



Poci Ludique Societas

PLS News

www.plspl.ca

Winter 2013

NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

by Linda J. Phillips

Autumn brought another busy season for PLS as we were rehearsing two plays at the same time: the much-anticipated *Mucedorus* and our annual Christmas pageant at St Thomas's Anglican Church. In fact, we were so busy that the usual Fall newsletter has become a Christmas newsletter.

This year we welcome two new work-study assistants: Noam Lior, a PhD student most recently associated with PLS as the director of *New Custom* and *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, takes over as the Archival Assistant, and undergraduate Laina Southgate is helping me as Production Assistant and also acting as Katherine's Assistant Stage Manager for the Christmas play.

Last year's Work-study Assistant Lauren Shepherd and I worked very hard on purging and tidying the Props/Archives room and the Costume storage room. It's now possible to actually walk around and find things! During the summer, some PLS props got a chance to shine. A few of our finest masks will be seen in an episode of the new television series *Reign*, and Alon Nashman borrowed our two-wheeled cart for his acclaimed one-man show *Hirsch*. The cart then became an integral part of the set for the production of *Mucedorus*.

In January, PLS/CPSET welcomed Charlotte Steenbrugge, a Marie Curie Research Fellow, funded by the European Commission Research Executive Agency to undertake research at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies (University of Toronto) and at the School of Critical Studies (University of Glasgow, UK) on the connections between sermons and drama in late medieval England. Charlotte has published on English, Dutch, and French drama. Charlotte has become a great asset to PLS's production team!

FAREWELL TO LUELLA MASSEY

Sadly, PLS lost a good friend and stalwart supporter when Luella (Lou) Massey passed away in July. From stage managing *Castle of Perseverance* in 1979 to manning the Chester 2010 concessions tent, Lou was always there for the big events, and ever ready to help and advise us through the years. A celebration of Lou's life was held at Hart House Theatre on December 4 and our production of *Mucedorus* (see below) was dedicated to her memory.

LAST SEASON (2012-2013)

*A Medieval Christmas:
Go We Hence to Bethlehem's Bower*

In another successful partnership with St Thomas's Anglican Church, to celebrate the season

we presented three pageants from the N-Town Nativity sequence which together made up a charming episode depicting Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem followed by the Adoration of the Shepherds and Magi, with plenty of the shenanigans that lovers of Medieval drama enjoy.



photo: Barbara Tangney

Bethlehem's Bower: the cherry tree (Mahaffey Khan and Madeleine Redican) bowing to Mary (Alice Degan)

Three Farces from Three Lands

Despite a major snowstorm that shut down opening night, we still managed to banish the February blahs and get in a pre-Lenten carnival mood with three short 16th century farces from Germany, Holland, and England: *The Stolen Shrovetide Cock* by Hans Sachs, *The Farce of the Fisherman* by Cornelis Everaert, and *John John the Husband* by John Heywood. There were slapstick fights, puppetry, and pie!



photo: Katherine Belyea

John John the Husband (*Three Farces from Three Lands*): John John (Bil Antoniou) and Tyb (Kristen Zaza) fighting

2013–2014 SEASON
Mucedorus

PLS presented *Mucedorus* in November, a co-production with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. At this play, arguably the most popular of Shakespeare's time and for many years after, audiences were treated to a fairytale romance with a princess in distress, a handsome prince in disguise, a wild man, a clown, and a bear.

The production was featured in a Globe and Mail article, "Shakespeare as reviser and collaborator?" and an associated symposium was presented, "*Mucedorus* in Context and Performance"



photo: Linda Phillips

Mucedorus: Envy (Mike Kirby) and Comedy (Polly Phokeev) trying to outwit one another

***A Medieval Christmas:
Such Splendid Sight Was Never Seen***

Continuing PLS's collaboration with St Thomas's Anglican Church, the text of this year's pageant is drawn from the Towneley manuscript, as modernized by David Parry in 1985. Come and see shadow puppets, Victorian flourishes, a mercurial King Herod, brawling shepherds and a whiny Joseph!

Director: Kimberley Radmacher; Music Director: Bryan Martin; Producer & Costume Designer: Linda Phillips; Stage Manager: Katherine Belyea

December 13–14 at 7:30pm & December 14 at 2pm

St. Thomas's Church, 383 Huron St.

Box Office: <http://www.plspls.ca/> and at the door

***Lancelot of Denmark and
Of Winter and Summer***

In the Spring PLS will produce two plays (*abele spelen*) translated from the Middle Dutch Van Hulthem Manuscript (dated 1400-1410). *Lancelot of Denmark* was an extremely popular romance which continued to be performed well into the 18th century. *Of Winter and Summer* is a humorous debate between allegorical figures about the most appropriate season for ... love.

Production team, dates, and location to be announced! Watch <http://www.plspls.ca/> and our email newsletter for all the details.

FORTHCOMING ISSUE OF *EARLY THEATRE* (16.2)
from Helen Ostovich

Early Theatre 16.2 (2013) will be available in print and online to subscribers in December. The contents include articles and notes on medieval, Tudor, and later early modern drama, and the announcement of our three prizes for best essays in volumes 14 and 15. Our Issues in Review section is a particularly lively discussion of Tudor drama by five high-achieving scholars.

To include: ISSUES IN REVIEW

New Approaches to Earlier Tudor Drama

Contributing Editor: Erin E. Kelly

Introduction: Why Attend to Earlier Tudor Drama

Erin E. Kelly

For a complete list of articles, please see "News" at <http://www.plspls.ca/>

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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