



Poci Ludique Societas

PLS News

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Fall 2012

NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

by Linda J. Phillips

It's been an exciting year at PLS, with some administrative changes you'll read about below and a busy production season that saw us performing in a cathedral, a church, and a converted church (U of T's Studio Theatre). Thanks to a generous grant from the Anglican Foundation for the Arts, we now have a new stable set built by Chris Warrilow. Also Eric Lehman and artist Joanne Rochester, with a little help from me, were able to create three dromedaries that can be disassembled for easier transport and storage. Later in the season, Eric and Joanne teamed up again to build a new donkey for Jesus (played by Eric) to ride into Jerusalem. Yes, our Jesus was also a carpenter!

Over the past year Work-study Archive Assistant Cassandra Morton spent many hours cataloguing our production archives, and this year Elise Young is continuing the job. Once that is completed, we hope to start digitizing as much as possible, including hundreds of slides from earlier productions. We are also very pleased to welcome PhD student Lauren Shepherd as our Production Assistant. Many thanks to the University of Toronto for continuing to fund the Work-study program despite provincial budget cuts.

CHANGES AT THE DRAMA CENTRE

by Stephen Johnson

As of 1 July 2012 the faculty and staff of both the former Graduate Centre for Study of Drama and former University College Drama Program have joined forces as the (new and improved) **Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies**. This new relationship, which comes after broad consultation with faculty, staff and students, represents an important change in our ability to provide good service to our discipline, our faculty, and especially to our undergraduate and graduate students. It also offers the unique opportunity for more formally established collaboration in both scholarly and creative pursuits between BA, MA and PhD students. Every year, students in all of our programs create exciting performance on this campus—it can only get better as we get to know each other, and work together. This benefits everyone, including PLS/CPSET, which will now have closer connections with an undergraduate student population that might be drawn on to support and be involved in its work, and with University College. Of course these benefits will take some time—at the moment we're all just becoming acquainted. But hopes are high, and the talk is enthusiastic.

LAST SEASON (2011–2012)

The first show of the season was *To Seek a Child*, the Chester plays about Herod and the Kings, performed in historic St. James Cathedral for the convention of The Friends of the Creche in November 2011.

Next, PLS teamed up again with St Thomas's Anglican Church to create *Behold the Time of Mercy*, a moving show for Lent combining episodes from the N-Town plays, The Raising of Lazarus, Entry to Jerusalem and Last Supper.

The final show of last season was a little-known play of prejudice and pirates—Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* co-produced with the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama in conjunction with the conference *Early Modern Migrations: Exiles, Expulsion, & Religious Refugees, 1400–1700*. It was a wild romp that left the stage littered with bodies.



Photo: Pedram Ziaei

To Seek a Child: dromedaries ridden by Balthasar (Daina Valiulis) and Melchior (Eric Lehman)

2012–2013 SEASON

A Medieval Christmas:

Go We Hence to Bethlehem's Bower

Once again PLS is partnering with St Thomas's Anglican Church to celebrate the season with three pageants from the N-Town Nativity sequence which together make up a charming episode depicting Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem followed by the Adoration of the Shepherds and Magi. The three plays represent a solemn celebration of the birth of Christ, but there are still plenty of the shenanigans that lovers of Medieval drama enjoy: Mary gets a pregnancy craving; Joseph gets grumpy; Herod has his usual rant; and a midwife has doubts about

Mary's virginity. There is also a miraculous cherry tree and beautiful period music to round out the production. Director: Kimberley Radmacher, Designer: Linda Phillips, Music Director: Bryan Martin, Stage Manager: Katherine Belyea.

December 14 at 7pm & December 15 at 2 & 7pm
St Thomas's Church, 383 Huron St.
Box Office: 416-978-5096

Three Farces from Three Lands

Banish the February blahs and get in a pre-Lenten carnival mood with these short 16th century farces from Germany, Holland, and England, including two old PLS favourites. All three share a typical comedic view of marriage among the peasantry. There will be slapstick fights, puppetry, and pie!

The Stolen Shrovetide Cock by Hans Sachs
The Farce of the Fisherman by Cornelis Everaert
John John the Husband by John Heywood

February 9-11, 2013
Studio Theatre, 4 Glen Morris St.
Box Office: 416-978-7986



Photo: Linda J. Phillips

A Christian Turn'd Turk: conversion dumbshow

CHESTER 2010: THE BOOK

by David Klausner

PLS's scholarly credentials rose significantly in October with the publication by Ashgate of *The Chester Cycle in Context, 1555-1575: Drama, Religion, and the Impact of Change*. The book derives in part from the conference on the cycle which took place simultaneously with PLS's production of the complete cycle at Victoria College in June of 2010. The book, edited by Jessica Dell, David Klausner, and Helen Ostovich, received a formal launch on Friday, 19 October in the Robert Gill Theatre of the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies (formerly the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama).

A NEW OFFICE MANAGER AND WEBSITE

by Katherine Belyea

Hello! Allow me to introduce myself: I'm Katherine Belyea, PLS's new office manager. I got my start with PLS as a stage manager for *What Light Is This?*, adding music assistance and web design for *To Seek a Child*. When John Cowling moved on to full-time work last December, I came on board as office

manager. We wish John all the best in his new position.

I have updated and migrated PLS's website. The content from the old site is still there, plus new features such as an expanded and searchable photo gallery, archival programs and posters, and information about ordering *Performing the Queen's Men* DVDs. I invite you to visit <<http://www.plspls.ca>> and send me some feedback!

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW

by Alexandra F. Johnston

Sometime this term we will be welcoming Dr Charlotte Steenbrugge as a post-doctoral fellow. Charlotte is a Dutch scholar who took her PhD at Cambridge. Her particular interest is in the relationship between preaching and the drama in late medieval England. She has been awarded a prestigious Marie Curie Scholarship from the European Union. She will hold the scholarship at the University of Bristol under the direction of Professor Pamela King but one of the conditions of the award is that two of the three years of the fellowship must be held outside Europe. Charlotte has chosen to come to Toronto not only because of U of T's strength in medieval studies but also because of the Centre for Performance Studies in Early Theatre and PLS. She has no experience with the performance of early theatre and is anxious to "apprentice" with us over the next two years.

FORTHCOMING ISSUE OF *EARLY THEATRE* (15.2)

To include: ISSUES IN REVIEW

Theatre and the Reformation of Space in Early Modern Europe

Contributing Editor: PAUL YACHNIN

For a complete list of articles, please see
<<http://www.plspls.ca>> or
<<http://wp.me/p2JUCZ-fR>>

COMING UP: PLS'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Board has officially declared 2015 to be our fiftieth anniversary! As you may know, PLS had its origins in 1964-65 in a seminar on medieval drama conducted at the University of Toronto. Soon it will have been fifty years since Professor Leyerle's Seminar, the original inspiration for the name "PLS".



DONATIONS WELCOME

As always, we count on your support for PLS in its many activities. Your donation—by cheque, money order or online—will be most gratefully received. Please make cheques out to "Poculi Ludique Societas" (USA donors, "Associates of the University of Toronto").

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