

Fall 10-1-2000

The Season Ticket, Spring 2000

Columbia College Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/seasonticket>

 Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "The Season Ticket, Spring 2000" (2000). *Season Ticket*. 24.
<https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/seasonticket/24>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Publications at Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. It has been accepted for inclusion in Season Ticket by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. For more information, please contact drossetti@colum.edu.

The Season Ticket

Columbia College Theater Department

Spring 2000

Inside this edition of
The Season Ticket...



- Meet the new theater department secretary, Julie!!
- Have Lunch with Shirley Jo Finney as she talks about *Hambone*, the Theodore Award winning play!
 - Day dream with *Sueño* director Henry Godinez!
 - Venture off with Susan Padveen, director of the restoration comedy, *She Ventures and He Wins!*
 - And Much, Much More!!

And Here's Julie!

There's a new face in the third floor office...well, not actually that new but she's behind a different desk. Julie Lutgen, who spent two years in the Columbia College Theater Department office as a work-aid, has now worked her way up to department receptionist.

Julie transferred to Columbia in February 1998 from Central College in Pella, Iowa. She is originally from Crete, Nebraska, a small town outside of Lincoln. Julie is officially graduating in June with a major in theater design. She has designed a

couple of shows at Columbia, including set and costumes for *Phedre* and costumes for *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*. You can check out her recent work as the set designer for the mainstage presentation of *She Ventures and He Wins*, and later this year she is designing the set for the directing project, *Slaughter City*.

So if you haven't already, come up to the third floor office and welcome Julie to her new position!

Lunch With Shirley Jo Finney, the Director of *Hambone*

This year's Theodore Ward Prize for an African-American playwright went to Javon Johnson for his play, *Hambone*. It was produced here in the New Studio in February and was directed by Shirley Jo Finney. The play takes place inside a diner and explores family relations and revelations of truth. Shirley Jo explains to us, "It's like the playwright said in his program notes, this play is a study in what happens when hidden truth is revealed. It has the bonding and relationship between father and son, with historical truths, such as the sins of the father being passed down to the son. The play shows us that the truth will always come to light. It has a cultural place in the story, the southern African-American, but it transcends that because it is about universal truth." Ms. Finney also gave a little historical reference into the play by telling us that "Hambone" really is, "a hand-slapping rhythmic play on words and language from Africa and then brought to the plantations. It allowed the slaves to communicate without drums, using their own bodies. Messages and rhymes were transferred and passed down to generations. The men in the piece bond and have a ritual of their own which is passed down through generations."

I then asked Shirley Jo how she came up with the design concept for *Hambone*. "Bishop, one of the central characters, had been found on a train. So we made the diner look like it had been a boxcar that was transformed into a diner. This was common to do in the 40s and 50s across the country. Then we chose elements of this diner. We used wood because it has cultural, generational, and historic elements. It

absorbs energy, has roots, energy of life, and symbolizes the family tree. We used a lot of red because it is passionate and reminds us of bloodline and life." Ms. Finney finished the interview by explaining what it is she wants out of a production, "—my audience to feel, to transcend the fourth wall and relate to the story so everyone leaves thinking or feeling something."



Another Concert Musical Hits the Columbia Stage!

Last Spring, Columbia started a series of concert stagings of musicals, starting with *The Pajama Game*. This April, *City of Angels* was performed in a concert format in the Getz Theatre. The play was directed by Estelle Spector, with musical direction by Larrance Fingerhut. It was performed in the style of the old 40's radio shows with vintage microphones and an on-stage live sound effects table.

Concert stagings are rehearsed only for about two weeks and are performed with minimal blocking and book in hand. They give more opportunities for our musical theatre students to perform, along with giving them the skills to learn quickly. And they are fun to watch! So keep an eye out for upcoming concert musicals here in the Theater Department.

A Letter to Ariadne: Exploring *He Ventures and She Wins*

Dear Ariadne:

Last week I read a book called "Dear George," a collection of letters to George Farquhar during the rehearsal of one of his plays by British director Max Stafford-Clark. I thought, even though you have no last name, and to our knowledge only have this one play, *She Ventures and He Wins*, to your credit, you needed at least one letter written to you. So here it is.

We've had a great time rehearsing your play. One of the things I found most entertaining was imagining what must have gone on in your life of love to have created the character of Charlotte. She's got to be one out-there chick for the 1680's. Here in the Theater Department, we were drawn to the play because it was a complete turnaround from the standard Restoration comedy in which the men play fast and hard with women and the women stand by and wait to be picked. Composer Joe Corqua and choreographer Wilfredo Rivera and I felt so strongly that the play has contemporary resonances that we've integrated a lot of music and dance of contemporary periods, and it seems to enhance the story. Set designer Julie Lutgen and costume designer Frances Maggio have likewise played with periods; we've actually made the first 5 scenes of the play and the last happen in contemporary England. Lighting designer Rich Peterson has been challenged with the devil scene. Not to give anything away, but poor old Squire Wouldbe sure does come up against the wrath of the

underworld. We've had great fun with the comic characters and for the play they seem to serve as counterpoint to the romantics' love scenes, to make the question of what is true love even stronger.

What questions did we have? Did Charlotte really expect Lovewell to end up in jail? Did she really think he could fight off all her enticements and still remain true to her? Why did her brother trust her so much? Is there real jealousy between Charlotte and her best friend, Juliana? Did anyone really exist who was as obtuse as Squire Wouldbe and does his wife Dowdy finally do him in? And what is true love? Never mind, that one's unanswerable. And what, exactly, is a cistern?

I have a few confessions to make. We named the tavern the Purple Goose, it seemed regal and homey at the same time. Hope you don't mind. I made a couple of nips and tucks here and there, mostly for clarity. I did not change your intentions at all, I don't think, or alter any plot points, but Restoration audiences did not have remote controls, or channel surf through their nights. Our audiences are used to ten-second sound bites, and I wanted them to enjoy this show as much as I'm sure your audiences did.

In conclusion, I wanted to thank you for leaving this little gem of the past for us to discover, polish up and present. It certainly has been a pleasure.

The Dream and the Reality, Henry Godinez talks about *Sueño*

This March, Columbia College Theater Department and Teatro Vista collaborated on a show here in our Getz Theater. *Sueño*, which is José Rivera's adaptation of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's classic Spanish tragedy, *Life is a Dream*, was directed by Teatro Vista co-founder and Columbia College Artist-in-Residence Henry Godinez. Henry Godinez took some time out of his busy schedule to talk about Teatro Vista and the play itself.

Teatro Vista, "Theater with a Vision," was founded by Henry and Eddie Torres, who is the current Artistic Director. They decided that there needed to be another Latino theater company in Chicago, one that offers a variety of work, including classical pieces. They started with a staged reading of the play *Broken Eggs*, and that led them to forming the company with their first full production in 1991 of *The Crossing* at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum. They produced another production a year later, and then kept putting up more work. In 1995, the company had a turning point. They co-produced José Rivera's *Cloud Tectonics* with the Goodman Theatre. Henry stepped down from being the artistic director the next year, but continues to help support them and works with them when he can.

Which leads us to this production with the Columbia College Theater Department. *Sueño* is a beautiful story which questions reality and challenges us to create our own destiny. In an effort to thwart destiny, King Basilio of Spain (who was played by Teatro Vista member Gustavo Mellado) has thrown his son Segismundo into a tower where he is hidden from the world because of the child's ominous horoscope. Years later, before crowning his nephew and niece Astolfo and Estrella king and queen, the dying king decides to test the character of his legitimate heir. Segismundo is given a sleeping potion, brought into the palace and installed on the throne. Having been raised like a caged beast and vowing vengeance, the prince rules as cruelly as the stars predicted.

Basilio has him drugged again and returned to his prison where, upon awakening, he is made to believe his ephemeral ascent to the throne had been only a dream. When the king's rebellious soldiers liberate and reinstate him, Segismundo, cured from his lust for revenge by being sent back to the horrible prison, reigns with generosity and nobility of spirit. At the same time, Rosaura, daughter of Clataldo, Segismundo's scrupulous guardian-jailer, appears. She is disguised as a young man to fight Astolfo for the honor he has taken from her. During the course of the play she not only allies with Segismundo, but falls in love with him.

Henry explains, "Liking *Sueño* is like liking two different plays. One is the original *Life is a Dream*, in which Barca explores what is real or what is a dream. There is the story and moral of being fooled by predictions and believing prophecies, therefore making them reality. There is also the possibility of nobility, truth, and love overcoming the animal side of man. Then the second is José Rivera's adaptation, which contrasts a juxtaposition of beautiful contemporary poetry and vulgar humor and language. The language brings it closer to today's audience without losing the intuition and insight of Barca's play."

Sueño performed in the Getz in March. The assistant director was Sandra Marquez, a member of Teatro Vista. The set design was a collaboration of the advanced set design class here at Columbia, and was inspired by Salvador Dali paintings. The beautiful period costumes were designed by Patricia Roeder, and the lighting and projection design (which showed us the moon and sun coming together for the eclipse) was by Emil Boulos. There was also original music by Columbia composition instructor Gustavo Leone.

What's up with the Staff and Faculty

It's that time of year again to check in and see what's going on!

Gigi Buffington recently performed the role of Sherry in the SAG indie feature *Everything He Touched* by Nancy Timmers, cast by the illustrious Jane Alderman. In June she begins work on the SAG indie *Empathy* playing the lead role of Christine. She is currently collaborating with composer Randy Tressler on the score for *The Prince Of Wales*, an adult fairy tale she wrote last year. She continues to work in voice-over, commercial television, and industrials.

Dale Calandra recently appeared as Mr. Fezziwig in the Goodman Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*. From March through May, he can be seen as Otto in *The Food Chain* at the Organic Theatre. This summer he will be directing *Twelfth Night* for Oak Park Festival Theatre, where he serves as Artistic Director.

Anita Loomis is appearing in *The Unfinished Works of Sir Linear Scribble* by Columbia College alumnus Ian Pierce at the Neo-Futurarium.

Brad Mott recently played in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and has upcoming work in the rotating repertory plays *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards* and *The Learned Ladies* at Court Theatre, where he is a resident artist.

Clare Nolan has March performances with the Sweat Girls at the Working Women's Theatre Festival in San Francisco. They are also reprising their piece *Motherlode* on Mother's Day weekend at Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

Scott Olson is directing *Hair* at Boxer Rebel-

lion Theater. In June he is directing *The Trick* at Bailiwick.

Susan Padveen is directing the Restoration comedy *She Ventures, He Wins* at Columbia, and *Grace and Glorie* with Buffalo Theater Ensemble.

Sheldon Patinkin staged a Valentine's Day concert for Chicago Symphony Youth Concerts. He is commissioned to write Second City's 40th Anniversary coffee table book. He is also directing John Mahoney in *Long Day's Journey into Night* (also featuring faculty member David Cromer) for Irish Repertory of Chicago in May, which is going to Galway in July. In July, he is also directing concert stagings of excerpts from *The Barber of Seville* and *Così fan Tutte* at Grant Park with the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists.

Holly Quinn has been busy in her collaborate endeavors with MASS Ensemble. Recent activities include recording a second CD; performing at the Wintergarden, World Financial Center in New York; live broadcasts of the New York show on WNYC New Sounds program; performances and kids workshop for architecture day at the Museum of Contemporary Art; and preparation for March performances at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. She also has performances in Chicago in April. Holly is also writing and choreographing *Rituals of Polite Seduction* with long-time collaborator Julia Rhoads. She recently formed a rock band with Chicago artist Luke Rothschild and sculptor Christopher Furman. She plays bass, accordion, and tries to sing back-up vocals.

Nana Shineflug had a busy Fall Semester; she created *Alive #3*, an exciting physical theater work for the Theater Department at Columbia; reprised *Coming Forth by Day*, her work inspired by *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* in collaboration with the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago as a Millennium project; and created two new dance works for The Chicago Moving Company Concert. She also represented Chicago at a multicultural arts conference in Salvador, Brazil, where she worked with the Dance Company Viiladanca, and did a residency at the University of Iowa in Ames where she taught and set a dance work on the dance ensemble. *Coming Forth by Day* was again presented in January in Lincolnshire. Currently, she is working on a new work for the Chicago Moving Company spring season at the Harold Washington Library April 7 & 8, and will be at a residency at Milliken University in May. She will travel back to Brazil, this time to San Luis in June and will do a two-week summer workshop at Brigham Young University in July, and with the Chicago Moving Company will go to Sao Paulo, Brazil, in September.

The Theater Department and Office of Community Arts Partnerships

Recently, the Columbia College Theater Department has become closely involved in projects with the Office of Community Arts Partnerships. Assistant Chairperson Brian Shaw explained what programs the department is currently involved in. The first one, "Urban Missions," partners the department with community based organizations. The FreeStreet Programs show *Cog in the Freak Plan* performed last fall in the Getz Theater and FreeStreet faculty taught workshops in Columbia classes. FreeStreet is coming back to perform next fall and there are other plans "in the works." The Theater Department is also partnered with the Duncan YMCA/Chernin Center for the Arts and last year students from Columbia worked as paid design interns in their summer program. Columbia is also in negotiations to co-produce the Theodore Ward Prize Winning play at their space after it performs here in the Department. Other programs partnered with the Theater Department are Association House and Street Level Youth Media.

The other program is called "Gear Up" and is funded by a grant from the Department of Education to bring Arts Education and programming to schools. The Columbia College Theater Department is currently working in two alternative middle schools with FreeStreet Programs, teaching voice and presentation skills to 6th and 7th graders. FreeStreet faculty, Columbia faculty, and Columbia students are working together on this project.

Brian highlighted the good points of these programs for us, "The goal is to share expertise and resources with community organizations. And students are going out there, getting work in their fields, and getting paid!"

Brian Shaw is currently teaching a class called Community Based Performance which gives students a foundation and understanding of community performance and teaching. Within the next couple of years, Brian hopes to expand the curriculum to include more specific classes on community teaching techniques.