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Alexander Ostrovsky’s a family affair
hilarious & outrageous satire
Directed by Roger Benington

April 17-26

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Program content is compiled by the production’s Assistant Director, Jonathan Wetherbee, and edited by the production’s director, Nigel Maister. For a complete list of sources and works cited, please contact the editor.

The program and its printing is supported in part by the UR English Department (“The Program Project”).

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This production of Hello Again is deeply indebted to the following for their help, and for their financial and material support:

- Dean Joanna Olmsted and Dean Richard Feldman & the D. R. Clark Memorial Fund
- Prof. John Covach, Prof. Kim Kowalke, and the UR Department of Music
- Josef Hanson
- Judith Hook and the UR Program for Movement and Dance
- Deborah Dowd

produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Services, Inc.

special thanks

Michael John LaChiusa
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Tracey Demersman from Goergen Athletic Center
for their help in finding outside rehearsal space
TDF Costume Collection
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a note about the program

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the university of rochester international theatre program presents

hello again

by michael john lachiusa

directed by nigel maister
musical direction by christopher d. littlefield
choreography by sean curran
set & lighting design by justin townsend
costume design by arnulfo maldonado
sound design by william j. pickens
additional orchestrations by christopher d. littlefield

CAST

kristin volpicella.............................................the whore
doug zeppenfeld.............................................the soldier
amanda averack.........................................the nurse
matthew myers...........................................the college boy
sarah seider..............................................the nurse
lazaro estrada.............................................the husband
andrew polec.............................................the young thing
joshua hatcher.............................................the writer
jessie thorpe...............................................the actress
john amir-fazli..........................................the senator

This production has been made possible through the combined efforts of ENG 170, 171, 270 & 271 (Technical & Advanced Technical Theatre) and ENG 290 & 291 (Plays in Production)

hello again runs 1 hour and 30 minutes with one 15 minute intermission

(we ask that you kindly leave the theatre during the intermission to help facilitate the act changeover.)

originally produced by lincoln center theatre, new york city
Michael John LaChiusa—composer, lyricist and librettist—established himself as a powerful presence on the American musical theatre scene after winning Off-Broadway’s 1993 Obie Award for his musicals *First Lady Suite* and *Hello Again*. Six years later LaChiusa was represented on Broadway during the 1999-2000 season by two more musicals, *The Wild Party* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, which together received 12 Tony Award nominations for each production: Best Score and Best Book (along with George C. Wolfe on *Award nominations for the season, garnering Mr. LaChiusa 2 nominations for each production: Best Score and Best Book. At Lincoln Center Theatre in 1996.

In addition to the Obie Award (1993), Mr. LaChiusa was the recipient of the first Stephen Sondheim Award (1989), the Gilman-Gonzalez-Falla Musical Theatre Award (1995) and the Kleban Foundation Award (1999). He was the 1998-99 Brena and Lee Freeman Sr. Composer-in-Residence at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and an Artist-in-Residence at the New York Shakespeare Festival’s Public Theatre for 1997-98. In 2000, with the recording of *The Wild Party*, he was voted an Amazon.com Artist of the Year. In 2005 he was the recipient of Emerson College’s Leonidas A. Nikole Award of Distinction for Artistic Growth and Achievement in Musical Theatre and the Flora Roberts Award, given annually by The Dramatists Guild, Inc. 1999-2000 season by two more musicals, *The Wild Party* and *The Immigrant*. He received his first Tony Award nomination for Best Book (co-written with Graciela Daniele and Jim Lewis) for *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, produced on Broadway by Lincoln Center Theatre in 1996.

Justin Townsend (Scenic & Lighting Designer) has designed sets and costumes for theater, film and dance. He recently completed work as production designer on his first feature film, *Aylesson Seekers* (Cipher Productions). Other work includes: *The Tempest* (La Pieta, Florence), *Snapshots* (Diverse City Theatre), *The Female Heart* (National Asian American Theater Festival), *Jump/Repe* (Urban Stages), *Crime and Punishment* (Riverside Church), *Operation Ajax* (Butane Group), *Jazz and Spice: The Music of Kurt Weill* (Westport Country Playhouse), *The Immigrant* (Westport), *Kingdom* (TBG Theatre), *Harvest* (East Coast Artists), *Rainy Days & Mondays* (DR2 Theatre), *Bad Dates* (Studio Arena), *Bath Party* (HERE Arts Center), and *Top Ten People of the Millennium Sing Songs of Schubert* (Victory Gardens’ Theater). He has also been a selected exhibitor at the Prague Quadrennial, the international exhibition of scenography and theatre architecture. Arnulfo is a graduate of NYU Tisch’s Department of Design for Stage and Film and was a recipient of the Alberto Vilar Global Fellowship in the Performing Arts.

William Pickens (Sound Designer) is glad to be working at The U of R for the first time. He is no stranger to Rochester, however. He was the Audio Engineer and Resident Sound Associate at Geva Theatre Center for four years. He was fortunate to design multiple shows there, including *Cabaret, A Marvelous Party, Key West*, and *That Was Then*. Recently he has assisted such designers as Lindsay Jones (*Urinetown* at Geva Theatre Center and *Cymbeline* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), Tony Smolenski (*Emergence/She* at The Public), Fabian Obispo (*Durango* at The Public and *A VeryCommon Procedure* at MCC), and Guy Sherman (*Dying City at Lincoln Center Theatre*). He would like to thank his beautiful wife for undying support and love!  http://www.willpickens.com

Arnulfo Maldonado (Costume Designer) has designed sets and costumes for theater, film and dance. He recently completed work as production designer on his first feature film, *Aylesson Seekers* (Cipher Productions). Other work includes: *The Tempest* (La Pieta, Florence), *Snapshots* (Diverse City Theatre), *The Female Heart* (National Asian American Theater Festival), *Jump/Repe* (Urban Stages), *Crime and Punishment* (Riverside Church), *Operation Ajax* (Butane Group), *Jazz and Spice: The Music of Kurt Weill* (Westport Country Playhouse), *The Immigrant* (Westport), *Kingdom* (TBG Theatre), *Harvest* (East Coast Artists), *Rainy Days & Mondays* (DR2 Theatre), *Bad Dates* (Studio Arena), *Bath Party* (HERE Arts Center), and *Top Ten People of the Millennium Sing Songs of Schubert* (Victory Gardens’ Theater). He has also been a selected exhibitor at the Prague Quadrennial, the international exhibition of scenography and theatre architecture. Arnulfo is a graduate of NYU Tisch’s Department of Design for Stage and Film and was a recipient of the Alberto Vilar Global Fellowship in the Performing Arts.

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CHRISTOPHER D. LITTLEFIELD (Musical Director, Piano/Conductor) received his BA in Piano Performance from UT Southwestern in 2004 and subsequently joined the university faculty as Music Director and Vocal Coach. He currently lives in New York City where he works professionally as a Musical Director and Coach/ Accompanist. Recent credits include The Yellow Wood (NY Musical Theatre Fest., 2007, dir. B.D. Wong), Shout! (The Mid-Market (Off-Broadway), The Screams of Kitty Genovese (NYMF, 2004), and NYMF’s Broadway Idol (w. Andrea McArdle). Developmental readings: Awakening (w. Julia Murney and Mary Testa), Groove Lily’s Striking 12, Now the Great (TheatreWorks), and UnLocked. Regional: Juliette (George St. Playhouse), Texas Shakespeare Festival, and Millbrook Playhouse. He has accompanied at The Juilliard School and NYU, and collaborated with Craig Lauper. Later this year, Mr. Littlefield will be recording his own music, which has been described as “R&B with elements of high-end pop and a touch of musical theatre.”

SEAN CURRAN (Choreographer) began his dance training with traditional Irish step dancing in Boston. He went on to be a leading dancer with the Bill T. Jones/Arist Cave Dance Company. He received a Bessie Award for his work in Secret Passages. A graduate and guest faculty member of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Curran was an original member of the NYC cast of Stomp! He has performed his solo evening of dance at venues throughout the US as well as at Sweden's Dramatic Theatre and France's EXIT Festival. Recent projects include productions of Much Ado About Nothing, A Midsummer Night's Dream for the Shakespeare Theatre, the twentieth anniversary production of Nixon in China and Street Scene at Opera Theatre of St. Louis; choreography for the NYC Opera productions of L'Etoile, Aida, Turandot, Haroun and the Sea of Stories, Capriccio, and Act and Squall for the Playwrights Horizons' production of My Life with Albertine; and Shakespeare in the Park; At Your Ears. He recently made his Metropolitan Opera debut choreographing Roméo et Juliette. Curran's work has appeared on Broadway in James Joyce's The Dead for Playwrights Horizons, and The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui choreographed at Lincoln Center Theater. He has created works for Trinity Irish Dance Company, American Ballet Theatre's studio company, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Dance Theatre of Texas, Dance Alloy, as well as for numerous college and university dance departments. Curran has taught extensively at the American Dance Festival, Harvard Summer Dance Center, Bates Dance Festival, and Boston's Conservatory of Music. Irish American Magazine selected Curran as one of its “Top 100” in the year 2000. Curran was awarded a Choreographer's Fellowship from the NY Foundation for the Arts in 2002.

Mr. LaChiusa has been commissioned to write musicals and operas by Houston Grand Opera, Musical Theatre Works, Lincoln Center Theatre, The New York Shakespeare Festival, Signature Theatre in Virginia, and by Audra McDonald for her Seven Deadly Sins project which premiered at Zankel Hall in 2004. His opera Send (who are you? I love you) starring Ms. McDonald, premiered at Houston Grand Opera in Spring, 2006.

He has created two revues of his works, la...la...LaChiusa (2002), and Hotel C'est l'Amour (2006). Additionally Mr. LaChiusa himself accompanied an array of female stars singing songs from the LaChiusa catalogue in 'The Girls Show,' part of the American Songbook Series at Lincoln Center (2004). His songs have been performed in concert halls across the country, including Carnegie Hall.

Recordings include Bernarda Alba (Ghostlight Records), See What I Wanna See (Ghostlight Records), the 2001 Grammy-nominated Original Cast Album of The Wild Party (Decca Broadway), Marie Christine (RCA Victor), Hello Again (RCA Victor), and First Lady Suite (PS Classics).

Mr. LaChiusa has been a contributing writer to the New York Times, Opera News and other periodicals. He is currently on the faculty at New York University, has been an adjunct professor at Yale School of Drama, and has been a guest lecturer on musical theatre at several other universities in the US.

Mr. LaChiusa was born in Chautauqua, New York in 1962, and currently lives in New York City.
scenes/songs

Scene 1: the 1900's
Hello Again.................. The Whore, The Soldier

Scene 2: the 1940's
Zei Geznt.................. The Swing Trio (The Young Thing, The Young Wife, The Actress)
I Gotta Little Time........... The Soldier, The Nurse
We Kiss.................. Swing Quintet (The Young Thing, The Husband, The Actress, The Writer, The Young Wife)

Scene 3: the 1960's
In Some Other Life............ The Nurse

Scene 4: the 1970's
Story of My Life................ The Young Wife, The College Boy

Scene 5: the 1950's
At the Prom.................. Pop Singer (The Young Thing)
Ab, Maien Zeit.................. The Prima Donna (The Actress)
Tom.................. The Young Wife

Scene 6: the 1910's
Listen to the Music............... The Husband

Scene 7: the 1930's
Montage/Safe/The One I Love............. The Writer, The Young Thing

Scene 8: the 1920's
Do a Little Rewrite............... The Actress

Scene 9: the 1980's
Speedin Thru' the Eighties........... Music Video (The Soldier)
Angel of Mercy.................. Music Video (The Nurse)
Mistress of the Senator............. The Actress

Scene 10: the 1990's
The Bed Was Not My Own.............. The Senator
Hello Again (reprise)............. Company

French author Marie-Henri Beylé, writing under the nom de plume Stendhal, is mentioned directly in two scenes of Hello Again. A celebrated author writing at the same time as Schnitzler, there are many affinities between the two men. While Schnitzler was studying human psychology, Stendhal was having a syndrome named after him, and, like everything that has become closely associated with the author and playwright, it is a medical condition that reeks of romanticism.

Stendhal Syndrome is the overwhelming of a person's emotions in the presence of great grandeur or beauty. Stendhal writes of experiencing shortness of breath, lightheadedness and a feeling of fainting while studying the artworks of a cathedral in Florence. The sensation threatened to overwhelm him to such a degree that he could do little else but read, and it is to the reading of poetry that he attributes a cure for the syndrome.

Much of Stendhal's life revolved around romance in its many forms (he wrote a treatise, On Love, which has been called “the driest book about love ever written!”). His works focused on the frank discussion of human motivations. He wrote works on the corruption of the church (which he hated), the corruption of the military (which he hated somewhat less), the sexual promiscuity of women in salon society (which he rather liked), and parts of the sexual experience that others refused to name. His work Armance, for instance, revolves around a young man who falls desperately in love, but finds that he is physically impotent. The desperation he is driven to by the conflict between his wish to fulfill his lover and his inability to do so ultimately leads to his tragic end.

Stendhal's life was sometimes similarly defined by disappointment. Indeed, it is through disenchantment with the France he had served loyally in battle that he moved permanently to Italy at the age of 31. It was there, in self-imposed exile, that he spent much of his life and completed much of his work. It was also there that he assumed the name Stendhal.
Fred Astaire (1899-1987) and Ginger Rogers (1911-1995), arguably the most famous dance partners in American history, began the first of their ten collaborations in 1933, with *Flying Down To Rio*. The pair had recently moved from the Broadway musical scene to try their hands at Hollywood (Astaire's first screen test led to this famously blunt summation: "Can't act. Slightly balding. Can dance a little.")

The majority of their work together occurred during the Great Depression and included the classics *The Gay Divorcee* (1934), *Top Hat* (1935), *Follow the Fleet* (1936) and * Shall We Dance* (1937). Combining early swing with ballroom and tap dancing, Astaire and Rogers were dance masters who moved with consummate grace, effortlessness and fluidity across the dance floor, belying the complexity and intricacy of the choreography.

The indelible highlight of *Follow the Fleet* (the film referenced in *Hello Again*) is the number, "Let's Face the Music and Dance" (music by Irving Berlin). Set on a gorgeous art-deco version of a ship's deck, it is a triumph both of dancing and narrative storytelling.

By 1939 there were rumors that there was a growing strain on set between the couple, and both were anxious to go their own way. Astaire wished to establish himself as a dance soloist and Rogers was eager to make her way into more serious dramatic roles. Their last film together was *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*.

The two had little in common outside of their passion for dance and film. Rogers, who was to marry five times, was a staunch Republican. Astaire was married for 21 years to Phyllis Potter, with whom he had a son. Potter's death was a more serious dramatic role. "Their last film together was *Shall We Dance*.

The events of the night of April 14th, 1912 have been etched into the historical consciousness of the Western world, immortalized in popular myths and legends (not to mention books and films), and launched apochryphal stories of heroism and tragedy. Oddly enough, the faint grinding jar that announced the demise of the Titanic at 46 of lung cancer so defeated Astaire that he sought to cancel his then-current production, offering to repay the production company for all costs incurred to that date if they would let him out of his contract. Ultimately, he completed the film. He would dance with many partners over the years, but none would capture the quality, inspiration and grace Astaire found dancing with Rogers.

Fred & Ginger

The Titanic

What initially attracted you to this story? How were you first introduced to it?

MJL: In 1992 Ira Weitzman, Producer of Musical Theatre at Lincoln Center Theatre, asked me to read the play [*La Ronde*] with the idea of turning it into a musical for Graciela Daniele, noted stage director and choreographer. I responded to it immediately, writing the first scene and playing for Ira the next day and for Graciela the following.

When Schnitzler first introduced his play Der Reigen, it was met with violent controversy. Do you feel that presenting the work’s themes is as important a task in today’s social climate as it was in its earliest days?

MJL: The themes of *Reigen* are timeless because they speak to our essential human nature. In spite of technology, or so-called advances in health care, education, even how we socially interact with each other, etc. one thing that does not change is human nature. *Hello Again* was met with controversy when it premiered, and it still is: audiences still feel uncomfortable with its frank discussion of sexuality.

In your work, the character “Young Thing” replaces a female character “Little Miss” or “Sweet Miss” with a young male. Why did you feel it was important to make this change?

MJL: Originally, I intended to remain true to the Schnitzler model of Female-Male, Male-Female, Female-Male, etc. But a wonderful young actor came in to audition, John Cameron Mitchell, and I knew I had to use him in the show. I change the Young Miss to the Young Thing that moment, wrote “Safe” that night and cast John Cameron the next day.

The play represents women as being the sexual aggressors at least as often as men. Do you feel this is different from the more general portrayal of men as sexual aggressors in popular media, especially in the time of Schnitzler’s writing?

MJL: I’m not certain that this is the correct interpretation of Schnitzler’s work; for instance, the Actress is quite aggressive. And for all her seeming passivity, the Young Miss uses quite aggressive tactics as well. Allowing a partner to be aggressive—or to appear to be aggressive—is, in some ways, an act of aggression in and of itself. However, female aggression in the popular media is often depicted as something monstrous, abnormal. Schnitzler understood the feminine paradox: one may be aggressive but she must take pains to conceal this or she’ll be branded as a monster. The play plays itself out today in the modern popular media.

In many ways the works of Stendhal parallel Schnitzler’s own work. Is there any contemporary writer that you feel could be used as a more recognizable reference today?

MJL: This a hard one to answer, because of the general paucity of modern writers who create and imagine on the level of a Stendhal or a Schnitzler; that, and the decline of the written word in general. Unfortunately, we’re not in an age of humanist discovery and that’s reflected in the arts. That said, there are some juicy insights by the late Susan Sontag (“Interpretation is the revenge of the intellect over art.”) and several delicious short stories by Deborah Eisenberg ([whose work I've used as the basis for my musical, Little Fish]). The late Carl Sagan and several other science writers, including Brian Greene, are inspiring. There’s something about David Sedaris that harkens back to Stendhal and Schnitzler, especially in terms of dark and stark humor.
I n 1862 in Vienna, then seat of power of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Arthur Schnitzler was born to prominent Jewish father and laryngologist, Johann Schnitzler. Vienna was a city of the Austrian aristocracy, and his father's patients included some of the foremost singers and actors of the time. Whether or not this fostered Schnitzler's enthusiasm for poetry and music at an early age we do not know. What is known is that his father strongly disapproved of his literary bent and encouraged him to enter the medical profession.

In 1895 Schnitzler entered medical practice with a degree from the University of Vienna and began work at the Viennese General Hospital. It was during this extended stay into medicine that he was introduced to a man whose passion for the mind would influence both Schnitzler's medical practice and literary career: Sigmund Freud. The two men moved in the same circles and shared a mutual respect for each other. Ironically, they only met in person once, though Freud once wrote to Schnitzler: "I have gained the impression that you have learned through intuition—though actually as a result of sensitive introspection—everything that I have had to unearth by laborious work on other persons."

Schnitzler's work nearly always revolved around the mystery of love as seen by the upper classes, often by well-established men driven to take up a mistress or multiple mistresses. His interest in the machinations of the human mind led to stunningly complex emotional content peeling back the glossy (and sanitized) view of the aristocracy and its sexual behaviors—a view that veiled much about the essential and common humanity of all and all human desire.

An example of the kind of conflict his characters deal with is that in his book Trammlacciule ("Dream Novel") on which Stanley Kubrick's Eyes Wide Shut is based. "The narrative of a man who finds, in the midst of what he thought to be a sterile society, an hedonistic underground hidden from public view by the wealthy and well-placed to whom it caters, is a narrative that is parallel in some ways to Schnitzler's own life. Schnitzler's extensive diaries (kept from youth until two days before his death) reveal a man whose elaborate romantic and sexual life is documented in enormous and graphic detail. A notable exception to this vein in his creative work is his comic novel, Professor Bernhardt, which many biographers identify both as a reaction against the rising anti-Semitism in Austria as well as a labor of love and homage to his father on whom Bernhardt, a Jewish professor who refuses to compromise his convictions, was based."

Among his novels and plays, the work that stands out is the play Der Reigen ("La Ronde"), which was an exploration of our attempts at communion with one another, and an acknowledgment of the very nature of the characters (most are only known by the names of their professions) to be set against iconic moments of the work have been produced. Four years before The Blue Room, Lincoln Center Theatre produced the premiere of Michael John LaChiusa's, La Ronde. The film starring Simone Signoret as the Whore, and Jean-Louis Barrault as The Poet (in Helo Again, The Writer) the film raised some eyebrows at the time, having even more explicitly detailed sexual encounters than Schnitzler's original work. Where Der Reigen consists of a series of ten dialogues punctuated by astersisks where the characters presumably lie together, Ophuls created an artful series of vignettes between couples, which expressed one thing to the characters while portraying another to the audience. With highly praised acting and magnificent directing, La Ronde was such a success that Schnitzler's play thereafter became mostly known by the film's French title. Aside from Ophuls' film version, La Ronde became the first of a number of film versions. Roger Vadim (celebrated not only for his directorial film work, but also for his romances with Brigitte Bardot, Jane Fonda, and Catherine Deneuve, amongst others) made a version in 1964, Otto Schenck directed a version under the original German title in 1973, and at least two other film and TV versions of the work have been produced. Most recently, acclaimed British playwright, David Hare, adapted the work as The Blue Room (it played on Broadway, starring Nicole Kidman as all the female characters, in 1998).

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The themes in the work are many and varied, dealing with class disparity, as in the scene between the Husband and the "Little Miss," where a wealthy man unfulfilled by his young wife both seduces and is subject to extortion by a younger woman, and the last scene where the trouble between the two is revealed. Ultimately, the public outcry against the play and the growing anti-Semitism in the region led Schnitzler to ban the further production of the work until after his death. War swept across Europe, engulfing the world that Schnitzler knew and then leaving it starved and abandoned. It was many years before Der Reigen was picked up again, even by an Austrian company. When Ophuls' 1960 film version of Der Reigen, titled La Ronde, was the principal architect of the work's resurgence. The film starred Simone Signoret as the Whore, and Jean-Louis Barrault as The Poet (in Helo Again, The Writer). The film raised some eyebrows at the time, having even more explicitly detailed sexual encounters than Schnitzler's original work. Where Der Reigen consists of a series of ten dialogues punctuated by astersisks where the characters presumably lie together, Ophuls created an artful series of vignettes between couples, which expressed one thing to the characters while portraying another to the audience. With highly praised acting and magnificent directing, La Ronde was such a success that Schnitzler's play thereafter became mostly known by the film's French title. Aside from Ophuls' film version, La Ronde became the first of a number of film versions. Roger Vadim (celebrated not only for his directorial film work, but also for his romances with Brigitte Bardot, Jane Fonda, and Catherine Deneuve, amongst others) made a version in 1964, Otto Schenck directed a version under the original German title in 1973, and at least two other film and TV versions of the work have been produced. Most recently, acclaimed British playwright, David Hare, adapted the work as The Blue Room (it played on Broadway, starring Nicole Kidman as all the female characters, in 1998).