The Imaginary Invalid

October 3-13, 2002
Trueblood Theatre

UM School of Music
Dept. of Theatre and Drama
University of Michigan Department of Theatre and Drama presents

The Imaginary Invalid

By Molière
Translated by John Wood

Director Malcolm Tulip
Scenic Designer Caleb Levengood
Costume Designer Jessica Hahn
Lighting Designer Brooke Sinclair
Sound Designer/Dramaturg Clark Johnson
Stage Manager Kelly K. Irwin

Setting: Argan’s Bedroom

There will be no intermission.

The Imaginary Invalid is presented by special arrangement with The Society of Authors, London, England.

Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break or scene change. As a courtesy to others, please set pagers to silent mode. Cellular phones should be deactivated. Please deactivate your electronic watch alarm so it will not interrupt the performance.
Cast of Characters

Argan ............................................................. David Jones
Toinette.......................................................... Jennifer Freidel
Angélique.......................................................... Joanna Fetter
Béline ............................................................... Christina Reynolds
Mr. de Bonnefoy ............................................... Aubrey Levy
Cléante ............................................................. Edmund Alyn Jones

Mr. Diafoirus......................................................... Josh Lefkowitz
Thomas Diafoirus............................................... Sean Ward
Louison............................................................... Lauren Roberts
Béralde............................................................... Jason Smith
Mr. Fleurant........................................................ Phillippe Boileau
Mr. Purgon ........................................................ Dan Granke

About the Playwright

Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin) (1622-1673) remains one of France’s best known playwrights. Born in Paris, Molière’s father was a prosperous merchant, but his mother died when he was ten. He attended Jesuit school then briefly pursued a degree in law before choosing a career in theatre. At the age of twenty-one Molière founded the Illustre Théâtre with a group of friends. The company was never able to compete with established theatres in Paris, so eventually Molière joined an itinerant company led by the actor Charles Dufresne. The company received the patronage of the king’s brother, which led to a command performance before Louis XIV in 1658. They performed Molière’s own farce The Fleet-footed Doctor which amused the king so much that he granted Molière the use of a Paris theater. Molière was best known for his “comédie-ballet” style. He created a skillful patterning of dialogue which is designed to enhance the typically intense physical presentation of the play. People also took notice of his choice of content — a satiric commentary on society that explores eternal human foibles and obsessions. Not surprisingly the plays had many detractors. For example, his study of religious hypocrisy, Tartuffe, was denounced by the church and proscribed by Parliament after its premiere in 1664. Revised twice, the ban was not lifted until 1669. Molière’s last play proved to be The Imaginary Invalid. During the fourth performance Molière, ironically playing the hypochondriac Argan, was seized with a genuine coughing fit and died later that night.
Since announcing *The Imaginary Invalid*, I have heard many comments which revealed an expectation of a *commedia dell’arte* experience. Considering Molière’s background, experience, and works, this is understandable. However, although the commedia structure and archetypes are here, and although outside of Argan’s room the rest of the city is celebrating Carnival, I chose this play not as vehicle to explore commedia but to provide an opportunity for the actors to discover through this text a different period; to create believable characters and discover how they play within this comedy. They must be real people first. If we do our work diligently and pay close attention to the demands of the play then the rhythms and characters of the *commedia* tradition should emerge.

Of course Argan is Pantalone via Géronte, Cléante and Angélique are the lovers via Lucinde and Valére. Toinette is Colombina via Smeraldina and Martine, (or perhaps she is partly a female Sganarelle). But Argan is also Molière, Béline is his wife Armande, the charlatans, Purgon and Fleurant, are doctors such as Patin, who thought nothing of bleeding a three month-old child twice for a head cold or prescribing for Louis XIII 212 enemas and 215 purgatives in one year!

There will be no King Louis or courtiers in the Trueblood audience so I have taken the liberty of removing (like the surgeon who removes the patient’s healthy yet potentially bothersome tonsils) the interludes, which must have entertained Molière’s patrons so ticklishly, yet would prove disastrously difficult for us to mount in such a small time. We cannot afford monkeys, archers and/or flocks of shepherds and shepherdesses. This is my omission not the estimable translator’s, Mr. John Wood, to whom we are anonymously grateful. In absentia. Not having met or corresponded with him. Should you need or require any precedence for this action from an authority more recognized (and quite rightly so) than myself, please refer to the adaptation by Miles Malleson.

And so, it is with *magnus pleasuribus* and *multitudintissimae gratuïtæ* that I invite you to enjoy our *Imaginary Invalid*.

Malcolm Tulip, September 12, 2002
About the Cast

PHILLIP BOILEAU (Mr. Fleurant) soph., BFA Perf./BA English, Canton, MI
JOANNA FETTER (Angélique) soph., BFA Perf., Highland Park, IL
JENNIFER FREIDEL (Toinette) soph., BFA Perf., Dallas, TX
DAN GRANKE (Mr. Purgon) senior, BFA Perf., Ann Arbor, MI
DAVID JONES (Argan) senior, BFA Perf., Beverly Hills, MI
EDMUND Alyn JONES (Cléante) soph., BFA Perf./BS Engineering, Detroit, MI
JOSH LEFKOWITZ (Mr. Diafoirus) senior, BFA Perf., West Bloomfield, MI
AUBREY LEVY (Mr. Bonnefoy) junior, BFA Perf., Hamilton, Ontario

CHRISTINA REYNOLDS (Béline) senior, BFA Perf., Laguna Beach, CA
LAUREN ROBERTS (Louison) soph., BFA Perf., Port Huron, MI
JASON SMITH (Béralde) senior, BFA Perf., Cadillac, MI
SEAN WARD (Thomas Diafoirus) junior, BFA Perf., Ann Arbor, MI

The performers in this production are composed of undergraduate students in the School of Music. The designers are composed of faculty and undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre and Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music.

About the Artists


KELLY K. IRWIN (Stage Manager) is a senior BFA candidate in design and production. UM: Stage manager: Parade, Dances of Passion, Of Thee I Sing, Slichot, World Wide Rhythms - “Street Facade,” “Rainbow Suite;” asst. master electrician: A Little Night Music. Regional Theatre: Stage manager, Busch Gardens, Williamsburg, VA; Production Assistant: Goodspeed Opera House - Dorian a new musical, Radio City Entertainment Christmas Spectacular - Detroit; stage manager/light board operator, Flint Community Players.
About the Artists

CLARK JOHNSON (Sound Designer/Dramaturg) is a fourth year student pursuing a BFA in performance-directing and a BS in Honors Biochemistry. UM: Asst. director: A View From the Bridge, The Balcony; actor: The Grapes of Wrath, A View From the Bridge; asst. sound designer: The Grapes of Wrath; asst. stage manager: The Tavern; Basement Arts: director: 24 Hour Theatre, stage manager: Bus Stop. Regional Theatre: Sound designer: Michigan Shakespeare Festival, Festival of New Works; asst. director: Festival of New Works.

CALEB LEVENGOOD (Scenic Designer) is a fourth year BTA candidate specializing in scenic design. UM: Technical director, Rude Mechanicals, Romeo & Juliet. Regional Theatre: Alice Through the Looking Glass (scenic designer), Othello, Romeo & Juliet (asst. scenic and props designer), Michigan Shakespeare Festival; Asst. scenic and props designer, Festival of New Works 2002.

BROOKE SINCLAIR (Lighting Designer) is a BFA candidate in design and production. UM: Assistant lighting designer: Sideshow, Good News!; various shows with Basement Arts. Last semester she studied theatre abroad in Ghana, Africa.


Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Alissa Koerner. This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater productions. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.
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Carpenter ................................... Robert Michael
Scenic Artist .............................. Tim McDevitt
Scenic Painter ........................... Tony A. Auletti
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Paint .................................... Shanti Akkineni, Liz Chisolm, Katie Conrad,
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Amy Duffy, Andy Fritsch, Dan Granke,
Mandy Heuermann, Justin Hyatt, Edmund Jones,
Heather Jones, Alex Mediola, Adam Metzger,
Thom Omar, Monica Patel, Mary Roeder, Andrew Russell,
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Angela Zuck, students of Theatre 250,

RUNNING CREW
Props ........................................ Grant Bates
Sound .................................... Brendan Kirwin
Light Board Operator .............. Kate Van Horn
Wardrobe ......................... Kanak Agarwal, Fernando Tarango

‡ Member IATSE local 395
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