



Poculi Ludique Societas

PLS Newsletter

Fall Season 2010

Changes at the Top

After many years of dedicated service, Alexandra Johnston has retired as Chair of the Board of Directors of PLS/CPSET and handed over the reins to returning Board member David Klausner. Sandy will remain as a valued member of the Board.

Last Season (2009-2010)

Last season's Christmas show, *A Child Shall be Born*, gave audiences a beautiful preview of two of the Chester plays newly edited and modernized by Alexandra Johnston for Chester 2010. In February, *Inside Out* explored the performance of allegorical characters and the dramatization of moral choice in early modern drama in conjunction with the Graduate Centre of Study of Drama and visiting scholar Alan Dessen.

Chester 2010:

For three incredible days, May 22-24 2010, the Chester Cycle came to life on the campus of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. Enthralled audiences watched as the newly refurbished PLS pageant wagons rolled up bringing 23 pageants presented by companies from across North America. It was a dream come true for those of us who had planned and worked so hard and so long to make this event happen. The Steering Committee and the Production Team are eternally grateful to Victoria University and to the many volunteers who cheerfully hauled and painted wagons, built sets, collected donations on site and a myriad other tasks. We also want to thank our 'Chester Angels', the generous donors without whose support *Chester 2010* would not have been possible.

Chester 2010 was not just a spectacular show, but also included an academic symposium and an ongoing research project of the Centre for Performance Studies in Early Theatre (CPSET). More information is available on the website: chester.uwaterloo.ca and will be updated as the project goes forward. As part of our research, Matthew Sergi of Berkeley interviewed a number of participants about their experiences. Here is a small sample of what they had to say:

- "Working on an actual production, not just a theoretical one, made me think differently

in interpretive ways -- not just practical ways. It's not just thinking 'what would we do when we put it on stage?' but actually working through that." – Christina Fitzgerald, Dramaturg, *Play 12: Temptation; Woman Taken in Adultery; etc.*

- "It was really quite exciting to see the actors get confident. They were completely in the zone... It was a long day, but it was great. It was easy to see that a modern audience could really relate to it." – Virginia Reh, Director, *Play 11: Purification; Christ and the Doctors*
- "The students and I have had so many discussions about humor and religion, and relating the practical to the religious experience. They're not medievalists – a lot of them aren't English majors – but we've all loved this play so much... It's been amazing." – Kimberly Koch, Director, *Play 9: Shepherds*
- "One of the things that you can't really get out of studying a play like *The Fall of Man* from a purely research perspective is some of the emotional bonds that are created... I think that's a very important part of the play: how humanity carries on after the Fall of Man." – Russell Lee Keck, Actor ("Adam"), *Play 2: Fall of Man*
- "The audiences are fantastic... and we really get a lot of energy from them. It's great performing in front of this kind of audience." – Laura Baker, Actor ("John"), *Play 14: Last Supper, Betrayal*



Play One: Creation and Fall of Angels

2010-2011 Season:

What Light Is This?

A Medieval Nativity Pageant

This season's Christmas offering will be a co-production with St. Thomas's Anglican Church. Director Linda Phillips has combined four short plays from the 15th century York Cycle: Nativity, Shepherds, Herod and the Kings, and the Flight into Egypt. We will be using the text modernized by Chet Scoville and Kimberley Yates for PLS's 1998 production of The York Plays. Music Director is Bryan Martin.

Venue: St. Thomas's Anglican Church
383 Huron Street (1 block south of Bloor
& east of Spadina)

Performances: Wed December 8 at 7:00 pm;
Saturday December 11 at 2:30 and 7 pm

Reservations: 416 978-5096
Adults: \$20; Seniors: \$15; Students: \$10

New Custom

New Custom is an anonymous play with ten parts written to be played by a small touring company of four actors. The title page describes the play as "no less witty than pleasant," which is to say that it combines a didactic agenda with theatrical entertainment. According to recent discoveries of scholars associated with Records of Early English Drama, this play was part of a concerted propaganda campaign launched by William Cecil very early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The purpose of this campaign was to use plays to persuade the English of the rightness of the Elizabethan Settlement that established the doctrine and governance of the Church of England with the Queen as the Defender of the Faith. Plays like this were being seen all over England when Shakespeare was a boy.

This workshop presentation, directed by Noam Lior, will build on previous PLS/SQM productions staged at the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama, including some of the rhetorical work developed on *Clyomon & Clamydes* and the physical and vocal work developed for *Inside Out: the Persistence of Allegory*.

Performances: March 9-12, 2011 at the Studio Theatre, 4 Glen Morris Street



Early Theatre

The journal *Early Theatre* is available at <<http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/earlytheatre/>>. Readers can access all of the issues except for the most recent 3 years. Those are available in paper by subscription from CRRS Publications through the Early Theatre website, or by online subscription from Iter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance <<http://www.itergateway.org/>>.

Early Theatre 13.2 (December 2010) contains a review essay on the production of *Chester 2010*,

'*Chester 2010: Creation and Judgement*', by Mary Elizabeth Ellzey, Garrett P.J. Epp, Douglas W. Hayes, Erin E. Kelly, Heather Mitchell, and Dimitry Senyshyn

CHESTER 2010 BAGS FOR SALE!!

Canvas bags make excellent Christmas gifts, especially when they are embellished with the beautiful *Chester 2010* Angel image. Bags are available for only \$10 each plus shipping and handling. Contact info@plspls.ca or you may buy them in person at St Andrew's Anglican Church before the performances of *What Light Is This?*

Keep in Touch!

Have you moved or changed your email address? Don't forget to let us know so you won't miss any of the latest PLS news.

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

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