhov), The Soldier’s Tale (Stravinsky) as well as several plays by August Strindberg. In addition to adapting the text for The Better Times of Petra Van Koten, Ian has contributed as a writer to Countess Blood Field, BSG, MotelMachine and Encore: The Gypsy Tragedy. Ian has directed numerous short films and animation for theatre and art installations. His six video shorts for The House of Arrest Installation were shown in New York and Chicago as part of JoAnne Akalaitis’ Spectrogram Cycle. Later this year Ian will be directing The Bakers by Jean Genet at Skidmore College. Ian has just been selected for the NEA/TCG Career Development Program.

TRACE OTWELL (SET & COSTUMES) has an MFA in scenic design and puppetry from CalArts. She recently adapted and directed Pearl of a Combat (Cotten Center for Puppetry and the Arts/CalArts), an adaption of Finnish folklore told with puppets, performers, and “Exercise in Creativity.” Other work in puppetry includes scenic design for Susan Simpson’s Spot, Shine, Glitter, puppetteering in June Greene’s Ether Telegraph, and being a creator/performance in Bread and Puppet’s Intersection Moon. Scene design credits include Flatbread Theater Co’s Farewell Juliet (Santa Monica Playhouse) and Lorca’s Blood Wedding (CalArts) — both directed by Max Truxx, and choreographer Maggie Lesc’s Wabash Wanderers To and Fro at CalArts. She is a member of “Test,” an experimental performance collective.

WILL HURST (LIGHTING) NY Credits: Guineas Pig Sake (Labyrinth Theater Co, The Public Theater), Get What You Need (The Atlantic), Of a White Christmas (Clubbed Thumb), Smashing Vegas (Play Co), The Lost Sundial in June (Off-Broadway—Century Center, Rattlestick Productions), Crude (Urban Stages), After the Show (The Drama League). Regional: A New Way (Long Wharf Theater), Serious Money, It Pays To Advertise, Brother (Yale Rep), Phantom Palace (Festival of the Arts and Ideas, Musik Der Jahrhunderte — Stuttgart), The Unknown, The Dazzle (Theaterworks Hartford), Real (The Empty Space), Orange Flower Water and Silence of God (Contemporary American Theater Festival). Regional and Architectural Designs include Myer Myers Jewish Synagogue in New York (Yale Art Gallery), Dwight Edgewood School, New Haven, CT; ArtSpace, New Haven, CT; Project Manager/Designer, Schuler & Shook, Minneapolis.

BRENDAN CONNELLY (ORIGINAL MUSIC & SOUND) is co-founder of the Theatre of a Two-headed Calf and has composed music for all of its plays. His sound design credits, outside of work with Two-headed Calf include: Deus Maritages, (Primary Stages; dir: David Levine); The Amorous Tryst (Present Company); The Rat Thief (Critical Mass and Modern Machine (NY Fringe Fest), both directed by Ian Belton; and Match, directed by Susanna Geller (Lincoln Center). Brendan is a member of Wet Ink, a nonprofit new music presenting organization and composers collective. His compositions have been performed at Columbia University’s Experimental Music Series, STAGE-01 Festival (NYC), Oasis — A Festival of Experimental Music and Art (Chashama, NY), and a number of Wet Ink Music composers-collective concerts. He has been a visiting artist at Dartmouth College, NYU, ETW, and Lafayette College. His new composition Quintet 1 will be released on Planetaria Records in the Fall of 2004.

CASPER HARDREWE (SPECIAL PROJECTS & PROPS) has worked on the Broadway productions of Little Shop Of Horrors, The Lion King, and Julie Taymor’s The Green Bird. He has also worked on the Production stage show, with The Blue Man Group, and on Super-Confidence. Casper was nominated for an Emmy award (costume design) for his work on Disney’s The Book of Pooh.
This production has been made possible through the combined efforts of ENG 170 & 270 (Technical & Advanced Technical Theatre) and ENG 290 (Plays in Production).

Max Abernathy - Kyeesha Becoats - Alex Blakeney
Mike Borden - Jacqueline Boyce - Mike Caputo
Peter Choi - Anna Cristolo - Arthur Goldfeder
Brian Jones - David Kim - Hee Won Lee - Min-Jae Lee
Adam Maccon-Carter - Matthew Mavissakalian
Michael Pollock - Mya Sylvester - April Tulloh
Jason Venditti - Adam Volk - Doo Ho Yoo

Season 04-05

The university of rochester international theatre program

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The International Monkey King Troupe consists of 15 actors and musicians, led by Ghaffar Pourazar, a British performer who became the first Westerner to complete the rigorous course of training at the National Academy for Traditional Chinese Opera. He has since become the leading exponent of this marvelous theatrical art-form in the West. Their mission is to make Beijing Opera accessible to a worldwide audience. They have performed at the Zheng Yi CiTheatre in Beijing and have toured internationally in Malaysia and Singapore. The company, visiting the US for the 2004 tour, includes six leading students from the National Academy and several highly regarded feature performers.

During the tour the troupe will offer over a dozen workshops for students and teachers at the colleges they visit. These workshops will cover aspects of the history, theatrical forms, music and dance of the Beijing Opera.

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in association with
the ur international theatre program & the eastman school of music
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the beijing opera's monkey king troupe's production of

the adventures of the monkey king