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ur performing!

a celebration of performing arts groups on river campus

many forms

a mouthful of birds

possessing

takes
A Mouthful of Birds

by Caryl Churchill & David Ian

directed by Ian Belton
set & costume design by Tracey Utwill
lighting design by Paul Whitsarker
sound design & original music by Brendan Connolly
special project & prop design by Casper Hargreaves
voice & acting coaching by Sally Goers Fox

production staff
production stage manager
Mike Caputo
assistant stage managers
Danielle Friedman/Stage
Venus Maldonado/Costumes
Daniel Mauro/Sound
Alison Rusco/Props
run crew
Daniel Cramer
David Pascoe
Miya Sylvestor
master electrician
Jeff Monheit
assistant master electrician
Kate Goddard
technical intern
Nils Maddern
props mistress
Michelle Cohen
assistant director
Patricia Tahan

This performance runs approximately 1 hour & 15 minutes without intermission.
Please be aware that loud sounds, air horns, and theatrical smoke effects are used in the production.
cast
in order of appearance

Dionysus
Spirit
Roy
 Lena
 Marcus
 Receptionists
 Colin
 Derek
 Man 1
 Man 2
 Weightlifters
 Mr. Wood 1
 Yvonne
 Mr. Wood 2
 Paul
 Paul's mother-in-law
 Women in mourning
 Kings
 Queens
 Dan
 Woman 1
 Woman 2
 Woman 3
 Doreen
 Ed
 Bacchant
 Agave
 Dionysus 2
 Pentheus

Decima
Sybil
Margaret
Curzon
Pentheus-head
Prison Officer 1
Prison Officer 2
Victims

Pentheus-head
Lap-dancers

Colleague
Friend
June
Pigs

Dionysus 3
Herecline
Dancers

The Prozac & Zolof Fairies
Yvonne's Mother
Death
Suzy
Lil
Tony
Mrs. Blair
Evans
Pottbangers
Manipulators
Cue givers

Effie Alleyn
Gaby Jones
Amanda Ahrens
Ted Limpert
Mike Riffle
Ted Limpert
Matt Johnston
Amanda Ahrens,
Ralph Germain,
Ryn Stilwell
Ted Limpert
Nick DiCola,
Ralph Germain,
Matt Johnston,
Gaby Jones, Emily
Nunes, Mike Riffle,
Shannon Sapolich,
Madeleine St. Marie, Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella
Meredith Flouton-Barnes
Mike Riffle
Shannon Sapolich
Nick DiCola, Ralph Germain, Madeleine St. Marie,
Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella
Emily Nunes
Nick DiCola, Jonathan Wetherbee
Emily Nunes, Madeleine St. Marie, Ryn Stilwell,
Kristin Volpicella
Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella
Gaby Jones
Ralph Germain
Jonathan Wetherbee
Nick DiCola
Mike Riffle
Kristin Volpicella
Emily Nunes
Matt Johnston, Madeleine St. Marie
Ralph Germain, Ryn Stilwell
Gaby Jones, Ted Limpert

Madeleine St. Marie
Jonathan Wetherbee
Mike Riffle
Shannon Sapolich
Ralph Germain
Gaby Jones,
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Kristin Volpicella
Ryn Stilwell, Kristin Volpicella
Gaby Jones
Ralph Germain
Jonathan Wetherbee
Nick DiCola
Mike Riffle
Kristin Volpicella
Emily Nunes
Matt Johnston, Madeleine St. Marie
Ralph Germain, Ryn Stilwell
Gaby Jones, Ted Limpert
According to Greek mythology, Hermaphroditus was the son of the gods Hermes and Aphrodite. He was raised by nymphs until he was fifteen, when he left his home to set out on his own. One day, he found a clear, beautiful pool inhabited by the nymph, Salmacis. She saw him while she was picking flowers and, captivated by his god-like beauty, was enraptured. She made herself up and approached him with her desire, but he, being so young, became embarrassed and said he did not know what love was. She then requested a sister kiss, but he threatened to leave, so she backed off for fear of losing him. She told him she would leave him be at the pool, then went and hid herself in a bush. He took off his clothes and dove into the water. She, upon seeing his naked body, became mad with passion for him and dove in after him. She grabbed his body and held onto him, wrapping her legs around him and kissing him, threatening to rape him if he resisted. He struggled against her, but she prayed that they would never be separated. She received her prayer, and answered it by causing Hermaphroditus and Salmacis to inhabit one body that was neither male nor female, but both.

The common definition of a hermaphrodite, or intersexual, is a person who is born with both male and female sex organs. However, this definition is not completely accurate. Some hermaphrodites have one of each sex of the sex organs; others have intersexes, a combination of both gonads in one organ; others still are genetically male or female with the genitals of the opposite sex. There are three main categories of hermaphrodites. They are true hermaphrodites, "male pseudo", and "female pseudo". True hermaphrodites are born with both ovarian and testicular tissue. Their chromosomes can be the female XX, the male XY, the mosaic XXXY, or the extremely rare XO.

To this day, the medical community does not understand what causes true hermaphroditism, and there are fewer than fifty hundred known cases. Female pseudo hermaphrodites are genetically female and have internal female reproductive organs, but have masculine genitalia. This occurs most commonly because of a condition that causes the adrenal glands to produce too much testosterone. Male pseudo hermaphrodites are genetically male. They usually have testicles in the abdominal cavity and either female or ambiguous external genitalia.

"What strange blindness was it that made me hold on to this absurd role until the end? I would be unable to explain it to myself. Perhaps it was that thirst for the unknown, which is so natural to man."

— Abel Herbulin
Voodoo, or more properly, Vodun, is etymologically related to an African word meaning “spirit”. The religion is directly traceable back through the 1700’s to parts of modern-day Benin, Togo, and Nigeria, though its roots may go back as far as 6,000 years in Africa. During the era of the slave trade, between roughly the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, slaves imported from Africa brought voodoo with them to the West Indies. Today, voodoo is most widely known as a series of evil, violent rites, involving “voodoo dolls”, zombies, human sacrifice, and cannibalism. 1930’s Hollywood helped spread the image of this image, an image which had been started decades earlier by Western sensationalists.

For the act of bearing or taking onto oneself or associating with property or an idea, the way to do this is to offer a gift or perform a ritual, rather than to simply accept it. This act of possession is central to the concept of property, and is therefore central to the concept of voodoo. Possession is the act of taking something onto oneself, or of associating with something, rather than simply of owning it. Possession is not merely the act of using something, but of associating oneself with it in some way.

In reality, voodoo is a multi-traditional worship of a supreme being and a pantheon of lesser spirits known as Loa ("mystery"). There are hundreds of Loa, the idea of which resembles that of Catholic saints. During voodoo ceremonies, practitioners believe that the priests and priestesses can become possessed by the Loa, who then deliver advice and warnings to the celebrants on the physical plane of existence. These rituals are celebrated in thanks for good luck, to avoid or end bad luck, to commemorate special days associated with members of the Loa, such as healing, birth, marriage, and death rites. The ceremonies are preceded by a feast. Afterwards, a carving or drawing associated with one of the Loa, is created on the ground using floor or cornmeal. This is followed by drumming, chanting, and dancing, as well as by an animal sacrifice. Though there is an aspect of “dark” sorcery tied to the religion, the goal of which is to manipulate and control other people, most practitioners keep to following “white magic”, used to heal and bring about good fortune.

I NIEL BEELEN (DIRECTOR) Directing credits include: The Better Times of Peter First Kant (Hamburg) - Off-Broadway premiere, two Drama Desk nominations; Barefoot in the Park (Singapore Repertory), staged by Robert Gluckin (L.A.,), Conquest of the Night by Paul Giardino (St. Louis, The Forge (London) at CSC, The Secretariat (The Five Lesbian Brothers), Solitude Forever (Wellman), Heine-Millers Filately, The Trojan Women (Eupides), The Signal (Cush), The Soldier’s Tale (Stravinsky) as well as several plays by August Strindberg. In addition to adapting the text for The Better Times of Peter First Kant, Jan has also written as an author to Games, Blood Night, 69, Moderns, and The History of the Gypsy Tradition. Jan has also directed numerous short films and written and directed and assistant director for television and stage installations. His six video shorts for The House of Atreus Installation were shown in New York and Chicago as part of the Jaak’s Akalma’s Tithengha Cycle. Later this year Jan will be directing The Balcony by Jean Genet at Skidmore College. Jan has just been selected for the NEA/TGC Career Development Program.

TRACY O’WILL (SET & COSTUMES) has an MFA in scenic design and puppetry from CalArts. She recently adapted and directed Peter Pan (Corset Center for Puppetry and the Arts/CalArts), an adaption of Finnish folklore told with puppets, performers, and architecture and designed by Anke Gullage’s Telelounge, and being a creator/performer in Bread and Puppet’s Intervention Man. Scenic design credits include Flamination Theater Co.’s Forever Juliet (Santa Monica Playhouse) and Lorna’s Blood Wedding (CalArts), both directed by Max Tex, and choreographer Maggie Levine’s Wandering To and Fro at CalArts. She is a member of "Test", an experimental performance collective.

PAUL WHEELER (LIGHTING) NY Credits: Kids For Sale (Labyrinth Theatre Co., the Public Theater), Get What You Need (The Atlantic), Of a White Christmas (Chalkboard Theatre), Strange Fruit (Theatre Company), The Last Sunday in June (Off-Broadway-Century Center, Rattlestick Productions), The Next Generation Thing (Urban Stage), After the Show (The Drama League), Regional: New World Theatre, Serious Money, It Pays To Advertise, Brother (Yale Rep), Phantom Palace (Festival of the Arts and Ideas, Musik Der Jahrhunderte — Stuttgart, Ten Unknowns, The Decade (Theaterworks Hartford), Red (The Empty Space), Orange Flower Water and Silence of God (Contemporary American Theater Festival), Museum/Architectural Design includes Myer Myers Jewish Silversmith in New York (Yale Art Gallery), Design Edgewood School, New Haven, CT; ArtSpace, New Haven, CT, Project Manager/Design/Choral, Schlesinger & Schoen, Minneapolis.

BELEND CONNELLY (ORIGINAL MUSIC & SOUN) is co-founder of the Theatre of Two-Headed Calf and has composed music for all of its plays. His sound design credits, outside of work with Theatre of Two-Headed Calf include: Don’s Marriage, (Flam Stage; dir: David Levine); The Amourous (Present Company Theatre/Smorgasbord, NY; fringefest), both directed by Ian Beelen, and Match, directed by Susan Geller (Lincoln Center). Brendan is a member of Wet Ink, a non-profit new music presenting group and composers collective. His compositions have been performed at Columbia University’s Experimental Music Series, STAGE-01 Festival (NYC), Oasis, A Festival of Experimental Music and Art (Chashama, NY), and a number of Wet Ink Music composer collective concerts. He has been a visiting artist at Dartmouth College, NYU, ETW, and Lafayette College. His new composition Quantum 1 will be released on Planetaria Records in the fall of 2004.

CASPER HARRISLEGE (SPECIAL PRODUCTIONS & PROPS) has worked on the Broadway productions of All My Sons, Of Hammer, The Lion King, and Julie Taymor’s The Green Bird. He has also worked on the stage show, with The Blue Man Group, and on Super-Confidence. Casper was nominated for an Emmy award (costume design) for his work on Disney’s The Book of Pooh.
This production has been made possible through the combined efforts of ENG 170 & 270 (Technical & Advanced Technical Theatre) and ENG 290 (Plays in Production).

Max Abernathy - Kyecsha Becoats - Alex Blakeley
Mike Borcher - Jacqueline Boyce - Mike Caputo
Peter Cho - Anna Criagolo - Arthur Goldfeder
Brian Jones - David Kim - Hye Won Lee - Min-Jae Lee
Adam McSweeney-Carter - Matthew Mavissakalian
Michael Pollock - Miya Sylvester - April Tulloh
Jason Venditti - Adam Volk - Doo Ho Yoo

The International Monkey King Troupe consists of 15 actors and musicians, led by Ghaffar Pourazar, a British performer who became the first Westerner to complete the rigorous course of training at the National Academy for Traditional Chinese Opera. He has since become the leading exponent of this marvelous theatrical art-form in the West. Their mission is to make Beijing Opera accessible to a worldwide audience. They have performed at the Zheng Yi Yi Theatre in Beijing and have toured internationally. The company, visiting the US for the 2004 tour, includes six leading students from the National Academy and several highly regarded feature performers.

During the tour the troupe will offer over a dozen workshops for students and teachers at the colleges they visit. These workshops will cover aspects of the history, theatrical forms, music and dance of the Beijing Opera.

3 performances only
sunday, oct. 24 @ 8pm / monday, oct. 25 @ 7pm / tuesday, oct 26 @ 7pm
limited seating

tickets: $10 for students $25 general public
call 275-0888 or reserve online at www.rochester.edu/theatre

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