

**Bridgewater State College Theatre Arts
Presents**



**the actor's
nightmare** **and** **Sister Mary Ignatius
Explains It All for You**

by Christopher Durang

Friday, April 27 @ 8pm
Saturday, April 28 @ 8pm
Wednesday, May 2 @ 6pm

Thursday, May 3 @ 8pm
Friday, May 4 @ 8pm
Saturday, May 5 @ 8pm

For More Information and Reservations,
Call The Box Office at 508-531-1321

Director's Notes

There is no document of civilization that is not also a document of barbarism. Walter Benjamin

The two plays on this evening's bill may seem to have little connection. *The Actor's Nightmare*, a bizarre comedy about anxiety and self-exposure, does not have the cynical bite of the controversial and frightening *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*. Yet, the two share the common theme of our almost desperate need for rational order and a concrete definition of the meaning of life.

The scripts are deceptively simple. The rehearsal process uncovered one of the basic traps inherent in translating the written word to performance: take nothing for granted. What may appear effortless in the mind's eye or ear, more often than not requires a gestation period of intense experimentation and exploration. So it was with this evening's plays.

Much of Christopher Durang's work is concerned with "the randomness of things." It is at the heart of *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* and *Betty's Summer Vacation*, two of his later full-length plays. These early one-acts are his first attempts at investigating this theme and, in doing so, has created works that are now recognized as staples of contemporary American theatre.

George Spelvin walks out of a world ordered by the irrefutability of numbers (he is an accountant) into a world of artistic chaos (he is not an actor). His dilemma is made that much more poignant when we consider that the characters populating that world seem to understand why they are there. The irony of George as Hamlet (the essential "non-actor") inadvertently quoting Sydney Carton from *The Tale of Two Cities* and Sir Thomas More from *A Man for All Seasons* illuminates the theme of the play -- there is really only one thing that truly gives meaning to life.

So it is with Sister Mary Ignatius, but in a much more disturbing manner. For Sister Mary, the world is ordered according to her ideology and faith. That Sister Mary is symbolic of the need for power to maintain itself, in her case arbitrary moral power, pushes the limits of our acceptance. An underlying theme of *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You* is a disturbing commentary on the abuse of power. When her authority is challenged, and when she is confronted with the possibility of a life devoid of meaning or the possibility of error of her definition, she reacts to impose this order and definition on the world. Wars of religion are fought for this reason.

It is fascinating that speculations about salvation and the after-life lie at the heart of the matter – it seems none of us are willing to accept our own mortality. In *The Mahabharata*, one of the main characters is allowed to choose the time of his death – a gift that enables him to live forever. Obviously, none of us has been given this gift, but the possibility of a choice of how and why our lives will end is alluded to in both plays. Perhaps, like Sydney Carton and Sir Thomas More, George Spelvin, Diane and Gary are heroic after all.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

“The Actor’s Nightmare”

William AmesGeorge Spelvin
Maryann Romano Meg
Michelle Skundrick Sarah
Julie Tideman..... Ellen
Andrew Riel Henry
Robert Egan The Executioner

“Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You”

Jennifer Ellis..... Sister Mary
Daniel Mayhew Thomas
Petra Gianopolous..... Diane
Anthony Previti Gary
Danielle Mathieu Philomena
Evan James Aloysius

Cast Biographies

"The Actor's Nightmare"

William Ames (George) – William is a Junior majoring in Communication Studies with a double minor in Theatre and Political Science. This is William's first role at Bridgewater State. He was last seen as Captain Horatio Headwind in Weymouth drama Society's *Hijinks on the High Seas*.

Maryann Romano (Meg) – This is Maryann's final performance at Bridgewater. Her favorite role at BSC was the title role in *Mother Courage*, for which she received an Irene Ryan Acting Award nomination. In 1997, Maryann toured the U.S., Canada, and Singapore as Liz in Scholastic's *The Magic School Bus*. Maryann can currently be seen as Maria in *Joey and Maria's Comedy Wedding* across New England.

Michelle Skundrick (Sarah) – Michelle is a Senior exchange student from Central Washington University. Her previous roles in Washington include Wanda in *Baby Dance* and Ethel Toffelmier in *The Music Man*. Unfortunately, this is her only show at Bridgewater as she will be graduating in May.

Julie Tidemand (Ellen) – Julie is from Silver Spring, Maryland. Within the past three years she has appeared at various community theaters in Maryland as Jackie in *Hot L Baltimore* and Suzy in *Wait Until Dark*. This is her first performance at Bridgewater State College.

Andrew Riel (Henry) – Andrew is a Junior at BSC and is majoring in Theatre Arts. This performance marks Andrew's tenth performance on the main stage. Past roles include: Harry/Martin in *Cloud Nine*; Uncle Ernie in *Tommy*; Camille in *Hotel D'Amour*; and Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*. Andrew was most recently seen in the Circle Theatre's production of *Click* as Pinto.

Robert Egan (The Executioner) – Robert is a Senior majoring in Communication Studies and Psychology. He is also minoring in Theatre Arts. This is his first on stage role.

"Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You"

Jennifer Ellis (Sister Mary Ignatius) – Jen is a Junior majoring in Theatre. This is Jen's eighth performance on the BSC stage. Her past credits include the role of Viola in *Twelfth Night*, for which she received an Irene Ryan nomination; Betty and Edward in *Cloud Nine* and Mrs. Walker in *Tommy*. She was most recently seen as Laurey in Massasoit Community Theatre's *Oklahoma*.

Daniel Mayhew (Thomas) – Danny is a Sophomore majoring in Theatre. This past year, Danny performed in *Hotel D'Amour* as an ensemble member and *Twelfth Night* as Sebastian.

Petra Gianopoulos (Diane) – Petra is a Junior majoring in Intensive Special Education and Theatre. Petra has previously been seen on the BSC stage in *Twelfth Night* (Olivia) and *The Who's Tommy*. She was also nominated for an Irene Ryan scholarship award for her roles in BSC's production of *Cloud Nine*. She is currently the secretary of The Ensemble Theatre organization.

Anthony Previti (Gary) – Anthony is a Junior majoring in Theatre and minoring in Mass Communications. In his last three years, Anthony has portrayed Lt. Malcolm in *3001: The Odyssey in Space*; Cathy/Joshua/Soldier in *Cloud Nine*; and Fabian in *Twelfth Night*, for which he received an Irene Ryan nomination.

Danielle Mathieu (Philomena) – Danielle is a Senior majoring in Sociology and minoring in Theatre. Over the past two years, Danielle has performed at BSC in *The Who's Tommy*.

(ensemble); as Dixie Dallas in the Children's Show *Radio Roundup*; the Ensemble of *Hotel D'Amour*; and Curio in *Twelfth Night*.

Evan Matthew James (Aloysius) – Evan is proud to be performing in his tenth show here at BSC. Some of his previous roles include: Captain Walker in *Tommy*; Chandebise/Poche in *Hotel D'Amour*; Lloyd Dallas in *Noises Off*; and Clive/Gerry in *Cloud Nine*, for which he received an Irene Ryan nomination. Evan is currently seen in the Circle Theatre's production of *Click* as Marlin

Tech Biographies

Cassandra Ristaino (Stage Manager) - Casey is a Junior majoring in Theatre Education. This is Casey's third time stage managing at Bridgewater State College. Her past credits include: *Jumping Into Darkness*, *Mother Courage and her Children*, and was assistant stage manager for last year's production of *Cloud Nine*. Casey is currently the Historian/Member-at-Large of the Ensemble Theatre Club.

Frank Meroney (Mater Electrician / Light Board Operator) – Frank is a junior majoring in Television and Film Production. He has worked on many television and film projects such as *Commonwealth Politics*, *Dog's Best Friend* and is currently Director of Special Effects on the TV adaptation of *The Actor's Nightmare*. His local theatre credits include *Spoon River Anthology* as Editor and Cinematographer, Video operator for *The Who's Tommy* and *3001: The Odyssey in Space*. He is currently producing a local Bridgewater cable access show *Hello Billy*.

Jeff "Skeletor" Fowler (Sound Production) – Jeff is a Junior majoring in Communications. Jeff is also on the sound production team for the film version of *The Actor's Nightmare*.

Michelle Skundrick (Costume Design) - Michelle is a Senior exchange student from Central Washington University. She designed the costumes for *The Actor's Nightmare* and will be designing shows this summer for the Peterborough Players in New Hampshire.

Henry Shaffer (Director) Director credits at BSC include *Dogg's Hamlet*, *Cahoot's MacBeth*, *The Ring Cycle*, *A Medieval Christmas* and *Cloud Nine* Other director credits include *The Magic Flute*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Gondoliers* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for The Raylynmor Opera in New Hampshire, *Evita* at Boston College and *The Importance of Being Earnest* for Georgetown University. As a costume designer, he has designed Off-Broadway (*The Voyage Inheritance*) and regionally at The Studio Theatre, Washington, D.C. (*Medea*, *He Who Gets Slapped*, *Shakuntala*, *Album* and *The Wake of Jamey Foster*), and The Peterborough Players (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *The Mousetrap* among others.) He has designed costumes for BSC since 1996. Film work as an art director includes *A Few Good Men*, *The Exorcist III*, *The Image Maker*, *Samaritan* for CBS, and *Patriot* for NBC. He received a B.A. in Fine Arts from Georgetown University and a M.F.A. from Carnegie-Mellon University.

Arthur Dirks (Technical Director, Light Design) Arthur Dirks teaches scenic design and stage lighting at

Bridgewater. Patrons may remember Arthur's designs for *Marisol*, *Jack the Ripper* and many other previous productions.

Artistic and Production Staff

Scenic Design.....	Arthur Dirks
Light Design.....	Arthur Dirks
Costume Design	Michelle Skundrick
Technical Director.....	Arthur Dirks
Auditorium Technical Director	Mark Johnson
Stage Technician.....	Timothy Sullivan
Master Electrician.....	Frank Meroney
Stage Manager.....	Casey Ristaino
Assistant Stage Manager	Matthew C. Greene
Light Operator.....	Frank Meroney
Sound Operator	Jeff “Skeleton” Fowler
Fly Operator	Melissa Persson
Property Masters	Andy Riel and Tony Previti
Set Construction.....	Timothy Sullivan, Jeremy Hanson, Frank Meroney, Tracy Miele, Joe Locontore, Noreen White, Julie Tidemand
Wardrobe Crew.....	Michelle Skundrick, Evan James, Paul Norton, Maryann Romano, Petra Gianopolous, Noriko Sato, Robert Egan, Andy Riel, Daniel Mayhew
Theater Management Supervisor	Jim Quinn
Management Staff.....	David Antocci, Kathryn Acciardi, Cathy Whiteside, Casey Ristaino, JR Mell, Matthew C. Greene,
Program/Flyer Designers	Matthew C. Greene, David Antocci, JR Mell
Program Layout.....	JR Mell

Upcoming BSC Theatre Arts Programs and Shows

Creating a Career In Theatre workshop

May 5, 2001 10am-4pm

\$5.00- admission

\$10.00- admission, catered lunch, and free ticket to

"the Actor's nightmare" and

"Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You"

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