Welcome to another exciting edition of the Drama Department’s bi-annual publication, OnStage Magazine. Our fall issue is chock full of articles about the major production this semester, Calderón’s “Life is a Dream” ("La Vida es Sueño"), and brings you closer to the unique process that brought this original adaptation to life. Some of these unique moments have been captured by the talented student photographer Simon Gonzales. We are also introducing you to three senior studios and several After Hours projects for all to look forward to this semester.

This fall is full of the New for the Drama Department. At about this time last year we were informed that our beloved Drama Building would need to be torn down because of the shifting foundation that had caused significant damage to the exterior of the building. A replacement Drama Building would be needed. Thanks to the tremendous support of President Keefe, UD’s Board of Directors, Brian Murray, and Pat Daley, UD was able to have our entire department back up and running in a new building on the same site as the old one in less than 9 months. Impressive by any account. What is even more impressive was that in such a short period of time the faculty of Drama were given the freedom to create a Drama Building that suits the needs of the department in 2016. We envisioned a space that was equally a classroom, rehearsal room, and performance space. We could not be more excited with the results.

While I am thankful to work in our new space, I believe it is important to remember our previous building. Serving as the University’s Chapel from 1956-1986 and then as the home for the Drama Department from 1986-2016, the legacy of this building will not and should not be forgotten. Our department literally stands on the glorious achievements, magnificent failures, and most importantly, the memories that took place in that building over a period of 60 years. Biologist Rupert Sheldrake has developed a theory of memory called Morphic Resonance which posits that self-organising systems inherit a memory from previous similar systems. Morphic Resonance exists, I believe, in buildings themselves, theatres in particular. It is my greatest wish that our new Drama Building (DB2.0?) learns from the inherited wisdom of our past and in time develops fertile soil for the creative fruits of our students.

I hope you enjoy this edition of OnStage and find the time to read the illuminating articles inside. I think you will find a truly dynamic fall season of offerings at the Margaret Jonsson Theater and Drama Building in the weeks ahead, beginning with “Life is a Dream” opening October 26.

See you at the Theater!

Kyle Lemieux, Chair of Drama
Adapting a Classic: Bringing New Life to Calderón
By: Alonna Ray

When we think about theater, we think about extravagant costumes, spotlights, red curtains, and elaborate sets all placed upon a stage before an audience, yet Peter Brook, an acclaimed director and theatrical visionary says, “I can take an empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theater to be engaged.” This year’s production of Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s “Life is a Dream,” in a new adaptation by Kyle Lemieux, will fall somewhere in between these two extremes.

Building on a rich history of contemporary theater practices and postmodern literary philosophy, Director Kyle Lemieux has opted for an unconventional process in his approach to directing the mainstage production this fall. Instead of following the traditional mode for rehearsing, he has elected, instead, to produce a semi-devised, semi-deconstructed, totally original adaptation of the famous Spanish play, relying on the creativity and exploration of an ensemble of actors to drive this process.

Devised theater, while very difficult to describe, is best defined as a form of theater without a text or script—an ensemble comes together with no script, no director, and no idea of what exactly they will be performing. Through group-based improvisational exercises, the ensemble creates a theme which slowly develops into a story and, finally, a solidified performance. After months of discovery and adaptation, they present the final product to the public—though there is no telling if this product will ever truly be finalized, as performances may be subject to change from night to night.

Though they have begun with a text, the ensemble of “Life is a Dream” has embraced the collaborative and creative elements of devised theater through their process of adaptation. Calderón’s text, while driving and informing the performance, is no longer law. It has been broken apart, examined carefully, and then slowly pieced back together.

“Calderón’s text, while driving and informing the performance, is no longer law. It has been broken apart, examined carefully, and then slowly pieced back together.”

Also influenced by the postmodern philosophies of the structuralists and deconstructionists. In the fifties and sixties, the structuralists attempted to give scientific status to the fields of anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and literary criticism. Dr. Jason Lewallen, Assistant Professor of Modern Languages, remarked that “Structuralism harnessed linguistic theory by Ferdinand de Saussure and applied that linguistic theory to the interpretation of cultures and myths and fables and literary texts.” It was a way of understanding the world by disassembling it, then reassembling it in a fabricated structure that was centralized around an organizing principle or theme. Structuralism intended to reveal literary truths through analysis. Guided by Saussure, the structuralists posited that close analysis of any text would reveal a network of transhistorical ideas that link human cultures across geography and time.

Deconstruction, on the other hand, was a reaction against this idyllic notion that texts and cultures shared these centralized links. “Deconstruction is a philosophical movement that picked up steam in the sixties under Jacques Derrida,” described Lewallen. “[He] came along and made the claim that these things that we call ‘scientific,’ these ways of explaining reality to which we give importance in our society,
well they’re not as stable as we think.” Deconstructionists carefully search literary texts for holes, or areas where they undermine themselves through paradox and contradiction, in order to decentralize them, showing their lack of internal consistency. Derrida claimed that the structures of text create “freeplay,” an ability that words and sentences have to form associations among themselves in order to generate meaning, but paradoxically limit it as well. By forcing a text into a centralized, preconceived structure, structuralist critics artificially restricted the natural boundlessness of its potential for “freeplay.” However, once the structure is removed, the text becomes unrestrained and opens itself up to the critic to interpret in new, experimental ways.

How do these two philosophical movements connect to a theatrical performance? In adapting Calderon’s play, the ensemble took a very close, structuralist look at what it was that defined the story—its paradoxes, its oppositions. They disassembled the piece, breaking it down into its fundamental elements of plot, theme, character, etc. in order to examine each one individually. By rebuilding the play after this intense examination, the themes of the show have been allowed to grow, to breathe, to live. The actors of the ensemble are now free to weave Calderón’s story into other narratives and experiences, creating tension between what is real and what is unreal, but perhaps suggesting a structuralist sense of universal truth and cultural connectivity.

While structuralism guided the adaptation of the show, deconstruction guided its realization. The performance itself will be “decentralized,” abandoning the necessity to abide by every word of the text, blurring the lines between playing space and audience, and breaking up the relationship between actor and character. In their deconstructed position, the actors act as both text and interpreters—their constant “freeplay” on the stage allows them to place the text on a broader scale, interpreting it in light of their own experiences, and to represent it in whatever way they see fit.

Early on in the production process, Lemieux stated that he was less interested in the restrictions of what it means to be a “play” and more interested in the realm of possibilities that are opened up when we emphasize storytelling. On opening night, we will find ourselves within a story that is driven by the constant “freeplay” of the ensemble as they live and breathe together within the world created by the text, but not bound by its laws. Every show will be unique to the evening and the audience as they join together with the ensemble to explore a different way of experiencing a piece of theater.

Fate, Free Will, and Artistic Striving

A major theme in “Life is a Dream” is the tension between fate and free will, between what is written in the stars and what is decided by individuals. This tension manifests itself in the decisions and interactions between Segismundo and his father, Clotaldo, but can also be seen in the struggle artists face in attempting to break the mold.

Throughout history, visionaries of the theater have been constantly developing new philosophies on what creates a good performance. To the right is a diagram of the methods and philosophies that have influenced the theatrical world in the 20th and 21st centuries, leading to revolutionary techniques like method acting and devised theater. As each method evolved, it was influenced by its predecessors. Rather than creating a direct timeline, these methods come together in a constellation of art forms.

Left: Rachel Polzer whispers to the ensemble. Below: Jackson Berkhouse, Zeina Masri, and Madeleine Bishop.
ILLUMINATING THE EVOLUTION OF THEATER

THE SYSTEM
Developed by Constantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), the first systematic approach to acting. Performances should be systematic, scientific, and repeatable. The actor must seek an inner justification for everything he does onstage.

BIOMECHANICS
Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940). Syntonic: Physically, actors must be trained in extensive physical exercises. When performing emotions, experiences will be produced by physical movement (dancing, etc.).

JACQUES COPEAU
(1879-1949) and the “misanthrope.” Attempted to achieve a new level of honesty and reality within the theater by presenting a bare stage and working with an ensemble as opposed to “stars.”

METHOD ACTING
Developed by Lee Strasberg (1901-1982) as an extension of Stanislavski’s system. The actor must substitute realistic experiences into his acting in order to create a realistic illusion.

THEATER OF CRUELTY
Developed by Antonin Artaud (1896-1948). A play must take an audience to the point where they are disturbed by both its content and presentation.

ALIENATION
(Verfremdungseffekt) Developed by Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956). The spectator must watch critically rather than passively, and the mechanics of the theater should be shown at all times (lights, music, stage directions spoken out loud).

JERZY GROTOWSKI
(1933-1999). The actor is holy and must train his mind as well as his body. Increased emphasis on the flexibility of the playing space, decreased emphasis on the words of the text. Dissolved the stage and the audience into one another.

DEVISED THEATER
Also known as collaborative creativity. The script is generated not from an author, but from a collaborative team of actors through extended improvisation.

THE SYSTEM
Calderón is the last master of the Spanish Golden Age, which coincided with Spain’s rise as a political power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This Golden Age saw a proliferation of theater at every level of culture from courts to academies and cathedrals to corrales (a type of open-air theater). “Life is a Dream” falls into one of the genres of drama unique to this era, comedia nueva, which involved mixing elements of tragedy and comedy together in shorter three act plays. In the classical conception of theater these two are entirely separate dramatic modes, and bringing them together requires the playwright to understand the dramatic tension of a story in a new light. Holding taut the many different tensions within a story is indeed what makes a story great.

Dr. Scott Crider, Associate Dean of Constantin College and beloved English professor, notes that one definition of man for Aristotle is as the animal with the greatest capacity for mimesis. Throughout the ages, humans have turned to theater as a channel for mimetic activity and a way to account for the manner in which we live. It gives man a particularly vivid way to step outside of himself and put on a character as a kind of mask through which he can recast his relation to the world. As Crider says, “an audience throws itself out of itself into the story world, then returns altered by the imaginary experience.” Of course, the practice of mimesis itself presents a tension between the salutary effects of self-knowledge and the danger of becoming too adept at putting on the character mask. Crider acknowledges the difficulty, but replies that “it’s dangerous in the way that love is dangerous, in that the response is not to not love;” likewise, we cannot avoid entering into mimetic worlds. Rather, we ought to remain self-reflective, which is the very activity mimesis aids.

Central to the plot of “Life is a Dream” is a reflection on the nature of reality. Segismundo has been chained in a tower his entire life, and wakes up one morning to find himself treated as royalty. The next morning he awakes in his tower again, and is told the previous day was only a dream. How could he possibly know whether or not it was? Maybe our entire existence is a dream. Maybe everything we take to be real is only an illusion. Calderón doesn’t end up making the argument proposed in his title, but he does cause us to reflect on the question — is life only a dream?

Furthermore, Dr. Crider adds that good stories require “distinct but recognizable” characters and “the ability to fold earlier story and story pattern into a new story, both made possible by the earlier ones, yet free of them, as well.” In other words, audiences like to be able to recognize the continuities of their tradition being explored through new characters, but they don’t want to be able to tell the entire story before it happens. The playwrights of the Spanish Golden Age dealt with this tension deftly by often taking their plots from well known stories and recreating them for a Spanish audience.

Specific to theatrical storytelling is the challenge actors have of making words on a page become dynamic
actions on a stage. Stories record events, but theater is storytelling as an event. As a part of the rehearsal process, Director Kyle Lemieux reversed the order in which the actors approached the script and the blocking. Rather than beginning with the script, the actors began with a series of motions; later, a story was superimposed on the motions, recreating their meaning. In this way, the tension between words and movement was deconstructed for the actors, which gave them the opportunity to understand it in a deeper way when they put it back together. The entire rehearsal process was very physical, focusing on the body rather than the text, as a part of Lemieux’s choice to present Calderón in the style of devised theater.

The story we will present to you for this semester’s mainstage will be wrought in and through tension—tension between well known archetypes and their particular manifestations, between our own self understanding and the self understanding of the characters the audience is invited to step into, and between the audience’s preconceptions of Calderón and our adaptation of it. This production of Calderón’s “Life is a Dream” will surely be a great story.

An Ensemble of Exploration
By Maria D'Anselmi

I settled down with the Fall Mainstage cast at a round table in Schlotzky's on a Sunday morning, full of anticipation. After months of intrigue and mystery, I had the privilege to chat with Rachel, David, Jackson, Zeina, Madeleine, Nick, and Dolores about their unconventional and unprecedented method of creating theater at UD. As the rain poured outside, we enjoyed an hour of laughter, conversation, and growing excitement as the cast shared their experiences and revealed glimpses of the massive treat in store for the UD community.

MD: How was it entering this project knowing nothing about it?

Dolores: The first day of rehearsal was definitely a scary thing. This is my first mainstage, since I'm a freshman. I was also very new to Kyle. I wasn't sure what to make of the rehearsal process to begin with, and I'm still not quite sure what to make of it! Once I got over that first fear of "I don't know what I'm doing. Is that okay?" then the rest of the rehearsals went well.

Nick: I'm not sure what I was expecting, but what we are doing is not it. I had heard Kyle talking before about doing something devised. I guess in my mind that translated to just poking around with the script a little bit. I wasn't prepared for rehearsals consisting mostly of exercises and storytelling. I was pleasantly surprised.

David: All the acting I've done in the past has been very traditional, so this was completely out of left field for me. I never even considered that this was a way that people made theater, but it's really opened my mind. I'm loving every second of it! In a lot of ways rehearsal has been like taking an intense creative acting class. I feel myself getting stronger as an actor in general.

Madeleine: For the first day of rehearsal we built a castle out of little wooden blocks, and I felt like a kindergartener. It's all related to the show, and I don't feel like I'm in rehearsal; I feel like I'm in a workshop.

Rachel: I knew going in that it would be a different process than the traditional rehearsal, but I didn't know what that meant. For the first week and a half, we didn't look at the script at all. It's making sense now; [what] everything we've done in the past six weeks will become in the next six weeks. Building this ensemble and focusing on our own abilities to tell stories and applying these concepts and these exercises to the script and making it our own. It's been really cool.

Zeina: I was very excited going into it. I know devised theater is becoming increasingly popular in the theater world. I was terrified of not having a script to fall back on because I very much like having the security of that structure. [I] was also terrified of speaking off the cuff and doing improvisational stuff. I found my footing at a certain point; I think we all have.

MD: Since you are performing Calderón's play, do you think that changing the script might be problematic?

Rachel: I don't think it's dishonoring it because we have acknowledged since the beginning that we're not trying to put on this show as the script that Calderón wrote. We are very knowingly trying to find a new way to present it, present a story and this is our source material.

Zeina: "Life is a Dream" is first and foremost a story. Calderón turned it into a play, but at its core what interests us is that it's a story, and that's essentially a very human thing. We're just trying to honor that, in the same way that Shakespeare honored the stories he based his plays off of.

Nick: I speak for everybody when I say that when we take liberties with Calderón's play it's not done out of disrespect to his play because we all agree we could put it on totally straight and it would be fantastic. We're just trying to make something
different with the source material, out of respect for how great [it] is.

MD: What is the benefit of working as an ensemble in a play that has distinct characters?

David: Not having a single character to focus on has really helped. Reading the whole play from a completely impartial view and not looking for your character and how it interacts with the script but [how] all the characters form as a cohesive whole—you really get a better sense of the play as a whole.

MD: How does your focus in this play compare to previous experiences with theater?

Madeline: You can lose focus so easily by just stepping off stage and becoming yourself again. But here you're on 24/7 even during rehearsals. There's nowhere to hide.

Zeina: In a lot of other shows there's a tendency to focus on a very specific skill set and certain aspects of that play and you hone those very finely. If you have to encounter another aspect of the emotional spectrum that isn’t in your role it can throw you off. We have to work all those muscles, and not let others atrophy.

Rachel: It's never just about one actor, that's the beauty of the ensemble. I've learned a lot about humility as an actor with this production.

MD: What boundaries have been pushed for you?

Madeleine: There have been a lot of awkward body moments. Kyle just says, "Laugh it off. The human body is hilarious so let's just all laugh at ourselves." When we were doing the mirror exercises on the floor, I remember Zeina was a cat so she was stroking his calf and I was her mirror so I had to do the same thing. We get pretty comfortable.

Jackson: Probably the biggest moment for me was when we were learning “round by through” and this other exercise... and I did them both with Kyle. That was unusual having that amount of contact with a teacher and so it was like, “I’ve done this all with Kyle so with these people it shouldn’t be too bad!”

MD: What can the audience expect from the show in a word or sentence?

Madeleine: They can expect to be told a story.

Rachel: Honesty.

David: They can definitely expect something sacred.

Zeina: Anthropology. This is us trying to find the universals of humanity and culture and what it means for us.

Nick: Something very personal.

Jackson: Intimate. We're trying to figure out how to include the audience in the story.

Dolores: They can expect something very old; even if it's not traditional, it's very ancient.

MD: Any last minute advice to the audience before opening night?

Rachel: I hope when the audience comes, they come with an open mind. They should not be expecting a traditional play. They will be highly disappointed and bored because that's not what we're going for. I think the UD community is a great place for us to put this on because of the level of interaction with the texts that we live for. It's a new way to experience an old tradition. I think UD will be pleasantly surprised.

Nick: If you don't like sand you probably shouldn’t come.

Dolores: Make sure you go to the bathroom first since there probably won’t be an intermission.

Zeina: I would advise anyone coming to see the show to come with both an open mind and questions. What am I going to see? What are my expectations? Are those expectations necessary? What do we need to absorb a story? Just mull over that.

Rachel: Come multiple times! It might change. ♦
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF DRAMA KYLE LEMIEUX has long appreciated Pedro Calderón’s “Life is a Dream.” A play rich in traditions dramatic, historic, and literary, “Life is a Dream” promises to take unexpected turns, which Lemieux articulated for OnStage a few weeks before opening night.

CM: Where did the idea for the show come from?

KL: I first got exposed to “Life is a Dream” when I found it on sale at a used bookstore for a quarter when I was a student here at UD. Some of the things that the play is investigating are things that I’m deeply interested in investigating in my work, and those happily coupled with the needs that I saw in the department.

CM: What has been a driving principle of your work on this production?

KL: When I was working with Will and Susie on the designs, we talked about a production that was “palms up.” How do we create a vision for how to tell a story without hiding anything? Our actors will never leave the stage. There are no light changes. There are no sound cues. It’s just the actors in the space, telling the story. What it demands is a stronger imaginative response from the audience. I hope, when the audience leaves, that we have eighty different responses to it, asking eighty different questions, moved in eighty different ways. The audience will trust us with their imaginations, and each evening we’ll take magical leaps into the story.

“T’m convinced that theater holds a special place in the possibility for robust development of a culture and developing good citizens.”

CM: Why the adaptation?

KL: I have to say I felt quite encouraged by Calderón. He only got paid when he wrote plays, so he and other playwrights stole from themselves and from others to provide new plays for the hungry audiences who were eager for this entertainment, which was wildly popular with all classes in Spain at the time. There’s a lot of recycling. So I felt quite encouraged by the playwriting of the time to say “Let’s not be so sacred with this.”

I’m really convinced that theater holds a special place in the possibility for robust development of a culture and developing good citizens. It’s not an accident that theater and democracy...
blossomed at first at the same time. Coming together to engage with our most difficult societal questions is what theater does best.

**CM: How do you balance the text with your creative vision?**

KL: I believe, and maybe I’m wrong, but I believe that the play is always in front of me and that I’m always trying to get closer to it—so all of these things that have emerged have come from the play itself. We’re certainly highlighting very particular elements of the play. There’s no question that we’re doing that to a greater degree than we’ve ever done, but all of the impulses and all of the end results come from things that I think exist in the play. At the end of the day, we’re going to have Calderón’s play, and within it we’ll have other elements that hopefully will form a unified evening of theater.

**CM: How much of the show is certain?**

KL: A lot of that is going to depend on the cast and their degree of comfort with a night-to-night variance, within a very specific and very narrow framework. I was curious to see their responses to thinking that we would be doing 90 minutes of loosely based improvisation of vague ideas that exist within the play. The work has been very disciplined, because in order to work on this play you’ve got to be absolutely regimented to create a framework for creative freedom. That will be determined by the actors themselves. Notice that I’m using the future tense. We are at October 6th, and we don’t have those questions finalized yet, which again speaks to the atypical nature of this process. This will eventually be a new version of the play, or a separate play entirely.

**CM: What do you hope that audiences will take away from this production?**

KL: There are elements of it that are intended to jarr our audience to really see what’s actually happening, and that’s very exciting. We start in the rehearsal room with our ensemble of actors, investigating what makes a good story. Calderón has written a fantastic, rich story. The goal is to tell that story as best we can, and also perhaps engage with the question: why does story matter? And why might it matter that we tell stories together? The play is rich in pain, in loss, and ultimately in forgiveness, and I hope that’s emotionally resonant as well, because that resonates with me in the play, and I hope to make that a part of the experience for the audience as well. ♦

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SUSAN COX (COSTUME DESIGN) and Affiliate Assistant Professor Will Turbyne (set design) share the rare experience of designing for a devised production.

NK: How has this design process developed? Are all the aspects unified?

WT: What I can say about this production is that Kyle's approach to the piece is the most organic process I have been a part of at the University of Dallas, my work in this was to create a space in which this sort of thing could grow and develop. The set pieces are there for the theatrical piece to then emerge from. I think place, time, and those type of considerations take a backseat to creating that environment over time that is flexible enough to lead to the organic nature of his process.

SC: The challenge in this has been to leave room for [our] work to become something that at the beginning of the process was yet to be identified. This is an evolving piece. Ordinarily, if you had enough time to do it, everybody would work in the same way the actors were working. Everybody would evolve as the project evolved. But you need a year to be able to do that, and then successfully begin the production period. Here we don’t have that luxury, the production period is the same amount of time as the rehearsal period. I think both of our tasks was to develop something that could evolve with whatever happened in the rehearsal process. And that is exciting, but nobody knows at this point exactly what the outcome will be. This is the nature of this process, and it is different than one that's usually used here.

NK: How does the stage and the clothing fit into this evolving piece?

WT: The large proportion of theatrical literature is based upon having a narrative structure with characters that go on a journey, and it tells a story or a chapter of their lives or some sort of narrative device with a beginning, middle, and end. Kyle came very early with the idea of dirt, of earth, and we talked a little bit about the ceremonial nature of theater, in order to create a place in which this story could be told by these performers—keeping in mind that, from my understanding of their process in the rehearsal hall and from what I’ve seen, the definition of performer, actor, and character is sort of something that they’re playing with creatively.

“We talked about a ceremonial space, we talked about an elemental space, we talked about breaking down the idea of audience and performer.”

SC: The clothes needed to be flexible enough to be many things, to turn into things, to become what was needed by the performers. It seemed important to pay attention to a kind of contemporary aesthetic as well, because the play that is building in rehearsal is a contemporary approach to an ancient play. In some ways the clothes look contemporary, but they need to become other periods.

NK: Did you look at Calderón's “Life is A Dream” for your costumes?

SC: My work usually starts with script analysis and what the play has to say. We certainly did that work, but we don’t exactly...
know what the play will end up being. You have to start your work in the grounding of the words, understanding at least who says what to whom and why, and what the relationships between the people are if you are going to tell the story in clothes. So I did a lot of research about what the period actually looked like, Calderón’s period in Spain; then how the artists at the time were painting people they thought about in history, mostly religious paintings.

NK: How would you define the type of set design you are using for this project?

WT: We talked about a ceremonial space, we talked about an elemental space, we talked about breaking down the idea of audience and performer, and [that] there’s a division between audience and performer. With those three basic things in mind I started looking at installation pieces, larger scale sculptural pieces—when I say installation pieces I mean a space where the viewer has to actually enter the space to appreciate what the artist has done with it.

NK: What has been your favorite part of this project?

SC: I love the conversations that it’s starting. I’ve loved the meetings we’ve had. It’s been a blast. Kyle’s preparation is so awesome to me. The amount of time he spent in preparation to do this has been really inspirational to me.

WT: In terms of the design work that we’ve done, it’s a much more expansive way of thinking. ‘What can this space be?’ is different than ‘What is this space?’ or ‘What has this space become?’. I’m curious see to what happens with the space that we’re creating, and with the clothes Susie is creating, and what Kyle and the actors do with it all.

The Ensemble of “Life is a Dream”

Madeleine Bishop
Freshman
History

Dolores Mihaliak
Freshman
Undeclared

David Morales
Freshman
History

Jackson Berkhouse
Sophomore
History

Nick Moore
Sophomore
Drama

Zeina Masri
Senior
Drama

Rachel Polzer
Senior
English

La Vida es Sueño

¿Qué es la vida?
Un frenesi.
¿Qué es la vida?
Una ilusión, una sombra, una ficción, y el mayor bien es pequeño;
que toda la vida es sueño, y los sueños, sueños son.

What is life?
A madness.
What is life?
An illusion, a shadow, a story.
And the greatest good is little enough:
for all life is a dream, and dreams themselves are only dreams.
SENIOR STUDIOS  
December 2-4, 2016  

“Action”  

Written by Sam Shepard  
Directed by William Buckley  

Sam Shepard’s popular one-act “Action” is an absurd, psychological dark comedy about four friends living in a claustrophobic cabin after the apocalypse. The friends—Shooter, Jeep, Lupe, and Liza—find themselves grieving; they must cope with the loss of their old lives and move on to see their new community in this single room. Are they available for each other in these hard times, or is the small group going to lose the battle of survival?

“THE HAPPY JOURNEY TO TRENTON AND CAMDEN”  

Written by Thornton Wilder  
Directed by Elizabeth Herrera  

Thornton Wilder’s “The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden” follows the Kirby family’s car ride to Camden, New Jersey. Ma urges her two children and husband into the car and onto the road to visit her oldest daughter, who has been suffering the aftermath of a miscarriage. The Kirbys laugh, joke, and cry as a seemingly pleasant and ordinary car ride masks the family’s grief. Written in the 30’s and performed in the 50’s, the play’s reflection on the American family is relateable even for a contemporary audience. There is joy and suffering as Ma Kirby flies to the rescue, bringing the whole family with her.

“THE TWELVE POUND LOOK”  

Written by J.M. Barrie  
Directed by Mary Armato  

“The Twelve-Pound Look” tells the story of Harry Sims, a pompous man preparing for his upcoming knighting ceremony. Harry’s morning is ruined when he unwittingly invites his ex-wife Kate, now a mere typist, to respond to his congratulation letters. Both Kate and Harry are extremely headstrong and close-minded individuals, and their chance encounter results in a lively battle of wits over who has the correct world-view.

SECOND BIENNIAL UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS  
SHAKESPEARE CONFERENCE  
November 11-12, 2016  

“As You Like As you Like It”  

Featuring a keynote by  
Ralph Alan Cohen,  
Gonder Professor of English at Mary Baldwin College  
Co-Founder and Director of Mission,  
The American Shakespeare Center  
And a staged reading of “As You Like It”  
Directed by Stefan Novinski

AFTER HOURS SERIES  
December 6, 2016  

“Whatever You Want”  

Written by Tom Zompakos Spencer  
Directed by Mary Spencer and Ellen Rogers  

The lives of college roommates Todd and Jordan are forever changed when they meet their new boarder, Hector, an immigrant from a far off nation who has taught himself English solely through the works of William Shakespeare. Shenanigans worthy of the bard himself ensue as the two try to woo friends Irene and Michelle with the help of Hector.

Above: Zeina Maasri and Dolores Mihaliak dress in rehearsal costumes.
CALDERÓN’S
LIFE IS A DREAM
adapted by Kyle Lemieux