Next Season at the School of Drama

THE IMAGINARY INVALID
by Moliere
October 27-November 9, 2003
Playhouse Theatre

OTHELLO
by William Shakespeare
December 3-14, 2003
Penthouse Theatre

MEPHISTO
by Klaus Mann, English translation by Timberlake Wertenbaker
January 25-February 8, 2004
Meany Studio Theatre

THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES
by John Guare
February 29-March 14, 2004
Playhouse Theatre

World Premiere
TBA
Written and directed by K.J. Sanchez (guest) and the PATP III's
April 11-25, 2004
Playhouse Theatre

World Premiere
SUITE FOR STRANGERS
written and directed by Robyn Hunt (faculty)
April 25-May 9, 2004
Meany Studio Theatre

UNFINISHED WOMEN CRY IN NO MAN'S LAND
WHILE A BIRD DIES IN A GILDED CAGE
by Aishah Rahman
May 23-June 6, 2004
Penthouse Theatre

Call 206-543-4880 for a brochure and additional information.

For more info, visit:
http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrama
The Desk Set
by William Marchant

The Production Staff

Director
Tommy Smith

Set Design
Andrew Layton

Costume Design
Niki Hernandez-Adams

Lighting Design
Kristine Hain

Sound Design
Jules Hill

Stage Manager
Matthew Eichert

Technical Director
Jerry L. Collum

Dramaturg
Melissa Weaver

Assistant Director
M. Louise Lyde

Assistant Stage Manager
Alex Hayes

Assistant Lighting Designer
Ann Bartek

Properties Master
Andrew Layton

Master Electrician
Cale Millberry

Tickets
UW Arts Ticket Office

Costume Construction Crew
Kim Breskin-Auer, Rachel Canning, Niki Hernandez-Adams, Eve-Line Leduc, and Drama 291 and 211 Costume Lab Students

Electrics Crew
Drama 212 Students

Running Crew
Julie Carlson, Katy Dixson, Liz Erber, Allison Gee, Brandon Jacobsen, Tiffany Jewell, Brian Lange, Michael Place, Tyler Polumsky, Rachel Roby, Steven Thomas, Janet Vilonza, Randy Vinneau, T. Ivan Winkler

Program Spotlight: Bachelor of Arts

This production of The Desk Set is one of many University of Washington School of Drama productions showcasing the talents of our top-rated Bachelor of Arts in Drama program. Founded in 1941 by Professor Glenn Hughes, the University of Washington School of Drama has grown into one of the most comprehensive and widely respected theatre training institutions in the country. The BA program is dedicated to providing a well-rounded major within a liberal arts context. The School of Drama recognizes and supports the view that a drama major, like a history or English major, is an end in itself. The faculty considers the optimum preparation for the theatre artist to be comprised of a liberal arts undergraduate major in drama and a graduate conservatory education. In this way, it resembles other professions, such as medicine or law. Undergraduate majors are required to complete core courses in acting, design and technical theatre, theatre history, dramatic literature, and performance criticism, as well as high-level electives including courses in intermediate and advanced level acting, design and technical theatre, stage management and a directing series. BA’s work with the School’s amazing faculty, graduate students, theatre professionals and visiting artists from around the world. BA’s get intense training in innovative techniques and even have the opportunity to participate as professionals in the exciting and vibrant Seattle theatre community.

Well-known alumni of the Bachelor of Arts in Drama program include Ann Southern, Robert Culp, Lois Smith, Frances Farmer, Ella Raines, Dawn Wells (Maryann of TV’s Gilligan’s Island), Rex Henriot, Bridget Hanley, and local celebrities Linda Hartzall (Artistic Director of the Seattle Children’s Theatre), actress Cindy Bosco, and Michael Immerwahr (Former Technical Production Director at the Seattle Rep).

If you are interested in making a contribution to support any School of Drama program, call Mickey Chemers, Director of Development, at 221-6797, or mail a donation to UW School of Drama, Box 353950, Seattle, WA 98195-3950.

Special Thanks

ACT, Mickey Chemers, Austin Elston, Intiman Theatre, Michael McQuilken, Seattle Children’s Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre
The Cast

Bunny Watson
Peg Costello
Sadel Meyer
Ruthie Saylor
Richard Sumner
Abe Cutler
Kenny
The Man
The Old Lady
Elsa
Mr. Bennett
Miss Warriner
Mr. Ferris

Barbara Suiter
Emily Cedergreen
Lauren Aboulafia
Mikano Fukaya
Andy Kidd
Jonathan Martin
Joe Feeney
Lathrop Walker
Britt Boyd
Amanda Shaver
Adrian Gaeta
Kristi Reiersgard
Graham Mills

Act One
Early December morning.

Ten-minute Intermission

Act Two
Scene 1—The day before Christmas, early evening.
Scene 2—Three hours later.

Ten-minute Intermission

Act Three
Four weeks later.

The Desk Set is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.
From the Dramaturg

The Desk Set opened on Broadway October 24, 1955 at the Broadhurst Theatre. Quickly establishing itself as a hit, it garnered rave reviews for its star, Shirley Booth, as the indomitable intellect, Bunny Watson. The well-known movie version, starring Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy was released in 1957 and versions of each continue to play in regional, Broadway and home theaters to this day. Almost fifty years later, this slapstick satire about a group of research librarians facing replacement by an electronic brain still resonates for many professionals and office workers caught in the conflict between new technology and job security.

Electronic computers, which were used in military and government environments during World War II, were just being marketed to businesses in 1954. Known mostly as high-powered calculators, like the "Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer" (ENIAC), these early computers, though capable of storing large amounts of data and performing rapid multiplication, did not seem to have an easily definable business application. In fact, they did impact payroll offices and other clerical jobs which required repetitive calculation – replacing many jobs that during and after World War II were held by women.

Many women in the 1950s were working diligently to establish themselves in careers, especially in roles as professionals and managers. Gender relations were strained – notice how The Desk Set’s female employees are still encouraged to kiss their bosses at Christmas time. In 1955, finding a husband was the only real job security a women had. Bunny Watson and her team of researchers had good reason to fear that automation could replace their work. Librarians, as early adopters of automation and technology, are in many ways still facing the same themes as the 1950s professional – and still just as likely to laugh about it.

The Playwright

William Marchant was born May 1, 1923 in Allentown, PA. A novelist, journalist and playwright, he is most famous for writing The Desk Set -- which ran for 297 performances on Broadway. He won the National Theatre Conference best first play award in 1952 for Within a Glass Bell and received praise for his memoir, The Privilege of His Company, about his friendship with Noel Coward. After the success of The Desk Set, he continued to write novels, theatre reviews and adaptations for television.

He passed away in 1995.

Recommended Reading


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