



Poculi Ludique Societas

PLS Newsletter

Fall Season 2011

The start of the academic year is also the beginning of a busy time for us at PLS. We are deep into rehearsals and prop and set construction for our first show. This season our two main productions are being staged in response to requests from the organizers of a convention and a conference. Almost three years ago Alexandra Johnston, who was working on editing the text for Chester 2010, received an invitation for PLS to perform at the Convention of the Friends of the Creche and she suggested that the Chester plays about Herod and the Magi, including the Slaughter of the Innocents, might be appropriate for a performance on Remembrance Day. Our spring show, *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, will be an interesting challenge, and we are pleased to be co-producing it with the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama in conjunction with the conference *Early Modern Migrations: Exiles, Expulsion, & Religious Refugees, 1400-1700*. PLS is also considering some other requests for future performances, but the details have not yet been confirmed. Remember to check www.plspl.ca or, better still, join our email info list for updates.

Last Season (2010 – 2011)

What Light Is This?

Our first co-production with St Thomas's Anglican Church, four plays from the York Nativity sequence, was a resounding success. Support from the parishioners for this Christmas pageant was outstanding. We at PLS look forward to working with the St Thomas's community in the future.



-New Custom & Light of the Gospel

New Custom

This workshop co-production with the Drama Centre of New Custom was proposed by Alexandra Johnston, who had been researching Elizabethan Protestant propaganda interludes. The title page description of the play as “no less witty than pleasant” proved to be surprisingly accurate, as the lively cast discovered that propaganda can be fun.

2011-2012 Season

To Seek a Child

PLS will be presenting a three part excerpt from the Chester Mystery Plays in St James' Cathedral as part of the convention of the Friends of the Creche: the sequence from the Kings' Visit to Herod, the Adoration of the Magi to the Slaughter of the Innocents and Death of Herod. Together these three plays (that were performed as one in the 1572 performance in the English city of Chester) form a trilogy on the tragedy of Herod who represents the power of the secular state. The first episode sets the holiness and dignity of Kings against Herod's monomania; the second episode is a beautiful enactment of the creche scene as the Magi present their gifts to the Christchild in the beauty and peace of the manger; the third episode dramatizes the response of Herod and his military regime to the escape of the Magi with the violence of the Slaughter of the Innocents. The performance for the convention will take place on the night of Remembrance Day and this portrayal of violence against innocent civilians from centuries ago will tie in to the theme of that day.

This year, we are trying out online ticket sales for *To Seek a Child*. Link via the show website below. As always, you may reserve by phone or email and pay cash at the door.

Friday November 11, 8:00 pm

Saturday November 12, 2:30 and 8:00 pm

St James Cathedral, King Street at Church Street, Toronto

Ticket prices: \$20 / \$15 senior / \$10 students

416 978-5096 or email info@plspl.ca

website: toseekachild.wordpress.com

A Christian Turn'd Turk

Directed by Noam Lior

Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* was written and staged in 1612, and follows the (mostly true) story of John Ward, an English sailor who became a popular hero by turning to piracy, then became a figure of national scandal by turning to Islam. The play is a polemic against conversion, filled with fascinating and problematic representations of foreign cultures, religions, and practices, all of which reveal a great deal about the sense of an English identity in development through and against concepts of otherness and foreignness. It's also an action-packed story about pirates, complete with naval battles, kidnapping, slave trading, seduction, disguises, betrayals, mutinies, intrigues, clowns, and a surprising range of murders.

This production is being staged in conjunction with the Jackman Humanities Institute's conference *Early Modern Migrations: Exiles, Expulsion, & Religious Refugees, 1400-1700* (April 19-21, 2012), and is affiliated with JHI, the DC, PLS, and CRRS.

Thursday April 19 – Sunday April 22
Studio Theatre, 4 Glen Morris Street
Box office: 416 978-7986

Our Archives

by Alexandra Johnston

We have been very lucky to have a great 'Work Study' student, Cassandra Morton, sorting through and organizing the PLS archives. After my rough sort before we moved into our new quarters, they have sat neglected. Now greater order is emerging and David Klausner and I have been brought in to identify unmarked photos from the past. Cassandra will be with us again during this academic year. When we have the material under sufficient control we will turn them over to the U of T Archives. This will make them available to scholars around the world through the Medieval Plays in Modern Performance (2mp) project based at the University of Bristol. Funded by a grant from the World Universities Network (WUN) the project reported its progress to a session at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds last July. Go to www.bristol.ac.uk/drama/2mp where you will see six major archives listed. PLS is number 5. We are in impressive company. Until our material goes to the U of T Archives, I will be fielding any questions directed to us.

Queen's Men Editions is now online at:

qme.internetshakespeare.uvic.ca

Queen's Men Editions is a collaborative site, created by an international body of scholars, theater practitioners, and digital developers, all

working to achieve the same goals: to inspire a love of early theatre beyond Shakespeare; recover the plays associated with the Queen's Men in particular as enjoyable, teachable, and performable theatrical texts; and to present those texts in a rich online environment.



Forthcoming Special Issue of Early Theatre (14:2)

by Helen Ostovich

Circles and Circuits: Drama and Politics in the Midlands

Guest editors: Mary Polito and Amy Scott

In 2004, many scholars were aware of the book of four anonymous, undated manuscript plays held at Arbury Hall Warwickshire; very few had read them. In that year another manuscript version of one of those plays was discovered in the Special Collections Library at the University of Calgary. Led by scholars at Calgary, a team of national and international faculty and graduate students have been investigating the provenance and significance of these decidedly Caroline plays. They point to literary circles in the midlands, probable country house performances, careful political critiques of the personal rule and 'circuits' that pay heed to estates, the authority of patrons and the mobility of people and ideas. This issue includes essays by Siobhan C. Keenan, 'Staging Roman History, Stuart Politics, and the Duke of Buckingham: The Example of The Emperor's Favourite'; Margaret Jane Kidnie, 'Trying to be Diplomatic: Editing The Humorous Magistrate'; and Louis A. Knafla, 'The Magistrate — and Humorous Magistrates — in Early Seventeenth-Century England'.

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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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