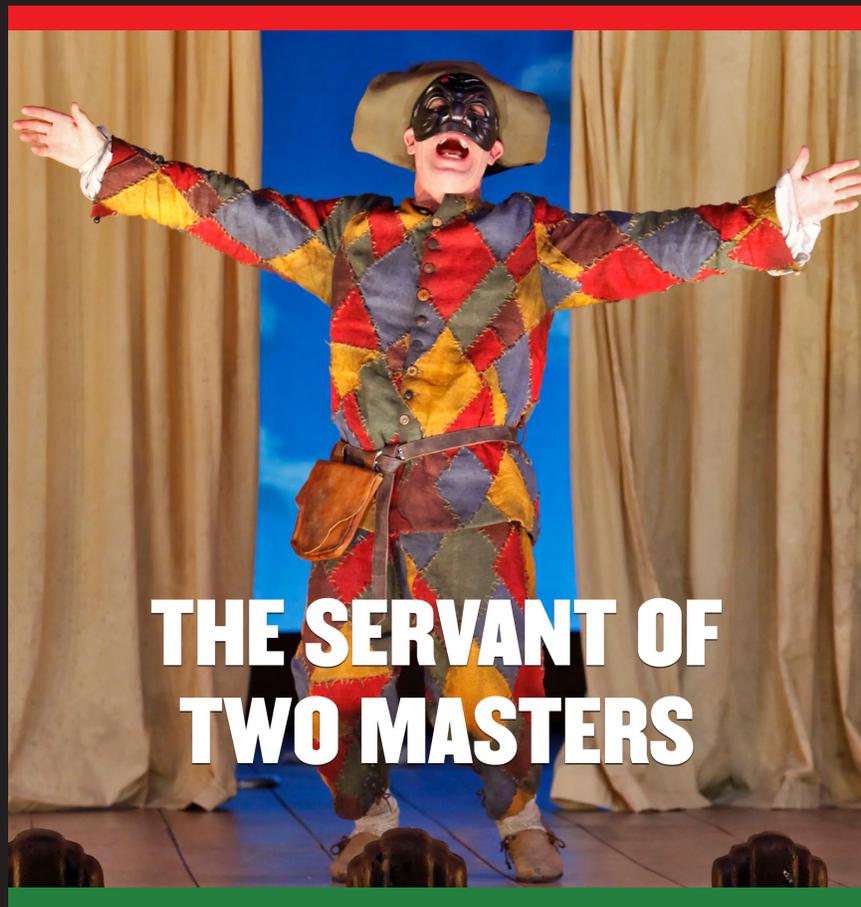


THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE  
POLONSKY SHAKESPEARE CENTER

## 360° SERIES

VIEWFINDER: FACTS AND PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE PLAY, PLAYWRIGHT, AND PRODUCTION



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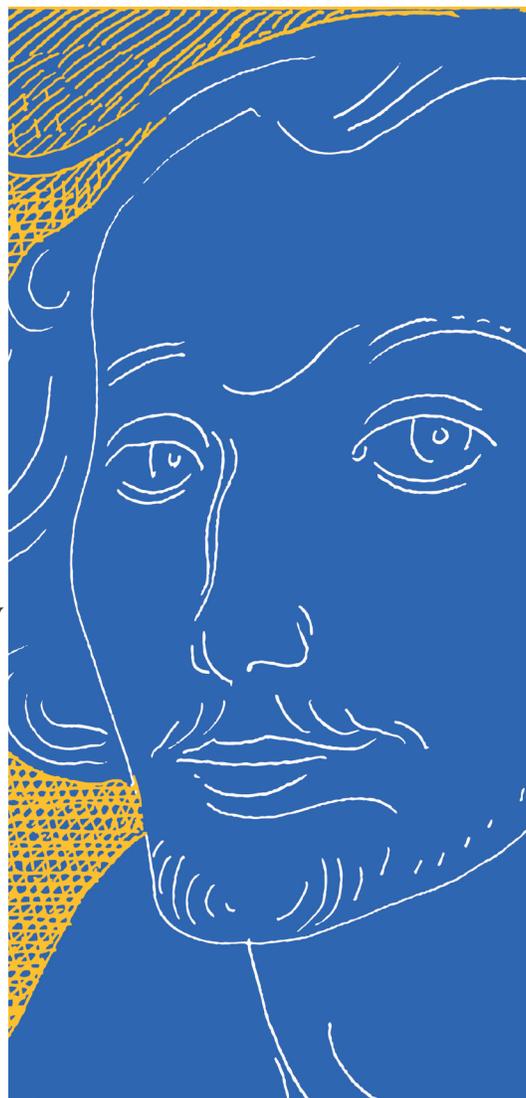
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### Notes

Front Cover: Steven Epp in Yale Repertory Theatre's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*, photo by Richard Termine.  
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# THE PLAY THE PLOT

MADELINE MILLER



The company of Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein

Oh, happiness! It is a bright morning in Venice, and the young couple, Silvio and Clarice, have just been given permission to marry. Clarice had previously been engaged to another man, Federigo Rasponi, but his sudden death has freed her to marry her true love. Clarice's father Pantalone, Silvio's father Doctor Lombardi, and the innkeeper Brighella stand by as witnesses. A knock at the door interrupts the happy scene. Smeraldina, Clarice's maid, brings in Truffaldino, a quirky servant with disastrous news—his master, Federigo Rasponi, isn't dead after all! And he's here in Venice! A man enters, declaring himself to be Federigo Rasponi and demanding to marry Clarice. Pantalone feels obliged to uphold the original engagement, much to the distress of his daughter, Silvio, and Doctor Lombardi.

Meanwhile, the innkeeper Brighella draws Federigo aside—and reveals that he recognizes Federigo's true identity. The person dressed as Federigo is actually Beatrice, Federigo's sister. Federigo was indeed killed in a duel by Beatrice's fiancé, Florindo, who then fled to Venice. Beatrice has followed him, hoping to collect her brother's money from Pantalone. Outside the inn, the always-hungry Truffaldino waits in the street fantasizing about food. His master Federigo—who he has no idea is really Beatrice—doesn't feed him nearly enough. Therefore, he decides that the best course would be to find another master to serve as well. Two masters, double the food! At just this moment a man enters, struggling with his luggage: it is Florindo. Truffaldino offers to serve him, and Florindo agrees. The servant Truffaldino now has two masters.

Truffaldino's first job for his masters is to go to the post office for their mail. Unfortunately, Truffaldino can't read, and the letters get mixed up. Florindo reads Beatrice's letter and learns that she's in Venice dressed as a man. Delighted, he runs off to find her. Pantalone arrives with a bag of money, which he hands to Truffaldino for his "master." Truffaldino doesn't know which "master" Pantalone means and mistakenly gives it to Florindo, though it was intended for Federigo. Meanwhile, Clarice begs her father to release her from the engagement to Federigo. The disguised Beatrice arrives and asks to speak with Clarice in private. Once they are alone, Beatrice reveals her true identity. Clarice is greatly relieved and tells her father that she will now consent to marry "Federigo." Unfortunately, Silvio doesn't know the happy news. Enraged at the loss of his love, he attacks Pantalone and accuses Clarice of being faithless. Deeply hurt, Clarice prepares to kill herself. Luckily, her maid Smeraldina arrives just in time to stop her.

At last it's time for lunch. Both Florindo and "Federigo" order their meals at the same time, and Truffaldino finds himself in a jam. Can he keep both masters satisfied while also finding time to stuff his own face? Smeraldina arrives, and Truffaldino, who had previously noticed the pretty maid, declares his love for her. He discovers that she feels the same. More mix-ups lead Beatrice and Florindo to believe that the other one is dead. In despair, they run out of the inn at the same time, ready to take their own lives. But just as they are about to plunge in the knives, they see...each other! They embrace, delirious with joy. Silvio and Clarice are reunited, and even Truffaldino is forgiven for daring to try to serve two masters at once. Oh, happiness, once more!

MADELINE MILLER is the author of *The Song of Achilles*, which was awarded the 2012 Orange Prize for Fiction, and the forthcoming novel, *Circe*. Her non-fiction has appeared in a number of publications including *The Guardian*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Independent*, and NPR.org. She earned her MA in Classics from Brown University and studied dramaturgy at Yale School of Drama, where she was a dramaturg on the Yale Repertory Theatre production of *The Servant of Two Masters*.

# THE PLAY PERSPECTIVES



Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein This page: Orlando Pabotoy, Allen Gilmore, and Liz Wisan. Opposite page, top to bottom: Orlando Pabotoy and Eugene Ma; Liam Craig and Steven Epp; Emily Young and Adina Verson.

*The following quotes are selected perspectives on the plays from notable scholars and artists.*

“I strongly desire that some brilliant Italian mind would undertake to perfect my own work, and thereby return lost honor to our stage with fine Comedies: true Comedies, that is, and not scenes slapped together with neither order nor rule; and I, who to this day may have appeared to some as wanting to act the role of the Teacher, will never feel ashamed to learn something from someone who has the ability to instruct.”

--Carlo Goldoni, *The Comic Theatre* (1753)

“I have a kind of love/hate relationship with Carlo Goldoni. I love that he has given us a historical document of what *commedia* might have been like. But, the original version of *The Servant of Two Masters* was written as a *commedia dell'arte* scenario. The dialogue wasn't written down. It was a series of scenes that mapped out the plot. He gave this scenario to Antonio Sacchi's troupe of *commedia* actors and they improvised and played it for years to great success. When he came back to see it he thought that it was too vulgar, too boisterous. So he took the play away from the actors and wrote it out based on the improvisations that they had created. Then gave it back with all the naughty bits cut out. In this production I have tried to give the play back to the actors by giving them freedom to discover it freshly each night. And... we've put all the naughty bits back.”

--Christopher Bayes, interview in 2011

## THE PLAY PERSPECTIVES

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“Here is an honest and good man who has purified the Italian stage, who conceives with imagination and writes with wisdom. You have delivered your country from the clutches of Harlequin. I would like to call your comedies Italy liberated from the Goths.”

--Voltaire, letter to Goldoni, Sept. 24, 1760

“The *commedia* is not only a study of the grotesque and facetious... but also a portrayal of real characters traced from remote antiquity down to the present day, in an uninterrupted tradition of fantastic humor which is in essence quite serious and, one might almost say, even sad, like every satire which lays bare the spiritual poverty of mankind.”

--George Sand, “Preface” to *Masques et Bouffons* by Maurice Sand (1862)

“The mask is a mysterious and terrible instrument... it brings us to the very threshold of theatrical mystery, demons are reborn through these immutable, immobile, static faces.”

--Giorgio Strehler, *Per un teatro umano* (1974)

“Every country finds its own clown—the phenomenon is international—without circus having given birth to them.... This search for one’s own clown resides in the freedom to be oneself, to accept this truth and use it to make others laugh. There is a child within us, that has grown up within us, and which society forbids us to show; it is more permissible on stage than in everyday life.”

Jacques Lecoq, *Theatre of Movement and Gesture* (1987)

“Goldoni’s method, whereby the undisciplined masked characters were forced into a contradictory relationship with a precisely formulated written text, is the perfect equivalent of Brecht’s move from the individualistic anarchy of expressionism to the epic (and narrative) rigour of the didactic pieces.... When Goldoni takes the traditional features away from the masked figures and grounds them in a corresponding contemporary social reality (making Arlecchino a servant—with the characteristics of a specific social world—rather than some abstract concept of a servant)... so Brecht goes beyond the formal didactic technique of the *Lehrstück*... to wider historical and social realities.”

-- Giorgio Strehler, *Per un teatro umano* (1974)



## THE PLAY PERSPECTIVES

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“When we hear on all sides the dictum that Goldoni is the father of modern Italian comedy, we ought to pause before we give adherence to such a definition. Goldoni has always been given full credit for the final destruction of the ‘*Commedia dell’Arte*,’ but it should be remembered first of all that the ‘*Commedia dell’Arte*’ had been moribund for many years before he appeared on the scenes. . . . We must not look on the kindly Goldoni as a fierce reformer, one with the mysterious, passionate temper of Alfieri. He did not want to hold an ‘*auto da fe*’ of Arlecchino, Columbina, and Pantalone; no one ever dreaded cruelty more than this simple Venetian. He was able by his subtle reforms to bridge the gulf that separated the old drama and the new; that is to say, to make the traditional characters evolve easily and naturally into modern men and women.”

--Walter Starkie, “Carlo Goldoni and the ‘*Commedia dell’Arte*” (1925)

“God knows how long they have been saying that when Goldoni decided to give rounded structure to the scripts, when he reformed theatre and stamped on improvisation, he slammed the lid on the coffin of *Commedia*. Nevertheless, I have a warning: I would go easy before tolling the funeral march. Don’t rush to summon the grave-diggers just yet. I could never bring myself to intone ‘*Commedia* was born in such and such a spot, it took poorly in such another place, recovered a little elsewhere, but finally breathed its last in....’ As far as I am concerned, *Commedia* has never died. I am still aware of its presence, and I know that in saying that I am speaking for a host of theatre people from today, yesterday, and day before yesterday.”

--Dario Fo, *The Tricks of the Trade* (1987)

Below: Steven Epp and Liz Wisan in Theatre for a New Audience’s production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photo by Henry Grossman.



# DIALOGUES CHARACTER AND MASK

HANNAH RAE MONTGOMERY



Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*.  
Above: The Company, photo by Henry Grossman.  
Below right: Liam Craig, photo by Gerry Goodstein

All *commedia* performances incorporate a specific set of stock characters, and almost all of the actors wear masks when they perform. They're more than just a costume piece; the mask represents the *personaggio* (pear-so-NAH-jee-oh, "personality") of each character. The masks are also important guides for the audience, allowing us immediately to identify what stock type each character represents.

## ZANNI (ZAH-nee)

### The comic servants

The zanni are the comic centerpiece of the genre whose bread-and-butter is incompetence. Usually servants, they're a group of characters constantly at the mercy of other characters, often beaten, and always hungry.

In the scenarios, it's normally up to them to resolve not only their own issues but also the problems posed by the *vecchi*. Most of them aren't that smart but must suddenly summon unexpected brilliance to save the day. They never manage to summon the necessary smarts on the first try, and their series of failed attempts to get things right drives the action—

inevitably, their efforts making everything worse, until at the end of the play they finally stumble upon a viable solution. They're unable to perform easy tasks without messing everything up, but in a pinch they pull off the seemingly impossible.



## CHARACTER AND MASKS HANNAH RAE MONTGOMERY

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The zanni can be further divided into three important subtypes:

### FIRST ZANNI

In *The Servant of Two Masters*: BRIGHELLA

The first zanni is often named Brighella which comes from the Italian word *brigare*, meaning “to con.” Indeed, the Brighella character is a schemer, brimming with wit, always trying to trick others. He can be an exception to the rule that zanni are stupid—although, more often than not, his schemes go awry. When he’s not a servant, he may appear as a middle-class businessman, such as the tavern-owner in *The Servant of Two Masters*.

Brighella often wears an olive-green half-mask, arranged in a greedy or lustful expression.

### SECOND ZANNI

In *The Servant of Two Masters*: TRUFFALDINO

The second zanni always bears a name ending in “ino,” commonly Arlecchino, or, for the French, Harlequin. He is a fool, saying the wrong things at the wrong time and misunderstanding simple instructions. The other characters often misinterpret his words and actions. He’s usually set up as a foil (an opposite or rival) of Brighella, or the first zanni, and their conflict creates additional moments of comedy.

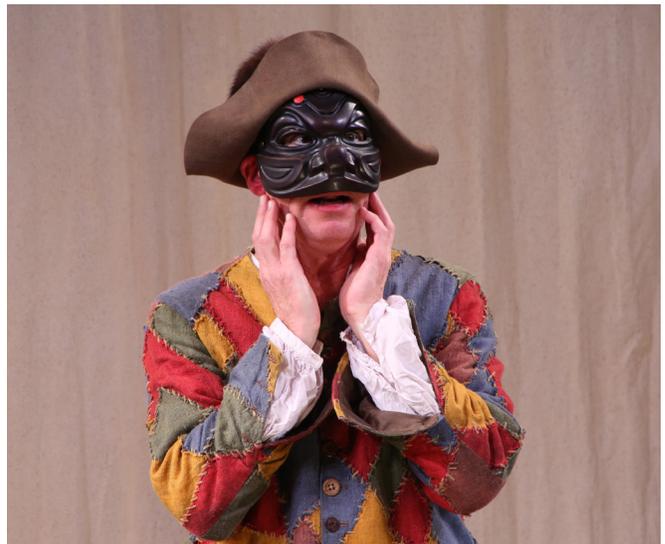
The second zanni mask is a brown half-mask with almond-shaped eyes and a broad snub nose.

### SERVETTA

In *The Servant of Two Masters*: SMERALDINA

A female servant, often the brightest of the bunch of zanni. She might be a little foolish, but she can also be pretty, graceful, and capable of devising the best-laid plans.

The servetta tends to appear without a mask.



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Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein. This page, top to bottom: Liam Craig as Brighella; Steven Epp as Truffaldino; and Emily Young as Smeraldina.

Opposite page, top to bottom: Allen Gilmore as Pantalone; Andy Grotelueschen as Doctor Lombardi.

## CHARACTER AND MASKS HANNAH RAE MONTGOMERY

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### *VECCHI* (VEK-ee)

The old men

#### *PANTALONE*

In *The Servant of Two Masters*: PANTALONE

He's usually a merchant and a money-obsessed miser. He's either the father of one of the young lovers or lusting after the young female lover—sometimes both.

The vecchio (singular of vecchi) is a persecuting figure in the story. He provides the essential conflict by throwing obstacles in the paths of the other characters (for instance, denying the lovers permission to marry), so that they must resort to tricks and cunning to get what they want. He claims he's driven by duty, but it's really just ego. Maybe he wants to keep the young woman for himself, or if she's his daughter, he wants her marriage to benefit him, financially or socially. At the end of the play, he meets his just desserts; stripped of his authority, he's been humbled.

His mask has a long, hawk-like nose, bushy eyebrows, and white hair.



### *IL DOTTORE* (EEL doh-TOR-ay)

In *The Servant of Two Masters*: DOCTOR LOMBARDI

He's talkative and eager to demonstrate his intellectual superiority, and he loves food and festivity—as evidenced by his big belly! He may also be a father to one of the lovers and Patalone's rival. He typically works in an academic profession such as law or philosophy and often misquotes Latin phrases in his attempts to sound smart.

He appears in a quarter-mask boasting a bulbous nose and prominent mustache. His is the only mask that allows much of the actor's face to show—a perfect opportunity for the actor to rouge his cheeks bright pink, hinting at his overindulgent passion for wine.



## CHARACTER AND MASKS HANNAH RAE MONTGOMERY

### *INNAMORATI* (ee-NAHM-more-ah-tee) The young lovers

In *The Servant of Two Masters*: SILVIO & CLARICE  
and FLORINDO & BEATRICE

Of all the commedia characters, they most nearly resemble real people (and therefore are the only characters to consistently not wear masks).

However, they're still comical because their passion for one another catapults them uncontrollably between extreme ecstasy and, when things don't go well, extreme despair.

They're ordinary people whom by some mischance—be it interference by the vecchio, the betrothal of their beloved to someone else, or the death of that cherished lover—has forced into extraordinary circumstances. Overcoming these imposed circumstances becomes a rite of passage into adulthood. They accomplish their goals when they've successfully stood up to the vecchi and assumed control of their destinies.

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*Commedia* archetypes can also be identified by specific *maschemi* (MAH-skay-mee; physical actions/gestures that convey character). For example, Pantalone walks bent in on himself, both because of age and because he's trying to protect his purse. *Il Dottore* strides with back straight and proud, but belly thrust forward, since over consumption of food and drink is one of his defining traits. The *zanni* scurry quickly, nervously, their speeches accompanied by sweeping gestures—for them, everything is urgent. •

HANNAH RAE MONTGOMERY is the resident dramaturg at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Dramaturgy credits at Actors include *4000 Miles*, *Luna Gale*, *At the Vanishing Point*, *The Mountaintop*, *True West*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* in the mainstage season, and the world premieres of *Cardboard Piano*, *Residence*, *That High Lonesome Sound*, *Remix 38*, *Cry Old Kingdom*, *The Delling Shore* and *How We Got On* in the Humana Festival. She has also worked as a dramaturg at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Yale Repertory Theatre and Yale Cabaret. Montgomery holds a B.A. from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama.



Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.  
Top to bottom: Eugene Ma as Silvio and Adina Verson as Clarice; Orlando Pabotoy as Florindo and Liz Wisan as Beatrice; Liam Craig, Allen Gilmore, and Andy Grotelueschen.

# THE PLAYWRIGHT CARLO GOLDONI



Monument to Carlo Goldoni (1883) in Campo San Bortolomio in Venice, by Antonio Dal Zotto (1841-1918) Photo credit: Nino Barbieri, via [Wikimedia Commons](#) [CC BY-SA 2.5].

Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) is one of only a handful of Italian dramatists to achieve international literary acclaim. Born in Venice, he was astonishingly prolific, writing more than 100 comedies, 50 opera-bouffes, and numerous tragedies and tragicomedies for three different Venetian theater troupes. He once saved a theater from bankruptcy by publicly challenging himself to write 16 full-length comedies during the 1750-51 season, twice his contracted number. A week later all the theater's boxes were sold and betting was rampant over whether he would fail. He accomplished the Herculean feat, and several of the resulting plays are now considered among his best. He completed five opera libretti that season as well.

Arguably his most famous play, *The Servant of Two Masters* (*Il Servitore di due Padroni*) has been produced only once before in English in New York City, Off-Off Broadway in the 1970s. Theatre for a New Audience's production is the first major Off-Broadway production in English. *One Man, Two Guvnors*, a modern adaptation, played on Broadway in 2012. Giorgio Strehler (1921-1997), one of the 20th century's greatest theater and opera directors, was principally responsible for raising *Servant's* profile in the modern era. Using the play as a versatile vehicle to explore techniques of *commedia dell'arte*, Brecht and masks, he directed six different productions over four decades, several of which toured internationally. A version titled *Arlecchino, Servant of Two Masters* played in Italian at Lincoln Center in 2005.

Goldoni originally wrote *The Servant of Two Masters* as a commedia scenario for the celebrated actor Antonio Sacchi, whose company performed it—as usual in that tradition—with improvised dialogue based on the scenario. Nearly a decade later, in 1753, Goldoni wrote it out and published it as a finished play, omitting the actor-invented vulgarities that he felt weakened his plot and emphasizing the realistic social situations of the masked characters. This was part of a program of reform the playwright had embarked on to elevate public taste. Goldoni was convinced that commedia, his country's preeminent comic form since the 1580s, had fallen into decadence, debased by egomaniacal stars, stale gags, and gratuitous obscenity, and sought to introduce a new, middle-class comedy of manners that replaced commedia's archetypes, farcical intrigues and masks with realistic characterization and situation. Several other plays he wrote in this spirit, *The Mistress of the Inn* and *The Fan*, have also become repertory staples.

*Servant* is often cherished as a scripted monument to the unscripted *commedia dell'arte*. Yet inspired theater artists over the years, including Strehler and Christopher Bayes, have kept it alive not by treating the text preciously but by remembering its roots in improvisation.

In 1762, Goldoni fled his beloved Venice after a venomous public dispute with rival playwright Carlo Gozzi and others, accepting an invitation to write for a popular company in Paris. He remained there until after the French revolution, dying penniless after the republican government canceled his royal stipend.●

# DIALOGUES FROM THE GREEKS TO GOLDONI

MONICA ACHEN



Above: Mosaic, three comedy masks, 3rd century AD. Archeological Museum of Sousse. Photo credit: Ad Meskens via [Wikimedia Commons](#). [CC BY-SA 3.0].  
Below right: Deocreative New Comedy mask of a slave from the odeon at Hadrian's Villa, 2nd Century AD. Cortile del Belvedere, Vatican Museums. Photo credit: [FollowingHadrian.com](#) [CC BY-SA 3.0].

In the West, comedy has often been regarded as tragedy's down-at-heel cousin, yet it boasts an equally long and illustrious history. As early as the sixth century BCE, mimes could be found in many of the emerging Greek city-states, combining short, often bawdy sketches with juggling and acrobatics. In 487 BCE, the first full-length comic play was performed in Athens, which was then embarking on nearly a century of democratic rule and theatrical innovation. The following decades saw the heyday of Old Comedy, a relentlessly political genre. The playwright Aristophanes was the master of this form. He and his contemporaries tackled contemporary events with barbed satire. Their characters hatch utopian schemes to improve society, while the chorus lambasts politicians and other public figures in the most scurrilous terms.

With the collapse of Athenian democracy at the close of the fifth century BCE, comedy was forced to retreat into the private sphere, focusing on love, money, and family rather than civic debate. This genre is known as New Comedy. Its most important exponent, Menander, wrote plays chronicling the tribulations of young lovers who must defeat greedy parents, lecherous old men, and other unsavory figures in order to marry. The couple's final union holds out the promise of new life and social renewal. After Rome replaced Greece as the dominant

Mediterranean power, the Romans adopted New Comedy for their own stages. Playwrights such as Plautus and Terence borrowed conventions and even entire plots from their Greek forbears.

The Roman Empire disintegrated in 476 AD. During the centuries that followed, Europe splintered into a patchwork of small fiefdoms ruled by squabbling noblemen. Urban centers emptied; literacy rates plummeted. The early Catholic Church attacked theatre for its alleged ties to pagan religious rituals and for portraying behaviors that the Church regarded as frivolous or downright immoral. These combined forces eradicated most theatre from the European continent. However, groups of traveling performers kept the comic heritage alive throughout the medieval period. Like the Greek mimes before them, these troupes offered a mixture of short sketches, acrobatics, and other types of



## DIALOGUES FROM THE GREEKS TO GOLDONI

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entertainment. The *commedia dell'arte* of Italy most likely emerged from this lineage of transient, popular performers. Commedia actors worked in tightly knit troupes that often included several members of the same family. Performing in streets and market squares, these troupes incorporated stock characters and plots derived from New Comedy into actor-centered, improvisatory romps.

As commedia gained ground during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, comic playwriting revived after a nearly a thousand-year hiatus. Shakespeare invented his own comic mode: plays like *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* place the lovers of New Comedy in “green worlds,” pastoral spaces in which social hierarchies are reversed and social codes rewritten. Half a century later, the young Molière encountered commedia performances while touring the French provinces with his own theatre company; a famous commedia troupe took up permanent residence in Paris just as he began writing his mature comedies. Molière

embroiders on the form's standard characters and scenarios, wedding them to his own elegant verse.

In Italy, Gozzi and Goldoni reinvented commedia as a literary genre just when it was dying out as popular, actor-driven performance. While Gozzi strove to preserve commedia's boisterous energy and tradition of improvisation, Goldoni tempered its bawdiness and introduced a more sentimental tone in order to appeal to a growing middle class audience. Goldoni proved the more foresighted of the two: as the eighteenth century progressed, sentimental comedy triumphed over older, less genteel forms. Not until that century's final decades would comedy begin to free itself from the corset of middle class respectability. •

MONICA ACHEN is an independent scholar based in Boston. Her essays have appeared in *Vanguard Performance beyond Left and Right* (University of Michigan Press, 2015) and in *Theater*. Monica has worked as a dramaturg at Yale Repertory Theater and Yale School of Drama and served as a teaching fellow at Yale School of Drama and Yale College. She holds a DFA and MFA from Yale School of Drama.



The company of Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servants of Two Masters*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein

# INTERVIEW CONJURING COMEDY OUT OF TIME

RICHARD McCOY IN CONVERSATION WITH CHRISTOPHER BAYES AND STEVEN EPP



Christopher Bayes and Steven Epp in rehearsals for Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

Following a day's rehearsal, director **Christopher Bayes** and actor **Steven Epp** sat down for a conversation about Goldoni, commedia del arte, and clowning with **Richard McCoy**, chair of Theatre for a New Audience's Council of Scholars.

**RICHARD McCOY** Let's start by talking about *commedia dell'arte*. *Commedia* is profoundly improvisational but it relies on stock characters and conventional plots. And yet the characters' emotional energy is so volatile and strong. They go from flippancy to intense feeling, turning on a dime.

**STEVEN EPP** That's absolutely the key to it. There's no thinking. There's no reflecting and psychological processing. It's like watching a seven-year-old. They're having a tantrum and then something grabs their attention and they're like, "Oh, look at that. That's funny." And being able to have that dexterity with the emotions was...

**CHRISTOPHER BAYES** It's virtuoso.... For me, when I would watch these guys do it, I feel like I'm maybe

watching a virtuosic act. And, as far as I can, I push them into the truth of every moment in a grand theatrical way. So, when it doesn't work – when it becomes artifice – that's when I shy away.

**RICHARD** One example of that for me was when you, Steve, were improvising on your boss telling you to go get some food.

**STEVEN** Right.

**RICHARD** And you say, "With what?" and then you started riffing on having no money and having to beg, and you got so emotional about that. It was so intense.

**STEVEN** It has to be able to go there. It's the sublime and the ridiculous living very closely together and an actor has to be able to navigate that. Because the audience wants it – they want to laugh out loud but then, if you can grab them and suddenly go to this equally felt, hugely reactive shock, it's so surprising and satisfying.

**CHRISTOPHER** Well, that's the key, right? For me, the main trigger for laughter is surprise and there's a lot of different kinds of surprise. There's surprises that

## CONJURING COMEDY OUT OF TIME RICHARD McCOY

are dirty tricks, and there's surprises that are math, and there's surprises that are musical, and then there's the surprise of integrity. And if you can surprise them with a surprise of integrity, and get virtuosic enough to fully own the tragedy of his poverty – not make fun of it like, "Ha, ha, ha, it's so funny that I'm poor. Ha, ha, ha, it's so funny that I'm starving." – but have a moment where, "Okay, we understand his problem." That can surprise and maybe not make us laugh in that moment, but actually embrace what's going on onstage in a deeper way.

**STEVEN** Also because it's coming out of a world that is so insane, and comic, and goofy, and playful, you can almost excuse it. Some people look at it as just goofing around and making it up. And, sometimes, I think audiences find it hard to realize the precision, and the discipline, and the timing that's actually at work if you're doing it well because it just feels loose and alive. It's actually very rigorous.

**CHRISTOPHER** It's like jazz that way.

**STEVEN** Yeah. And, in fact, that moment goes to a

deeper place and becomes subversive because you've created the sense that, "This is going to be a fun, easy evening," and when you suddenly hit something, it's almost more subversive than an intellectual play, because you don't think it's going to go there.

**CHRISTOPHER** Well, that's like Dario Fo.

**STEVEN** Yeah, Dario Fo and I think Richard Pryor or Lenny Bruce.

**CHRISTOPHER** Or George Carlin, who was really rolling through it.

**STEVEN** We're rolling with them, suddenly, bam, it's like –

**CHRISTOPHER** Like Dave Chappelle and Chris Rock are doing it now. Mostly, it's standup that you can feel that.

**RICHARD** So, though I have a lot of respect for Arthur Miller, it's not the hectoring tone of "Attention must be paid." Instead, you go from joking and goofing to suddenly yanking us to attention with the real pathos of this servant theme.



The company of Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein

## CONJURING COMEDY OUT OF TIME RICHARD McCOY

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**CHRISTOPHER** Yeah. You laugh at that and you love it, and all of a sudden you realize there's also the possibility of tragedy there. I think, for us as a company, we know that it can go there – and it doesn't feel like common knowledge because I don't see it very often....

**STEVEN** No, most people think *commedia* is just artifice.

**CHRISTOPHER** It's all dance, and bad jokes...

**STEVEN** It's not that. It has to have a certain integrity and honesty behind it.

**RICHARD** Christopher, you've spoken of your love/hate for Goldoni. Tell us about that. And talk about him, 150, maybe 200 years after *commedia* flourishes, writing a script which is, in some ways, antithetical to the improvisational style of *commedia dell'arte*.

**CHRISTOPHER** Well, he wrote a scenario and gave it to the actors. They play it for eight years and then he came back and took the play from them. He just wrote a series of scenes – it's called a scenario because it's on the back of the scenery like, "Oh, this scene is going to happen now and Florindo reacts." The actors improvised. They made this beautiful play. It was very successful but, later, they got bored.

**STEVEN** And certain actors had their classics that they knew so they might find a way to circle back to *lazzi* where the actor gets confused about a certain thing, or slips on a thing, or there's famous ones like –

**CHRISTOPHER** "The Fly."

**RICHARD** Explain *lazzi*.

**STEVEN** So a *lazzo* is basically a problem, and the character riffs on it. And, usually, in the more acrobatic characters, it involves some physical business that might lead to a great exploit and finishes with, I don't know, a backflip or something that they can do, or just a great sleight of hand. And over the series of shows we've done, we have one that we constantly do. It seems like every show has a wedding, so we do Pachelbel's Canon, and we do it in different ways each show.

**RICHARD** Is it fair to describe it as a routine?

**STEVEN** Probably Americans would think of it as it's a

routine – it's a bit.

**CHRISTOPHER** You can call it a shtick but I think that's a bad word for it – it's a bit, yeah. A little fly moment, where you catch [a fly] in your mouth, and it goes through your stomach, and you fart it out, and then you run, and catch it, and eat it again, and it goes through your stomach, and you fart it out. How do you catch it next time? It's actually super traditional – it's amazingly traditional what we're doing.

**RICHARD** And what's your source for these traditions?

**CHRISTOPHER** Out there.

**RICHARD** Elaborate, explain.

**CHRISTOPHER** The world is our source. What's happening now. What happened last night [at the presidential debate]: "You're a puppet." "No, you're a puppet." That little bully moment – that little immature moment of, "No, you are." "I know you are but what am I?"

**STEVEN** Yeah, that's *commedia* right there.

**CHRISTOPHER** That's totally *commedia*. But what are we going to see on the stage? By the time we get there, that moment's going to be gone, probably.

**RICHARD** What about some of the stock features of these routines?

**CHRISTOPHER** Nobody knows what those are – they weren't recorded.

**RICHARD** They weren't recorded?

**STEVEN** Some are written down...

**CHRISTOPHER** Arlecchino chases the fly and –

**STEVEN** And he swallows it and he burps it out. Well, depending on the actor, that could have been two minutes or it might have been twenty minutes.

**CHRISTOPHER** There's really no way to document this stuff other than vaguely describe it.

**STEVEN** For Americans, the closest thing may be the Marx Brothers... there's this famous story, when they first did either *Animal Crackers* or *The*

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*Cocoanuts*. George S. Kaufman wrote it for them – they were already pretty established as a vaudeville group of comedians and they had all their shtick and they were pretty defined between Groucho, and Harpo, and Chico. And so Kaufman wrote this show for them and they took it out and toured it all over the U.S. before bringing it to New York. And, supposedly, when they got back to New York, Kaufman went to see it again and there were no lines left in the show that he had written. They had just slowly added, and changed, and cut – which is exactly what happened with *Servant of Two Masters*. It's also basically what we've done with Connie [Congdon's] translation of the play.

**CHRISTOPHER** With her blessing.

**STEVEN** With her blessing. She's loved it. She would come, especially at Yale, and she'd just sit there and laugh and go, "Yeah, do more of that." But it's the same muscle and the same principle.

**CHRISTOPHER** And the Marx Brothers never studied commedia – they weren't intellectuals, they just knew what works. And, if you look at *The Simpsons*, the guys who write *The Simpsons* never studied commedia but it's total commedia.

But to get back to your question about my love/hate for Goldoni, as a person who started my career as an actor, I want to see this company take ownership of the material. Goldoni undercut that because he was a bit of a prude. He cut parts he thought were vulgar and felt, "This is my script now." He basically stole it from the actors, and it offends me that some take his script as the cornerstone of *commedia dell'arte*.

**STEVEN** It's inaccurate.

**RICHARD** So do you see yourself restoring it to the actors?

**CHRISTOPHER** I'm trying to give it back to them. As a person who began as an actor, I think I direct and work from the heart of actor.



Steven Epp and Allen Gilmore in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein

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**STEVEN** It makes all the difference.

**CHRISTOPHER** It's not intellectual – it's an emotional and theatrical muscle that I have. It's not abstract in any way. And we know each other well enough to trust, "Maybe this, maybe that." What we're doing now – which is amazing, which I love – is we're putting stuff in the show now that we know we're going to cut. We know very well it's going to get cut, but it makes us happy in the room.

**STEVEN** Which is very important in the process.

**CHRISTOPHER** So we don't get bored – we stay cooking.

**RICHARD** It sounds a little anarchic which I think is consistent with the spirit of comedy.

**CHRISTOPHER** Well, it's the spirit of play. If you play one game too much, you're going to get bored. My kids played Pokémon Go every day for two weeks until they were "So done with that game." It's dead now because the game didn't change. A game has got to change in order to keep you interested. And I think it's actually an unconscious choice that we make in that room. Sometimes, I just yell at them... I just yell at Eugene [Ma] for no reason – "Eugene, you missed your cue!" – just screaming, and it freaks him out for a second, and then maybe he's better or maybe it throws him. I don't care because it brings life to the room. And, to keep the creativity alive and in motion, it's not completely up to me – but, as the pirate in charge, I want to encourage that behavior for the other people in the room.



There's also always the possibility of a deep disaster. Someone says something that they don't get a laugh out of – they just throw it out there – and then we respond to the fact that it doesn't work, but it makes everybody more awake.

**RICHARD** Back to the servant, Truffaldino... Christopher, you've described *commedia* as the theater of the downtrodden.

**CHRISTOPHER** Yeah. It's a theater of status but we root for the little guy. We don't root for the old rich bastard.

**RICHARD** Right. But still, Truffaldino does his share of walking on others' backs – the two porters, for example. And he's not above exploiting others.

**STEVEN** Yeah, it's a dog eat dog world. And as dumb as he is, he's super smart in a really dumb way.

**RICHARD** Well, that's my next question: that combination of stupidity and savvy... how do you pull that off?

**STEVEN** It's essential to that character, the same way that Beatrice and Florindo have to live in the grand passion. Like, for Florindo, it's all that stuff where the heart just cracks open – but then, oh, he's going to kill you. It's the person who will kill and who's in love – killing and loving are right next to each other. For Truffaldino, it's survival, but he's completely naïve and he has to be really savvy. And I think, in all the *commedia* characters, there's usually two essential things that are antithetical to each other but live right

This page, top to bottom: Steven Epp; Christopher Bayes and Eugene Ma in rehearsal. Opposite page, top to bottom: Steven Epp and Allen Gilmore; Orlando Pabotoy and Steven Epp; Steven Epp in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

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next to each other. It's that navigating between those, just like [you're] navigating between the immediacy of the emotions, going from completely devastated to, "Oh, that's joyous."

**CHRISTOPHER** Arlecchino's a deeply tricky part because he's not a smart person but he thinks he's smart. He thinks he's very clever – oh my god, he thinks he's got a way to figure this out – but he's not so smart about it. He keeps getting in trouble, so then



he has to solve a problem...

[John Cleese does a beautiful thing on YouTube](#) about it. I say this to my students all the time – no one who is really stupid thinks they're stupid. So Arlecchino – Truffaldino in this play – has to be a stupid guy who thinks he's smart.

The young lovers have to have a complete hormonal freak out which accentuates how excruciating it is to be that age and to be in love. If you remember, that was the most excruciating time of your life – it's nuts. You have to dive in so deeply and authentically and come out playful.

**RICHARD** Another moment of surprising authenticity is Dottore's operatic aria about lost honor. Suddenly, I thought, "Oh, lost honor really does count in this play." I would not want to be on the receiving end of that aria. It's a real take-down of Pantalone, and it has enormous power.

**CHRISTOPHER** It's also funny because Pantalone only cares about about money, but if you lose your honor and reputation, nobody wants to do business with you.

**RICHARD** You mentioned Arlecchino. At a couple of points in the play Truffaldino is asked, "Are you Satan?" and, of course, Arlecchino was –

**CHRISTOPHER** I see where you're going.

**RICHARD** – a Vice character and a devil.

**CHRISTOPHER** Yeah, Dante even puts Arlecchino in hell in his *Inferno*

**RICHARD** So, in addition to being stupid and savvy, Arlecchino can be a bad guy. Steve, do you think Truffaldino is a bad guy?

**STEVEN** No. He's not a bad guy.... He's naughty.

**RICHARD** Naughty? Okay. Fair enough.

**STEVEN** That's why he's a little devil. He's not in the way a kid is not. There's a part of him that's very child-like.

**CHRISTOPHER** Like my 11-year old son... as soon as he goes to bed, he hides his little phone so he can watch

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This page, top and bottom: Steven Epp and Emily Young in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*.  
Opposite page: Andy Grotelueschen and Allen Gilmore in rehearsal. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

Netflix at night with it. It's a guilty pleasure, like candy.

**STEVEN** It's that energy of a little kid who's going to see if they can get away with certain things. Truffaldino's trying to eat – or he's trying to get some money so he can eat – and so he's going to do whatever he needs to do and, if that means sneaking around –

**CHRISTOPHER** And lying.

**STEVE** – and tricking, he's going to do that. It's not evil or malicious in any way. He's just naughty.

**RICHARD** Fair enough, I'm just thinking about that link to the Vice figure of medieval comedy and being a little devil.

**CHRISTOPHER** It also comes from all the pagan festivals – clowns come from that.

**STEVEN** They're the ones with the fork and they're poking you in the ass. Right? They sit behind the pompous mayor or the politician, and make the fart sound.

**CHRISTOPHER** He's sort of Bart Simpson.

**STEVEN** I feel like he's a mix of Harpo and Groucho in a certain way. Groucho's super smart but --

**CHRISTOPHER** He lies like crazy.

**STEVEN** He lies, and he's dumb... he screws everything up. So I think there are some elements of each in Truffaldino.

**CHRISTOPHER** But it comes, you're absolutely right, from Dante. In the same way that "clown" comes from clod, or clump, or drunk.

**RICHARD** There's a wonderful quote from St. John Chrysostom, an anti-theatrical church father, cited in Harry Levin's book on comedy, *Playboys and Killjoys*: "The clown is he who gets slapped." So, in the literal sense, he's the butt of the joke.

**CHRISTOPHER** Oh, nicely done, sir. Scholarly.

**RICHARD** He is also the one who bares his ass and, thereby, affronts all us respectable folks in the audience. One of my takeaways from a clown workshop that I took with Zack Fine and Andy Grotelueschen after working with them on *Two Gentlemen of Verona* here at TFANA –

**CHRISTOPHER** You are very brave, sir. Very brave.

**RICHARD** Because of my interest in Shakespeare's clowns, I signed up for that, and one of my big takeaways was that it's very embarrassing to be the clown.

**CHRISTOPHER** And to not be funny is worse.

**RICHARD** Yeah, and then the challenge of being funny. But, however embarrassing, the clown must also be shameless.

**STEVEN** Yeah, we talk about that a lot – a big part of the learning curve or entry into the whole world of comedy is you have to be willing to completely humiliate yourself, make an ass of yourself which is also probably, on some level, connected to showing your ass. And that's embarrassing and, if they don't laugh, you're exposed in the most horrible way and shamed. Those things live really close together in



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rehearsals as a collective endeavor that builds *esprit de corps*?

**CHRISTOPHER** That's why we call ourselves "The Lopsided Caravan" – because we're in a caravan together and we're misfit toys.

**RICHARD** So, Steve, what got you started on acting and clowning?

**STEVEN** Since I was a little kid, I wanted to be an actor. I didn't grow up in a place where there was theatre available, really, so, my earliest formative influence was probably *I Love Lucy* – reruns of *I Love Lucy* were on at some point in the afternoon or something. That's what I remember as a little kid... I think I basically wanted to be Lucille Ball. Every show was built around *lazzi* where something went wrong – Lucy screwed up, made a mess, got into big trouble – leading into comic mayhem, and craziness, and some brilliant physical comedic exploits and some funny lines. And then Ricky forgave her and everybody was happy. It's like however long those things were – maybe 27 minutes – it was like a 27-minute commedia scenario.

I was a theater major in college and started working right out of college with this theater that Chris and I started together, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, in Minneapolis. The foundation of that company was a French School, the Jacques Lecoq School. Lecoq in turn worked closely with Giorgio Strehler who worked with the famous Compagnie de Masques and founded the Piccolo Teatro, and Strehler in turn worked with Dario Fo [See pg. 4, "Perspectives"]. So they were all connected and the people we started with came out of these approaches, and we are its descendants.

**CHRISTOPHER** I think we're a part of that legacy.

**RICHARD** Who were the luminaries of that legacy?

**STEVEN** Jacques Lecoq. I think Lecoq was a good colleague, to some degree, of Dario Fo – who just died last week – and Strehler. They were doing research. They were trying to go back, basically, and say, "How did it work?" They went back and said, "We need to research and remember, and try to reinvestigate all the traditional forms," what they called the root forms of theater: *commedia*, clown, working with masks,

the Greek tragedy . . . and eventually they did work on farce, they did work the medieval tradition where the devil makes fun of the church on All Fool's Day, turning everything upside down.

**CHRISTOPHER** *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is a version of this – where prostitutes dress up as priests and the priests dress up as prostitutes and you crown the most deformed person in the city to be the mayor. And ultimately, its origins are pagan.

**STEVEN** And ancient. That goes back to the Greeks and the Romans. All that stuff never stopped, it just went –

**CHRISTOPHER** It just became Halloween. It became Christmas.

**RICHARD** What about the gender politics of this play? There are very strong women. And one of the scandals of commedia was that women performed.

**CHRISTOPHER** Yeah. It was the first form that allowed women to be onstage.

**RICHARD** So you've got these very strong women and I just want to list them. You have Beatrice, of course, who is an expert horsewoman, she cross-dresses, she defeats Silvio in swordplay. Clarice resists her father and she's angry at Silvio. She will not give up too easily. And then Smeraldina gives that wonderful speech about the double standard.

**CHRISTOPHER** Yeah, and that's the original. It's not rewritten.

**RICHARD** So what do you think? Is this another vindication of the underdog, this time along gender rather than class lines?

**CHRISTOPHER** In this production? Generally, yeah. We're good guys. We have strong women in our lives that we want to celebrate.

**STEVEN** I think, in the *commedia* world, they were traveling together – they ate together, they cooked together, they set up the set, they took it down, they put it in a wagon, they drank after the show, and they all bonked each other, and they got up, and did the same thing the next day. I'm sure it was volatile but, if you look at Dario Fo and Franca Rame, his wife, they were a volatile couple

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but she was equal – she was amazingly powerful in their company. Their company was really the two of them. But more people ended up knowing Dario Fo.

**CHRISTOPHER** Because he wrote things down. He was published.

**STEVEN** But, really, they were an equal couple and I think their company functioned a lot like many *commedia* troupes with very strong women in those companies. It's the same in Moliere – Madeleine [Béjart] actually ran the company – it was her company – and Moliere started to write stuff down and so his name emerged, but she was probably calling the shots.

**CHRISTOPHER** One of the most famous *commedia* companies was run by a woman named Isabella Andreini, and she was feted in salons all over Europe as an intellectual, as the head of this company, and she played all these parts – probably most of the Beatrice parts. So, yeah, there's a huge feminist muscle that goes way back.

Top to bottom: Liz Wisan and Liam Craig; Adina Verson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.



**STEVEN** These troupes were more like a family than a hierarchy headed by an intellectual playwright, parsing out his moral wisdom to the peon actors.

**CHRISTOPHER** It wasn't that at all.

**RICHARD** This comes back to the question that I posed at the start: your ambivalent feelings about Goldoni as someone who's writing down and trying to contain improvisation. And the written script versus the live performance, the page versus the stage... there is a way in which the written script has the last word because it's down there on the page.

**CHRISTOPHER** Right. And a springboard for us as a document.

**RICHARD** But to make that word flesh, you've got to have performance.

**CHRISTOPHER** Yes, it was written to be performed. It wasn't written to be read. When you look at Dario Fo, you look at his work: "Eh." When you look at the work of [16th century writer] Angelo Beolco who wrote under the stage name of Ruzzante, the same. It's not a literary document – it's a performative, live document. That would be, I think, the case for Shakespeare and Moliere, both actor-authors.

**STEVEN** Each only did what he did because he was working with a company. And they probably changed it from night to night. There are certain plays that are closer to the spirit of *commedia* than others.

**CHRISTOPHER** Well, they wrote in verse...

**STEVEN** Yeah, but even in those, having done a lot of them, I feel that, when you live inside those plays, you can feel that improvisatory muscle that they all had behind it. I feel the same thing when I do Shakespeare. You can tell this was not a playwright writing in a little room somewhere, writing a play and then handing it down from on high to the actors...

**CHRISTOPHER** Right. I was in a production of, I think it was, *Richard II*, and the challenge that opens the play required both actors to throw down a "gage," which is usually a glove, but one forgot his glove. So instead of saying, "Pale trembling coward there I throw my gage," he said, "I declare my rage," improvising in iambic pentameter.

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**RICHARD** What about potential tragic undertones in *The Servant of Two Masters*? At the beginning of the play, the whole troupe sings about banishing melancholy, but this play is like a farcical version of *Romeo and Juliet* with lovers dying and threatening suicide; tragic possibilities are not all that far beneath the surface. Do you think they are completely banished or do you think they somehow seep in?

**STEVEN** I think, over the years of doing this show, one of the most consistent responses that we would get is people saying, "I forgot what it felt like to laugh that hard. I forgot that I needed to laugh but I was crying at the end or at this moment. And I never would have expected that." There's some way that you laugh so much, and then there are points where the show just hits you and you're crying. Or you're crying and you're brought to that by a different means than you're used to. We're used to, "Oh, we're going to see a comedy and it's funny. And we laugh and then we try and remember where we parked the car." And I think, with this, they lose themselves in a world that delights them and they laugh and laugh, but it's also somehow unexpectedly moving.

**CHRISTOPHER** In the work that I do with my students, one of the first things we do is a big laughing exercise, where they laugh at each other as much they can because it's contagious. Right? But the thing that gets in the way of their ability to laugh, every single time, is their fear of crying. Every single time someone has a problem with laughing, it's because they're scared of crying. They're scared of falling apart so they're holding it together. It's the same muscle that makes that sound – exact same muscle, in the diaphragm –

**STEVEN** That's why comedy and tragedy are linked right there.

**CHRISTOPHER** So as soon as we allow laughing at that level, it's easy to have a beautiful little cry about something poetic.

**RICHARD** Two more questions.

**CHRISTOPHER** Oh god.

**RICHARD** The first one goes back to the artifice of this theater and, to use a more pretentious term, the metatheatricality of it.

**CHRISTOPHER** That's a good one. I like that better than "artifice." I like the metatheatrical.

**RICHARD** I'm thinking of Truffaldino's continual

breach of the fourth wall with his direct addresses to the audience. "When will this play start?" "When is the play going to end?" "When can I have a pee break?"

**STEVEN** Truffaldino has the most access to the audience. Other people do but it's mostly the mask characters who do. Pantalone does.

**CHRISTOPHER** But the audience is Truffaldino's friend.

**STEVEN** They're on his side, yeah.

**RICHARD** And what does that do to the willing suspension of disbelief?

**CHRISTOPHER** It doesn't exist, does it?

**RICHARD** You don't think so?

**CHRISTOPHER** I don't want anything to do with it. I don't like it.

**STEVEN** The way the show begins is these two old Italian guys in this pub coming in and basically discovering this old dilapidated theater and then they accidentally hit the switch, and the electricity goes out, and, basically – through a very magical and incredibly beautiful theatrical moment – we go back to this sweet, charming little set and this little moment in which this play can happen.

**CHRISTOPHER** We conjure it out of time.

**RICHARD** My last question: do you want to riff for a while about the music? The music is just beautiful.

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This page: Aaron Halva and Chris Curtis in rehearsal.  
Opposite page: Steven Epp and Emily Young in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.



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**STEVEN** Aaron Halva has been with Chris as a composer-musician going back 18 years.

**CHRISTOPHER** A little over 20, probably.

**STEVEN** Yeah. And all the shows we've done now, in these last six years or whatever, Aaron's done the music to all of them. He's both composing and then playing the shows every night in performance, which is amazing and huge what he does over there. And Chris Curtis, the violist, he and Aaron go way, way, way back, also, so there's just so much history and shared experience. And he is in rehearsal from Day 1 which is almost unheard of, but it's essential because there are beautiful pieces that are composed on the spot, coming out of a moment when we're in early rehearsal and Chris will go, "Can we put something on this and soundtrack this? And then maybe we should sing." So it's built organically out of rehearsal. It's not like, before we go into rehearsal, he says, "I want five numbers and could you write them and bring them in?" It's built out of and on the actors –

**CHRISTOPHER** The amazing thing about both Aaron and Chris is that they don't follow and they don't lead – they play together with the actors.

**STEVEN** To have that trust relationship together onstage – it's so rare to be able to find that and it just takes time.

**RICHARD** Well, it's been a privilege to watch the rehearsals because I get to see the moving parts. I know the final performance will make it all look easy but –

**CHRISTOPHER** I hope not. I hope that it looks like we're having a really interesting, super-fun game, and it doesn't look easy. I don't want it to look easy. I want it to look like bliss and it takes work to make bliss. Do you know what I mean?

**STEVEN** The last time we did this show, the last run was in Seattle. We were probably moving into our 300th performance or whatever. We'd done six cities in over three years and, in the meantime, we'd done other shows together; in every other city, we knew it was probably going to go somewhere else. But when we closed the show in Seattle, we thought we were done. Nobody else was interested. There were no other potential gigs. We were going to close it and then go to Yale and start work



on [*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*], so we knew we were moving to this other exciting, great new project but we were like, "This is probably it."

We had all been together for so long doing this show. We got to the last performance and we moved into that last part of the show when Beatrice is finally in her dress. She's moving in front of Florindo and they sing the big song, "We're getting married." People started to cry onstage as we were doing it. Seriously, everybody was openly weeping through the entire end of the show. We kept doing the show – we knew it so well, we just kept delivering the lines, there were huge laughs – but people were just openly weeping onstage because we knew it was coming to an end. And I think that speaks to the history that we have together with it, the life of it, the sweet open beauty of doing that together onstage. People weren't just there hitting their cues and delivering their job – they were living their emotions. It's the purity and power *commedia* has – it was amazing. And I loved when Truffaldino just yelled at everybody, "Just get your shit together. We have to finish the show." •

*This interview has been edited and condensed.*

RICHARD C. McCOY is the chair of Theatre for a New Audience's Council of Scholars, and a Distinguished Professor of English at Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. He is the author of four books – *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia* (Rutgers, 1979), *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (California, 1989), *Alterations of State: Sacred Kingship in the English Reformation* (Columbia, 2002), and *Faith In Shakespeare* (Oxford, 2014) – as well as many articles on Shakespeare's plays. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Council for Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and The Huntington Library. He has also served as a speaker and consultant for Shakespeare performances for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Canada's Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Classic Stage Company, Target Margin, The Public Theater, and The Shakespeare Society.

# THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

LIAM CRAIG (*Brighella*) was last seen at TFANA in *The Killer*. Broadway: *Boeing Boeing* (u/s, appeared). Off-Broadway: *The Internationalist* (Vineyard Theatre), *Aunt Dan and Lemon* (New Group), *Two Noble Kinsmen* (Public Theater), *Juno and the Paycock* (Roundabout). Regional: *The Tempest*, *The Government Inspector* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *The Servant of Two Masters* (Yale Rep); *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* (Berkeley Rep). TV: “Mozart in the Jungle,” “Unforgettable,” “Law & Order: SVU.” Film: *The Royal Tenenbaums*. MFA: NYU.



AIDAN EASTWOOD (*Waiter*) is excited to be making his Theatre for a New Audience debut. Favorite roles include Orin in *Little Shop of Horrors* and Cassio in *Othello* at Playhouse on Park; Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* with The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey; and the title role in *Hamlet* and Iago in *Othello* with Mainstage Shakespeare. Aidan has a BFA from NYU.

STEVEN EPP (*Truffaldino*) was an actor, writer, director, and Co-Artistic Director at Theatre de la Jeune Lune (1983-2008), winner of the 2005 Tony Award for Best Regional Theatre. Steven is currently the co-Artistic Director of The Moving Company based in Minneapolis. Acting credits: title roles in *Tartuffe*, *Crusoe*, *Hamlet*, *Gulliver*, *Figaro*, *The Miser*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, and *Ruzante*. Regional: Guthrie, La Jolla, Berkeley Rep, Trinity Rep, Spoleto Festival, ART, Alley, Intiman, CenterStage, The Shakespeare Theatre, PlayMakers, Seattle Rep, South Coast Rep, Yale Rep, New Victory, and TFANA. Co-Author or Adaptor of *Children of Paradise*, *Fissures*, Moliere's *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*, Goldoni's *Il Campiello*, *Massoud*, *The Lion of Panjshir*, *The House Can't Stand*, *Come Hell and High Water*. 1999 Fox Fellow. 2009 McKnight Playwrights Center Theatre Artist Fello. Beinecke Fellow. Numerous acting awards including Helen Hayes Award, Best Actor. He lives in Minneapolis with his wife and has three children.

ALLEN GILMORE (*Pantalone*) is delighted to make his TFANA debut in *The Servant of Two Masters* with his buddies in the cast. He recently performed as “Old Emile” in the world premiere of *Man in the Ring* by Michael Cristofer at Court Theater in Chicago. He has played “Pantalone” with this troupe at Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, The Shakespeare Theater in D.C., Yale Rep in New Haven, Berkeley Rep, ArtsEmerson in Boston, and Seattle Rep.



ANDY GROTELUESCHEN (*Dottore*). TFANA: Fiasco Theater's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (St. Clair Bayfield Award) and *Cymbeline*; Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* (dir. Arin Arbus). With dir. Christopher Bayes: *The Servant of Two Masters* (Yale Rep/Shakespeare Theatre), *The Molière Impromptu* (Trinity Rep), and *Clowns* (The Glass Contraption). Broadway: *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Off-Broadway: *Into the Woods* (Fiasco/Roundabout, Lucille Lortel nom.), *The Odyssey* (The Public Word, dir. Lear deBessonet), *Measure for Measure* (Fiasco/New Victory). Film: *Coin Heist* (Netflix), *Geezer*, *Still on the Road* (PBS). TV: “Elementary,” “The Good Wife,” “The Knick.” Brown/Trinity MFA, and Fiasco Theater company member.

Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. This page, top to bottom: Andy Grotelueschen, photo by Henry Grossman; Orlando Pabotoy, photo by Gerry Goodstein. Opposite page, top to bottom: Eugene Ma; Liz Wisan. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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EUGENE MA (*Silvio*). TFANA debut. New York: La Mama, P.S. 122, Joe's Pub at The Public, JACK, the Ontological-Hysteric and the Ohio Theatre. Regional: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, Yale Rep, Seattle Rep, Wallis Annenberg Center (with directors Mary Zimmerman, Christopher Bayes, and Stan Lai). Composing: Yale School of Drama, Joe's Pub, Urban Stages. A certified teacher of Clown and *Commedia dell'Arte*, Eugene completed his apprenticeship with Christopher Bayes at Yale and Juilliard. Eugene is currently a Resident Director at the Flea Theatre and holds a Drama Desk nomination. AEA. BFA: NYU. [www.playwitheugene.com](http://www.playwitheugene.com)



ORLANDO PABOTOY (*Florindo*). TFANA debut. New York: The Public, New York Theater Workshop, The Met Opera, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Imua! Theatre Company, Lake Lucille, The Flying Machine Company, Division 13. Roles include Aufidius in *Coriolanus*; Puck, Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Azdak in *Caucasian Chalk Circle*; Petruchio, Grumio in *The Taming of the Shrew*; Prospero, Antonio, Stephano in *The Tempest*; Captain Jamy, French Lord in *Henry V*; Magno in *The Romance of Magno Rubio*; Genet in *Jean Genet*; and the Fool in *King Lear*. TV/Film: "Strangers with Candy" (Comedy Central), "JAG" (CBS), In the Weeds (Independent Feature), Blue Hour, "The Beat" (WB), and "Whoopi" (NBC). Regional/International: Old Globe, Yale Rep, and in Jedermann at the Salzburg Festival. Awards: Fox Fellow, John Houseman, OBIE. Graduate of Juilliard Drama Division.

SAM URDANG (*Waiter*) is from Boulder, Colorado. He attended the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University where he received his BFA in acting. He trained and worked at Shakespeare's Globe in London as a student and assistant voice and dialect coach. He has been juggling for 11 years.

ADINA VERSON (*Clarice*). Theatre credits include *Indecent* (Vineyard, Yale Rep, La Jolla), *peerless* (Barrington Stage Co.), *As You Like It* (STC, DC), Christopher Bayes's *The Servant of Two Masters* (Guthrie, Seattle Rep, ArtsEmerson), *The Winter's Tale* (Yale Rep), *4000 Miles* (Cincinnati Playhouse), and *Machine Makes Man* (Amsterdam Fringe, Best Int'l Performance; National Arts Festival of South Africa, Cape Town Fringe), which she co-created with Michael McQuilken. TV: Miriam Setrakian on "The Strain" (FX). MFA: Yale School of Drama.



LIZ WISAN (*Beatrice*) performed as Beatrice and Smeraldina in Christopher Bayes's *The Servant of Two Masters* at Yale Rep, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, Seattle Rep, and ArtsEmerson. NY credits include: *These Paper Bullets!* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Other Desert Cities* (Broadway and LCT), *The Tempest* (La Mama). Regional: *These Paper Bullets!* and *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Yale Rep), *Baskerville* (The Old Globe), *Absurd Person Singular* (Two River Theater), *Intelligent Homosexual's Guide...* (Berkeley Rep). TV/Film: "Elementary," Ready or Knot, and Bitches. MFA from Yale School of Drama. Member of New Neighborhood and The Actors Center. [www.lizwisan.com](http://www.lizwisan.com)

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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EMILY YOUNG (*Smeraldina*) is thrilled to be working at TFANA again with *The Servant of Two Masters*. She is an original company member of Fiasco Theater. Broadway: *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. Off-Broadway with Fiasco: *Into The Woods*, Menier Chocolate Factory in London, Roundabout (Lortel nom.); *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, TFANA; *Measure for Measure*, New Vic; *Cymbeline*, TFANA/Barrow Street. Other Off-Broadway: *Romeo and Juliet*, Theater Breaking Through Barriers; *Colorado*, Summer Play Festival '04. Regional: McCarter, Old Globe, Folger (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Helen Hayes nom.), Long Wharf, NC Shakespeare, Illinois Shakespeare, Trinity Rep, Edinburgh Fringe, Kennedy Center Millennium Stage. Workshops and Labs: Sundance Theater Lab, NY Stage & Film. Film/TV: Cinemax's *The Knick*, dir. Stephen Soderbergh; *God of Love* (Academy Award for Best Live Action Short); *Manhattan Melody* (Telluride); *Natives* (SXSW). Training: M.F.A. Brown/Trinity; B.A. Brown University.



AARON HALVA (Composer/Music Director). New York: Paula Vogel's *Indecent* (Vineyard Theatre). Yale Rep: Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, Molière's *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters*. Regional credits include: *The Servant of Two Masters* (Guthrie Theater, ArtsEmerson, Shakespeare Theatre Company, and Seattle Rep), *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* (Intiman Theatre, Berkeley Rep), and *The Molière Impromptu* (Trinity Rep). International: *Ballywoonde* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival). Film: *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*, as leader and arranger of Cuban music. Awards: 2016 Connecticut Critics' Circle for Musical Direction and Composition.

CHRISTOPHER CURTIS (Composer/Musician). New York composition credits: *Red Noses* by Peter Barnes, *Four by Feydeau*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *The Molière One Acts*, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, and *The Love of Three Oranges* (The Juilliard School); *Zibaldoni*, *The Reluctant Love Doctor*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *The New Place*, *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!* (NYU Tisch, Grad Acting). Regional credits: *The Birds* (Yale Rep); *Servant of Two Masters* (Yale Rep, Shakespeare Theater, D.C.); *The Molière Impromptu* (Trinity Repertory Theatre). Film credits include original scores for *Facing North* and *To the Other Side*, directed by Drew Bracken. He plays viola and guitar in the band Quiet Lights.



CHRISTOPHER BAYES (Director) began his theater career with the Tony Award-winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune where he worked for five years as an actor, director, composer, designer and artistic associate. In 1989 he joined the acting company of the Guthrie Theater where he appeared in over twenty productions, including his one-man show *This Ridiculous Dreaming* based on Heinrich Boll's novel *The Clown*. He has directed at Juilliard, NYU Graduate Acting Program, HERE, Dixon Place, The Flea, the New York International Clown Festival, The Public, Yale Rep, Shakespeare Theater, Guthrie, Arts-Emerson, Seattle Rep, Intiman, Berkeley Rep, Court Theater, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and Trinity Rep. He was part of the creative team for the Broadway and National Tour of *THE 39 STEPS* for which he created Movement/Choreography and

Rehearsals for Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein. This page, top to bottom: Christopher Bayes; Liz Wisan and Allen Gilmore. Opposite page, top to bottom: Adina Verson; Orlando Pabotoy.

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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served as Movement Director. He also created the Movement/Choreography for John Guare's *Three Kinds of Exile* (Atlantic). He is a 1999/2000 Fox Fellow. He has taught workshops internationally at The Beijing Center, Cirque Du Soliel, Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Big Apple Circus. He has served on the faculty of Juilliard, Actor's Center (founding faculty & Master Teacher of physical comedy/clown), the Public's Shakespeare Lab, the Academy of Classical Acting, NYU Graduate Acting Program, and Director of Movement and Physical Theater at the Brown/Trinity Consortium. He is currently Professor and Head of Physical Acting at the Yale School of Drama.



KATHERINE AKIKO DAY (Scenic Designer). Film: Assistant Art Director for *The Breaks*, *The Deuce*, *Rebel in the Rye*, *Gotham*, *Limitless*, *The Mysteries of Laura*, *Public Morals*, *The Normal Heart*, *Annie*, and *Smash*, and Art Director for *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. Regional Theatre: Yale Baroque Opera, *The Servant of Two Masters* (Yale Rep, Shakespeare Theatre Co. in DC, and tour). New York: *Commedia Dell'Artichoke*, *Walled-In*, the Movement Workshop Group. B.A. Dartmouth College, M.F.A. Yale University.

VALÉRIE THÉRÈSE BART (Costume Designer). Selected credits: *Twelfth Night* and *What You Will* (Bedlam, Central Square Theatre); *Tina Packer's Women Of Will* (costumes/sets); *Macbeth* (Acting Company); *Bones In The Basket* (Araca Project); *The Servant Of Two Masters* (Seattle Rep, Guthrie, ArtsEmerson, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Yale Rep); *She, After* (costumes/sets, Urban Arias); *Volleygirls* (NYMF); *The Drowsy Chaperone* (New London Barn Playhouse); *Die Fledermaus* (NYU Steinhardt); *Goodbye New York*, *Goodbye Heart* (sets, Here Arts Center); *Pop!* (sets, Yale Rep). M.F.A. Yale School of Drama. [valeriebart.com](http://valeriebart.com)

CHUAN-CHI CHAN (Lighting Designer) is originally from Taiwan. Miss Chan was nominated for the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lighting Design, Resident Production. Selected design credits include: *The Servant of Two Masters* (Seattle Rep, ArtsEmerson, Guthrie Theater, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Yale Rep); *August: Osage County* (Greenray Theatre Company, Taipei, Taiwan); *God of Carnage* (Shanghai Dramatic Art Center, China); *Xanadu*, *Peter Pan*, *Les Misérables* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre, 2015 Nutmeg Summer Series). Please visit designer's website: [www.chaunchichan.com](http://www.chaunchichan.com)



CHARLERS COES (Co-Sound Designer) has designed shows at Yale Rep, Seattle Rep, Berkeley Rep, The Old Globe, Guthrie Theater, Shakespeare Theatre Company, ArtsEmerson, Wilma Theatre, Two River Theater, South Coast Rep, North Shore Music Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Ford's Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Roundabout Theater Company, the Huntington. Tour: Phoenix Entertainment, NETWorks and The Acting Company. He has also designed aerial, robotic and aquatic spectacles for Royal Caribbean; an immersive show, *Queen of the Night*, at the Diamond Horseshoe; *Puppet UP!* at the Venetian in Las Vegas; and collaborated on installations with artists Anne Hamilton, Abelardo Morel and Luis Roldan. He teaches at the Yale School of Drama.

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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**NATHAN A. ROBERTS** (Co-Sound Designer) is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, instrument-maker, and sound designer who specializes in creating original music and soundscapes for plays, often live onstage. Recent credits include: *Sense and Sensibility* (Guthrie Theater/Dallas Theater Center), *Tokyo Fish Story* (The Old Globe), *In the Next Room* (Syracuse Stage), *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Yale Repertory Theatre/Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Nathan earned his MFA from the Yale School of Drama and teaches in the Theater Studies program of Yale University.



**SORDELET INK** (Rick and Christian) (Fight Director) is a combat company bringing over thirty years of action movement experience to the entertainment community. Broadway: 70 Broadway shows including *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Eclipsed*. International: 54 productions worldwide: *Tarzan*, *Aida*, and *Ben Hur Live*. Opera: *Cyrano* (starring Plácido Domingo) at the MET, The Royal Opera House and La Scalla. Film: *The Game Plan*, *Dan in Real Life*, *Brave New Jersey*. TV: Stunt Coordinator for Guiding Light for 12 years, *One Life to Live*, *Kevin Can Wait*. Instructor: Yale School of Drama, CUNY Harlem, HB Studio. [www.sordeletink.com](http://www.sordeletink.com)

**DAVE BOVA** (Hair/Wig & Makeup Designer). TFANA: *A Doll's House*, *The Father*, *Pericles*, *The Killer*. Broadway: *Violet*, *The Real Thing*. Off-Broadway: *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Here Lies Love*, *Booty Candy*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, *Good Person of Szechwan*, *The Ohmies*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Nothing But Trash*. Regional: *Marie Antoinette*; *Last of the Boys* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Two Gentleman of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice* (DC. Shakespeare Theatre); *Guys and Dolls*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Great Lakes Theater Festival); *Les Mis*, *Light in the Piazza* (Weston Playhouse). Thank you to Zevie for all the love and support.

**ERIC REYNOLDS** (Properties Supervisor) TFANA: *Pericles*, *Tamburlaine*. Broadway: *Oh, Hello*; *Fully Committed*; *An American in Paris*; *On Your Feet*. Off-Broadway: *Terms of Endearment* (Directors Co), *Himself and Nora* (Minetta Lane), Atlantic Theater, Ars Nova, Public Theater, NYMF. Regional: *The Servant of Two Masters* (Shakespeare Theatre, DC), *Austen's Pride* (Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival).



**SONJA THORSON** (Production Stage Manager) a proud member of AEA, is excited to be working with TFANA. Broadway: *Long Day's Journey... (Roundabout)*. New York: *You Got Older (Page 73)*, *Every Angel Is Brutal (Clubbed Thumb)*, and Heartbeat Opera. Regionally, she has worked at Yale Repertory Theatre, Minneapolis Children's Theatre Company, and The Old Globe. Other credits include: *Gotta Dance* (Broadway in Chicago), and *Afterland* at Yale Institute for Music Theatre. BS: South Dakota State University MFA: Yale School of Drama.

**BLAKE KILE** (Assistant Stage Manager) is currently a New York-based Stage Manager. His credits include: Tours: *Patio Pastico Plus* (PSM), *Skink* (PSM). New York: *Così Fan Tutte* (PSM), *The Bad German* (PSM), *The Astronaut Love Story* (PSM), *The Hour of the Star* (ASM). Regional: *The Divine Sister* (PSM), *Cinderella Rock with Todrick Hall* (PSM), *Next to Normal* (SM). He would like to thank his friends, his boyfriend Derek, and his family. To find out more: [blakekile.com](http://blakekile.com).

Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein. This page, top to bottom: Aidan Eastwood and Sam Urdang in rehearsal; Steven Epp and Allen Gilmore. Opposite page, top to bottom: Liam Craig and Steven Epp; Adina Verson and Eugene Ma.

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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DEBORAH BROWN (Casting Director). This is Deborah Brown's 25th season with Theatre for a New Audience. She has cast for Broadway, Off-Broadway, and many of the leading regional theatres in the country. She shared an Emmy for the HBO series "From the Earth to the Moon." Other television includes "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd" and New York casting on "Band of Brothers."

JONATHAN KALB (Resident Literary Advisor/Dramaturg) is Literary Advisor and Resident Artist at Theatre for a New Audience and Professor of Theatre at Hunter College, CUNY. He has twice won the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism, which he received for his books *Beckett in Performance* (1991) and *Great Lengths: Seven Works of Marathon Theater* (2012). *Great Lengths* also won the Theater Library Association's George Freedley Award.

THE BRUCE COHEN GROUP (Press Representative) is celebrating its 40th year of publicizing the good causes that make New York City the capital of the world: the performing and visual arts, community development, historic preservation, business improvement districts, public spaces, tourism and organized labor. Bruce Cohen is a former president of I.A.T.S.E. Local 18032. He owes his first job to Merle Debuskey.

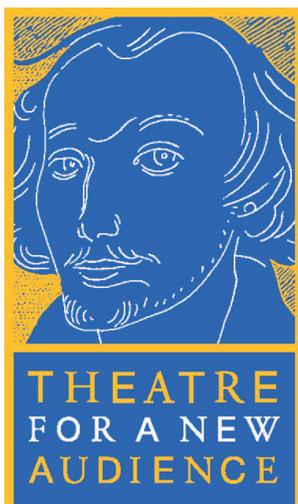
JEFFREY HOROWITZ (Founding Artistic Director) began his career in theatre as an actor and appeared on Broadway, Off Broadway, and in regional theatre. In 1979, he founded Theatre for a New Audience. Horowitz has served on the Panel of the New York State Council on the Arts and on the Board of Directors of Theatre Communications Group. He is currently on the Advisory Board of The Shakespeare Society and the Artistic Directorate of London's Globe Theatre. He received the John Houseman Award in 2003 and The Breukelein Institute's 2004 Gaudium Award.

DOROTHY RYAN (Managing Director) joined Theatre for a New Audience in 2003. She spent the previous ten years devoted to fundraising for the 92nd Street Y and the Brooklyn Museum. Ryan began her career in classical music artist management and has also served as company manager for Chautauqua Opera, managing director for the Opera Ensemble of New York, and general manager of Eugene Opera. She is a 2014 Brooklyn Women of Distinction honoree from Community Newspaper Group.

MICHAEL PAGE (General Manager) has been working in commercial and not-for-profit arts management for over ten years; this is his third season at TFANA. Prior credits include Nina Raine's award-winning *Tribes*, David Cromer's landmark production of *Our Town*, *Mistakes Were Made* by Craig Wright, and Fiasco Theater's *Cymbeline* (Barrow Street Theatre); Douglas McGrath's *Checkers*, Rajiv Joseph's *The North Pool*, Jenny Schwartz's *Somewhere Fun* (Vineyard Theatre), among others. MFA: Ohio University.



## ABOUT THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE



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### About Theatre for a New Audience

Founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, the mission of Theatre for a New Audience is to develop and vitalize the performance and study of Shakespeare and classic drama. Theatre for a New Audience produces for audiences Off-Broadway and has also toured nationally, internationally and to Broadway. We are guided in our work by five core values: a reverence for language, a spirit of adventure, a commitment to diversity, a dedication to learning, and a spirit of service. These values inform what we do with artists, how we interact with audiences, and how we manage our organization.

### Theatre for a New Audience Education Programs

Theatre for a New Audience is an award-winning company recognized for artistic excellence. Our education programs introduce students to Shakespeare and other classics with the same artistic integrity that we apply to our productions. Through our unique and exciting methodology, students engage in hands-on learning that involves all aspects of literacy set in the context of theatre education. Our residencies are structured to address City and State Learning Standards both in English Language Arts and the Arts, the New York City DOE's Curriculum Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Theater, and the Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Begun in 1984, our programs have served more than 128,000 students, ages 9 through 18, in New York City Public Schools city-wide.

### A New Home in Brooklyn: Polonsky Shakespeare Center

After 33 seasons of award-winning and internationally-acclaimed productions, Theatre for a New Audience's new home, Polonsky Shakespeare Center, is a centerpiece of the Brooklyn Cultural District.

Designed by celebrated architect Hugh Hardy, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is the first theatre in New York designed and built expressly for classic drama since Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont in the 1960s. The 27,500 square-foot facility is a unique performance space in New York. The 299-seat Samuel H. Scripps Mainstage, inspired by the Cottesloe at London's National Theatre, combines an Elizabethan courtyard theatre with modern theatre technology that allows the stage and seating to be arranged in seven configurations. The new facility also includes the Theodore C. Rogers Studio (a 50-seat rehearsal/performance studio), and theatrical support spaces. The City of New York-developed Arts Plaza, designed by landscape architect Ken Smith, creates a natural gathering place around the building. In addition, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is also one of the few sustainable (green) theatres in the country, with an anticipated LEED-NC Silver rating from the United States Green Building Council.

Now with a home of its own, Theatre for a New Audience is contributing to the continued renaissance of Downtown Brooklyn. In addition to its season of plays, the Theatre is expanding its education and humanities offerings to include lectures and activities for families, as well as seminars, workshops, and other activities for artists, scholars, and families. When not in use by the Theatre, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is available for rental, bringing much needed affordable performing and rehearsal space to the community.

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## THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE MAJOR SUPPORTERS

*Even with capacity audiences, ticket sales account for a small portion of our operating costs. The Theatre expresses its deepest thanks to the following Foundations, Corporations, Government Agencies and Individuals for their generous support of the Theatre's Humanities, Education, and Outreach programs.*

The 360° Series: Viewfinders has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the Human Endeavor. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this Viewfinder, do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A Challenge Grant from the NEH established a Humanities endowment fund at Theatre for a New Audience to support these programs in perpetuity. Leading matching gifts to the NEH grant were provided by Joan and Robert Arnow, Norman and Elaine Brodsky, The Durst Organization, Perry and Marty Granoff, Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, John J. Kerr & Nora Wren Kerr, Litowitz Foundation, Inc., Robert and Wendy MacDonald, Sandy and Stephen Perl binder, The Prospect Hill Foundation, Inc., Theodore C. Rogers, and from purchasers in the Theatre's *Seat for Shakespeare* Campaign.

Theatre for a New Audience's Humanities, Education, and Outreach programs are supported, in part, by The Elayne P. Bernstein Education Fund. For more information on naming a seat or making a gift to the Humanities endowment, please contact James Lynes, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 212-229-2819 x29, or by email at [jlynes@tfana.org](mailto:jlynes@tfana.org).

Theatre for a New Audience's productions and education programs receive support from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Theatre for a New Audience's education programs are part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.



**Council on  
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*Additional support for these programs is provided by the generosity of the following Foundations and Corporations through their direct support of the Theatre's Education programs and through their general operating grants to the Theatre's Annual Fund:*

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