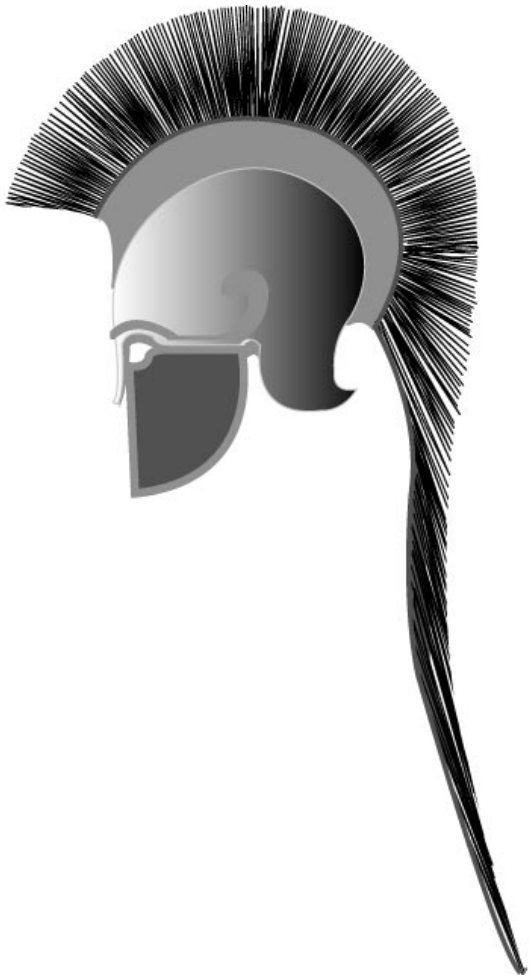

Genesius Guild

2004 Season
Study Guide

Illinois Humanities Council

About the Genesius Guild

For 48 years, the Genesius Guild has presented free, outdoor productions of classic works in Lincoln Park, Rock Island, Illinois, using an outdoor stage constructed by members of the amateur theatre group. Over time, the program has grown to include Shakespearean drama, Greek tragedy in mask, modern interpretations of Greek comedy, opera in English, and professional ballet.

This program is designed to give citizens of the Quad City region easy access to the great works of Western Civilization; to provide to all who are interested an opportunity to perform in great works of art; to foster an appreciation of and dedication to the best in performance art.

The guild is supported by the Genesius Theatre Foundation, a tax-exempt organization charged with promoting the classics; by the Rock Island Park Board, continuing an 80-year commitment to supporting local dramatic performance; through sponsorships of local organizations, grants from Iowa and Illinois Arts Councils, and the contributions of its audience.

The group is open to all who wish to participate. Tryouts for the four plays will he held at 1 pm on consecutive Sundays: May 30th and June 6th. Two weekday tryouts are also scheduled for 7 pm on June 1st and June 3rd. No parts are pre-cast. Everyone auditioning has an equal opportunity to secure roles on and off stage. The guild offers an excellent opportunity for students and aspiring actors of all ages to gain experience by working - in a congenial atmosphere - on some of the greatest plays ever written.

During the summer season, the guild may be contacted at two telephone numbers: 788-7113 (the Lincoln Park stage) or 786-5420 (the guild costume house, 1120 40th Street, Rock Island). Additional information, as well as a rehearsal schedule and a full copy of this study guide, may be obtained by visiting the guild's website at **www.genesius.org**.

Summer Schedule
2004

Tryouts (at Lincoln Park Stage):

Sunday,	May 30,	1 pm
Tuesday,	June 1,	7 pm
Thursday,	June 3,	7 pm
Sunday,	June 6,	1 pm

June 12, 13, June 19, 20	Larsen: "Barnum's Bird" (Opera@augustana)
June 26, 27 July 3, 4	Shakespeare: "Merry Wives of Windsor"
July 10, 11, July 17, 18	Sophocles: "Oedipus Rex"
July 24, 25, July 31, Aug. 1	Shakespeare: "Othello"
August 7, 8 August 14, 15	Aristophanes: "Peace"
August 20, 21, 22	"Ballet Under the Stars" (Ballet Quad Cities)

All performances at 8 pm
Lincoln Park, R.I. Classic Theatre
Admission: free

The 2004 Season

While all the plays in each summer schedule are equally important, the production of “Oedipus Rex” is of particular interest. In a run-up to its 50th anniversary season in 2006, the guild is presenting, in sequence, the three plays by Sophocles which deal with the legend of Oedipus.

The first, presented this year, is the basic story, “Oedipus Rex.” Next summer, Sophocles’ final play, “Oedipus at Colonus” reveals the ultimate fate of the tortured king. In 2006, the guild will repeat its most popular Greek tragedy, “Antigone,” which tells of the fortunes of Oedipus’ children. That play will be preceded by a brief Aeschylus work “Seven Against Thebes” which fills in a dramatic gap between the second and third plays.

This summer’s Shakespearean offerings include the third and last of the Bard’s treatments of the fat knight, Falstaff: “The Merry Wives of Windsor.” The “Henry IV” plays featuring Falstaff were staged last summer.

“Othello” is considered one of Shakespeare’s four great tragedies. It is a domestic story of love, hate, and jealousy and balances the heroic Othello and the “divine” Desdemona with one of Shakespeare’s most repellent villains, Iago.

The Aristophanic farce, “Peace” concerns the efforts of a single Athenian to bring peace to an insane world, beset with war. As usual, the play will be re-written and up-dated to include contemporary personages.

The opera by Libby Larsen comes to us from its world premiere just two years ago. It is the story of Jenny Lind, the Swedish soprano who was brought to America by the legendary showman, P. T. Barnum.

The season will conclude with “Ballet Under the Stars,” a weekend preview of Ballet Quad Cities’ 2004/5 season.

Libby Larsen

Libby Larsen was born on Christmas Eve, 1950, in Wilmington, Delaware, She is acknowledged to be one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers, with over 200 works in her catalogue, spanning virtually every form, from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral and choral scores.

Fanfare Magazine attributes her success to "her ability to write memorable new music completely within the confines of traditional harmonic language." In appraising her operatic creations, the Wall Street Journal wrote that she "has come up with a way to make contemporary opera both musically current and accessible to the average audience."

Her opera, "Frankenstein, the Modern Prometheus," was chosen as one of the eight best classical music events of 1990, and the 2002 premiere of "Barnum's Bird," was an unqualified success.

Larsen's works have been performed by major orchestras and ensembles around the world, including the Quad City Symphony Orchestra. During the past year, she served a five-day residency at Augustana College, during which she composed a choral work for the Augustana Choir.

Barnum's Bird
by Libby Larsen

Opera@Augustana returns to the Genesius Guild stage again this summer with a new work by American composer Libby Larsen. The choral opera is written for chorus, four soloists and orchestra. "Barnum's Bird" was given its world premiere on February 1, 2002 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The story tells of the unlikely relationship between Swedish opera star Jenny Lind and American showman, Phineas T. Barnum. At the height of her fame, the "Swedish Nightingale" was lured to this country by a lucrative contract for an extensive, nationwide tour. The interplay between art and commerce in this arrangement inspired composer Larsen to examine ourselves as both lovers of art and consumers of entertainment.

* * *

The opera consists of two acts. The first is divided into three scenes which depict Jenny Lind and Signor Giovanni Belletti, an Italian baritone, in Europe, and P.T. Barnum in New York with "General" Tom Thumb, one of his leading attractions. Although Barnum has never met or heard Lind, he sends his agent, J. H. Wilton, to Europe to propose that she come to America to sing under his management and at his expense.

The offer was a munificent one, covering all her expenses, and paying an attractive personal fee for each performance as well as a considerable sum of money which she decided to donate to her favorite Swedish charities. In addition to these, she bestowed grants on a number of charitable organizations in the United States.

In Act Two, Lind and Belleti come to America, and, in nine scenes, begin and end their 1850 tour. In depicting the singers' performances, Larsen incorporates into her own music selections from a variety of 19th Century sources, operatic and popular, all associated in some way with Jenny Lind's progress through the United States.

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford, England shortly before April 26, 1564. He died in the same village on April 23, 1616. His christening occurred on April 26, and historians prefer to place his birth on the 23rd, to align his birth with his death, but he probably was born a few days earlier.

It also helps that April 23rd is the Feast day of St. George, England's patron saint.

Shakespeare came from a Catholic family at a time when it was becoming dangerous to be a papist. His father was a prominent citizen, rising to the position of mayor. His subsequent fall from eminence may well have been a consequence of the religious tensions of the time. At any rate, Shakespeare made it his life's ambition to restore the family to its former position, something he achieved through the fame and fortune he secured through his work as a playwright and actor.

Shakespeare was educated at the Stratford school and his plays reflect the topics he studied there. The country life of Stratford is also present in his works, even when they are set in exotic places. This is especially true of the few plotlines which were drawn from his own imagination. The majority of his works were based on earlier versions by other authors.

It is likely that he served as a household instructor/entertainer during early manhood, but we have no concrete evidence of this. It is also likely that he joined a troupe of travelling actors when they visited Stratford, short one performer.

However it happened, we find him in London, leaving wife and children behind in Stratford, but not abandoning them. He made regular visits home and lavished his income on their welfare.

He first came to prominence as a poet, but was soon the best-known playwright in London, attracting the envy of some, but the general admiration of most. He collaborated with other playwrights, but often wrote alone. Certainly, his great plays are the product of a single sensibility.

He began with comedies and histories, but gradually moved into the nobler realm of tragedy, producing the greatest poetic dramas in the English language. He retired from the stage and returned to live out his days with honor in Stratford. Before finally retiring, he collaborated with John Fletcher on several plays when the younger man was engaged to replace him as the King's Men's resident author.

Shakespeare's dramatic creations are of such an exceptional nature that some scholars have tried to assign their authorship to others, especially some lesser poets and noblemen who had university training. The reasoning being that only someone with a college degree would be capable of such dazzling work.

This is a pointless exercise, as Shakespeare had the same education as Ben Jonson, an acknowledged playwright, who, incidentally, was indebted to Shakespeare for getting his plays accepted for performance. There is also the fact that the plays demonstrate an intimate knowledge of both the theatre and the men who made up his acting company. It is fairly easy to portray the nobility and to cobble up information on foreign lands. What is not so easy for a nobleman is to understand country life to the ground, which was one of Shakespeare's great dramatic strengths.

Shakespeare was simply a unique genius, rather like Mozart, whose musical inspiration and creations are inexplicably beyond that of other composers, even as Shakespeare's works stand at the pinnacle of poetic drama.

The Merry Wives of Windsor
by Shakespeare

There is an old tradition in English theatre that "Merry Wives" was written in response to a royal request. Queen Elizabeth so enjoyed the antics of the rascally, fat knight, Falstaff, in the "Henry IV" plays, that she expressed a desire to see him in love. Shakespeare, her favorite playwright, obliged with a script in two weeks' time.

The author cobbled up several sequences from other plays, as was his custom, but he also included many details from his life in Stratford, including his memories of a Welsh schoolmaster who worked there when the poet was in his teens. The play fairly glows with the atmosphere of English country life and it includes references to several topical events.

While Falstaff is somewhat diminished - as Shakespeare originally conceived him, he would be far too intelligent to fall in love or be taken in by the plots against him - he becomes the center of much fun and the play's verbal music and high spirits have made it a popular comedy and a frequent subject for operatic treatment.

* * *

The play begins outside the home of Master George and Mistress Margaret Page. Justice Robert Shallow and his cousin, Abraham Slender, are complaining to Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson, that they have been wronged by Pistol, Bardolph, and Nym, companions to Sir John Falstaff.

Page brings Falstaff outside to settle matters and a kind of peace is cobbled up. Master John Ford's wife, Alice, joins the company. All are invited in to "drink down all unkindness." Shallow, Evans, and Slender remain outside to discuss the possibility of Slender wooing young Anne Page, George's daughter. He is, at best, a ridiculous and reluctant suitor. Anne is also being pursued by a Frenchman, Dr. Caius. Evans asks Mistress Quickly, housekeeper to Dr. Caius, to intercede with Anne for Slender. She is already

speaking to Anne for Dr. Caius and, when the doctor finds that Evans has asked her to intercede for Slender as well, he challenges the Welshman to a duel. To further complicate matters, Mistress Quickly also agrees to speak up for a third wooer, Master Fenton.

Meanwhile, Falstaff, residing at the Garter Inn, is obliged to discharge his followers in order to save money. The Host of the Inn agrees to hire Bardolph as a tapster. Falstaff then asks Pistol and Nym to bear love letters to Margaret Page and Alice Ford, hoping to ensnare their love and their husbands' incomes. The two men refuse, so Falstaff discharges them and sends his page. Nym and Pistol decide to tell Page and Ford of Falstaff's plan.

Act II begins with Alice Ford reading Falstaff's latter. She is appalled at his proposal. Margaret Page enters with an identical letter and the two decide to punish the knight for his audacity. They send Mistress Quickly to Falstaff, asking him to keep a rendezvous with Mistress Ford the next day at 11, when Ford will be out of the house.

Nym and Pistol then tell Ford and Page of the plot. Page laughs it off, but Ford is a jealous man, Ford goes to Falstaff in disguise as Master Brooke, offering the knight money to seduce Mistress Ford. When Falstaff tells him he already has a rendezvous with her, Ford can barely contain his fury and decides to catch the two of them together.

Act II begins with Sir Hugh Evans arriving at the site for the duel, only to discover that he and Caius have been sent to different places. When the two meet, the Host of the Garter is able to make peace between them.

Slender continues to sigh for "sweet Anne Page" and gets her father's consent to marry. Her mother is still holding out for Dr. Caius. Both reject the suit of Master Fenton for lack of income and his former association with the wastrel Prince Hal and Poins.

Falstaff visits Mistress Ford and has barely begun his wooing when Mistress Page bursts in to tell them that John Ford is coming home with a group of men ready to rough up the fat knight. The two hide him in a large basket of laundry and instruct servants to take the heavy load and dump it into the Thames River. Ford enters and searches the house. Finding no one there, Ford is still not convinced. Delighted by their success, the merry wives decide to try another trick and send Mistress Quickly to Falstaff to make another appointment. Reluctantly, he agrees. When Ford comes to see him, Falstaff tells of his narrow escape and of his plan to visit Mistress Ford again. Ford vows that the lecherous knight will not escape him again.

In Act IV, Falstaff once again appears at Ford's house, only to be interrupted again by her husband, who paws through the laundry. The two women disguise Falstaff as a woman and, when Ford sees him, he is told she is Mother Prat, the fat witch of Brainford, a person he despises. Ford chases the disguised Falstaff out of the house, beating him as he goes.

Deciding that things have gone far enough, the two women tell their husbands of their treatment of Falstaff and Ford apologizes for doubting his wife. Page suggests that they try one more trick. Alice Page reminds them of the old legend of Herne the Hunter who haunts Windsor Forest. They will urge Falstaff to meet them at midnight underneath Herne's Oak and they will disguise all the children and adults as goblins to frighten and torment the old sinner.

As they agree to this plot, two more are added. Master Page plans to have Slender elope with Anne during the confusion; Mistress Page plans the like for Dr. Caius. Fenton reveals to the Host of the Garter that Anne has told him of the plots and that she intends to elope with him.

At the opening of Act V, we see Falstaff, dressed as Herne the Hunter with a pair of antlers on his head. He meets the two merry wives at midnight and almost immediately, the three hear the sound of spirits in the woods. The two women run away and Falstaff cowers below the tree. The disguised fairies run in and start to pinch and poke the hapless knight.

Nym and Bardolph are disguised as Anne and are taken away by Slender and Caius. Fenton takes the real Anne by the hand and they leave. As Bardolph leans close to Falstaff, the knight smells his breath and realizes that he is being tricked. As the plot is uncovered, everyone has a good laugh at Falstaff's expense. Then both George and Alice Page discover that they have been tricked as well, as Anne and Fenton, now married, return.

Master Page, ever one to see reason, decides there is no use lamenting what has happened and invites everyone, including Fenton and Anne, Falstaff and his retinue, to his home to "laugh this sport o'er by a country fire."

About the Play

Most critics seem to agree that the play was written hurriedly and most likely at the request of Queen Elizabeth. It was probably given its first performance before the queen on April 23, 1597, at Westminster, one month before the second Lord Hunsdon, patron of the Chamberlain's Men, was to be received into the Order of the Garter.

While the story may have been adapted from an Italian novella - most likely Giovanni Fiorentino's "Il Pecarone" - it is filled with local places: Windsor Castle and Forest, the great oak, Datchet Mead, the road to Frogmore, even the castle ditch. The characters are of the court and countryside, making this the most English of Shakespeare's plays.

There are several references to individuals who would have been familiar to a royal audience, including a duke of Germany (Count Mompelgart) who had made something of a fool of himself. There is also reason to believe that the Host of the Garter was based on a real person.

"Merry Wives" is noted as the Shakespearean play with a higher proportion of prose than poetry. It was quite popular in its day, then disappeared for a while, but has been in steady performance since 1720. Among the composers who have used the text as a basis for opera are Otto Nicolai ("The Merry Wives of Windsor"); Giuseppe Verdi ("Falstaff"); and Ralph Vaughan Williams ("Sir John In Love").

Sophocles

Sophocles was born around 497 B.C.E. in Colonus, a deme (suburb) of Athens. His father was Sophillus, a successful businessman. While in his youth, Sophocles won prizes in wrestling and music. In those days, a boy was expected to excel in both the arts and athletics. Sophocles was fortunate to be able to study with the celebrated musician, Lampros. When the Athenians held a celebration to mark their victory over the Persians at Salamis, Sophocles led a chorus in singing to the accompaniment of a lyre.

During Sophocles' youth, Aeschylus was the dominant figure in Greek tragedy. In 468 B.C.E., at the age of 28, he competed against Aeschylus in the annual dramatic competition and won. He was to continue winning throughout his life, scoring first prize 20 to 24 times and never scoring lower than second. In all, he wrote over 120 plays, only seven of which survive today.

Sophocles was universally loved. He was friends with the great men of his time: including the historian Herodotus and Pericles, ruler of Athens. He was elected to high office and as general of the army at least once. He had several children, some of whom also became dramatists.

Sophocles made significant improvements in theatrical practice. He added a third actor, enlarged the chorus from 12 to 15, devised painted scenery, conceived the idea of the tetrology - a series of three serious plays followed by a satiric play, all on the same general theme - and added several costume details and properties which became traditional.

He lived long enough to compete with - and defeat - the tragic poet Euripides. He lived to the age of 91, dying in 406 B.C.E., having outlived Aeschylus and Euripides, and having actively participated in Athenian public life from the height of its glory till just before its defeat by Sparta.

Oedipus Rex
by Sophocles

In the notes he prepared for his lectures on poetry and drama, the philosopher Aristotle cites Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex" as a perfect tragedy, meeting all the traditional, technical requirements for the form, and producing in its audience a true catharsis. The Father of Psychiatry, Sigmund Freud, sees in the play the touchstone for some fundamental aspects of mental and emotional development.

Yet, when it was first performed as part of a trilogy, the play was awarded only second prize, not first. (Literary scholars would really like to read the plays that beat it out.)

From earliest times, "Oedipus Rex" has been regarded as one of the greatest tragedies ever written. The plot is carefully developed, the characters are fully drawn, and the problem at its center - Is Oedipus guilty or not? - has occupied humanity throughout the ages.

* * *

PROLOGUE

The drama begins with the people of Thebes entering as suppliants, led by a priest. The city is suffering famine and plague and they are desperate to discover its cause. In Greek thought, there was not a sharp dividing line between natural and moral law. If the gods were punishing the city, there must be some reason for it, individual or collective.

Oedipus enters and asks why they have come. The priest answers him, telling of the great travail they have endured. They have come to see Oedipus as the one man most likely to be able to solve the problem. After all, he solved the riddle of the sphinx and freed them from its oppression, for which they made him their king. Surely now he can help them once more.

Oedipus tells them he has anticipated their visit and has already sent his brother-in-law, Creon, to Delphi to seek the Oracle's advice. Creon returns as they are talking and delivers the Oracle's message. The former king, Laios, was murdered. The plague will not be lifted until that murderer is discovered and punished. Oedipus questons Creon, learning that Laios was killed while on a pilgrimage. One of his servants escaped and said that the king and his attendants were set upon by a band of highwaymen. Oedipus promises to find and punish the guilty party.

PARADOS

After the stage empties, the chorus makes its entrance for the parados, the first of six choral interludes. They describe the city's suffering and implore the gods to send them deliverance.

SCENE I

Oedipus re-enters, answering the chorus, assuring them that he will solve the problem. He issues several decrees: if anyone knows anything about the crime, he is to report to the king; no one in the city may offer the guilty partry shelter or aid. He further prays that the gods will consume the murderer in wretchedness.

Oedipus says he is taking the murdered king's part, as if he were his son, since Laios left no children. He reminds them that he not only occupies Laios' throne, but that he has married the former king's wife and sired four children with her.

The leader of the chorus (choragos) suggests that he might consult the blind prophet Teiresias who has lived in Thebes since Laios' time. Once again, Oedipus has anticipated the suggestion and has summoned Teiresias who then enters, led by a boy.

Oedipus questions Teiresias who refuses to answer. Their exchange grows heated and Teiresias blurts out that Oedipus himself is the guilty man.

Oedipus is enraged and shouts that Teiresias must be part of a conspiracy against the former king. Further, he suggests that Creon must be in on the plot, too, since he urged Oedipus to listen to Teiresias. Teiresias prepares to leave, and departs with these words:

> The damned man, the murderer of Laios,
> That man is in Thebes. To your mind he is foreign-born,
> But it will soon be shown that he is a Theban. . . a blind man
> Who has his eyes now; a penniless man, who is rich now;
> And he will go tapping the strange earth with his staff.
> To the children with whom he lives now he will be
> Brother and father - the very same; to her
> Who bore him, son and husband - the very same.
> Who came to his father's bed, wet with his father's blood.

(NOTE: all quotes from the Fitts-Fitzgerald translation)

CHORAL ODE I

The chorus is appalled by what it has heard. It can't make sense of the wild words from both king and prophet, but its faith in Oedipus is unshaken: he is the man who saved them from the sphinx.

SCENE II

Creon enters, having heard that he has been accused of being complicit in the murder of Laios. He questions the chorus. Then Oedipus enters and repeats his accusations. Creon defends himself, arguing that he has no possible motive for wanting to depose Oedipus. At this point, Jocaste, Oedipus' wife and Creon's sister, enters to try to calm the two men down. Creon leaves and choragos asks the queen to take the king inside as well. Instead she asks him why he is so angry and he tells her that Teiresias has accused him of being the murderer. To allay his fears and to prove that prophets are not to be believed, she tells him of a prophecy sent to Laios after their only son was born:

That his doom would be at the hands of his own son -
His son, born of his flesh and of mine.
Now, you remember the story: Laios was killed
By marauding strangers where three highways meet;
But his child had not been three days in this world
Before the king had pierced the baby's ankles
And left him to die on a lonely mountainside.

The mention of a place where three highways meet disturbs Oedipus. He asks Jocaste for further details and begins to believe that Teiresias may be right after all. He tells Jocaste of his past: that he is the son of King Polybos and Queen Merope of Corinth. One day, a drunken man told him that he was not his father's son. His parents angrily denied the story, but Oedipus went to Delphi to be reassured.

The god dismissed my question without reply;
He spoke of other things. Some were clear
Full of wretchedness, dreadful, unbearable;
As, that I should lie with my own mother, breed
Children from whom all men would turn their eyes;
And that I should be my father's murderer.

At this, Oedipus fled, vowing never to return to Corinth. As he travelled, he came to a place where three highways converged. An old man in a chariot came toward him, accompanied by retainers. One of them tried to force Oedipus off the road. Oedipus struck the man and the charioteer struck at him with his goad. Furious, Oedipus atttacked and killed them all. If the man Oedipus slew that day proved to be Laios, then Oedipus himself is the man whom he cursed, the cause of the plague, and must be driven from Thebes. Yet he cannot go back to Corinth for fear of fulfilling the oracle.

His last remaining chance is to talk to the shephard who was with Laios when he was killed. If he maintains that the crime was committed by a group of highwaymen, then the man Oedipus killed was not Laios. Jocaste says she will send for the man at once and they enter the palace.

CHORAL ODE II

The chorus is shaken by what it has heard. It is also distressed by the manner in which Jocaste dismisses the pronouncements of the oracle. They remind themselves to be "reverent in the ways of right" and call on Zeus to witness that "reverence for the gods has died away."

SCENE III

Jocaste returns with offerings for Apollo to whom she prays for deliverance. As she prays, a messenger enters, inquiring where he might find the king. Directed to Jocaste, he tells her that he is from Corinth with news of the death of King Polybos and an invitation to Oedipus to return and take the throne.

Jocaste joyfully sends for Oedipus. She tells him that he can now be freed of the fear of murdering his father. But Oedipus still worries that he may somehow marry his mother. The messenger tells him that his fears are groundless because he is not Polybos' natural son. Polybos and Merope had him as a gift from his hands. Years ago, the messenger was a shepherd on the slopes of Mount Kithairon. He was given a baby boy, its ankles pierced and bound, by a shepherd from Thebes. Choragos tells Oedipus that the Theban shepherd is the very man sent for by Jocaste.

At this point, Jocaste sees clearly the terrible truth and begs Oedipus to go no further in his inquiries. But he will not be deterred; he wants to know once and for all who he really is. He jokes that his wife's agitation is due to the fear that he might prove to be the child of a commoner. Jocaste rushes into the palace.

ODE III

The chorus speculates on Mount Kithairon and Oedipus's birth.

SCENE IV

The Theban shepherd is brought in and is forced to tell what he knows: that Oedipus is the son of Laios and Jocaste and that he was given the baby to be abandoned on Mount Kithairon but, in pity, gave the child to the man from Corinth. Now Oedipus has learned the full story of his birth and his crimes. He runs into the palace.

ODE IV

The chorus, in sorrow, mulls the terrible history of the man who saved them from the sphinx, but who now has been brought low by fate.

EXODOS

A second messenger enters from the palace to tell the chorus what he has witnessed. (It is a convention of Greek tragedy that scenes of violence occur offstage and are described by a tragic messenger.) He tells how Oedipus ranged through the palace calling upon the gods; how he found his wife/mother dead, a suicide by hanging. He takes the brooches from her gown and stabs them into his eyes, so that he might never again see his family or the scene of his crimes.

The palace door opens and Oedipus enters, blood streaming from his empty eye sockets. In a dialogue with choragos, he laments his fate. Creon, who has now assumed leadership of Thebes comes in and tries to get him to move out of public sight. Oedipus asks to be driven into the exile he deserves, but requests a final favor: that he be allowed to see his daughters one last time. Creon brings in Antigone and Ismene who take a tearful farewell of their father. He laments their fate, knowing that nothing but disgrace and agony await them. His children are taken away and he is led into exile.

Choragos closes the play:

> Men of Thebes: look upon Oedipus:
> This is the king who solved the famous riddle,
> And towered up, most powerful of men.
> No mortal eyes but looked on him with envy
> Yet in the end, ruin swept over him.
>
> Let every man in mankind's frailty
> Consider his last day. And let none
> Presume on his good fortune until he find
> Life, at his death, a memory without pain.

About the Play

There are probably more questions in the text of Oedipus Rex than in any other Greek tragedy. All of them serve the resolution of two main questions: “Who killed King Laios?” and, later, “Who is Oedipus?”

Everyone attending the first performance of the play knew the story. What interested that audience was how the plot unfolded: how Oedipus used his formidable intellect to bring about his own ruin.

It is the story of a deep thinker whose ability meant little when pitted against the will of the gods. It is a disturbing story. The gods foretell that this particular person will commit the greatest crimes - patricide and incest. He spends his whole life trying to avoid this fate, only to find that his efforts meant nothing. It reminds us of the inscription at Delphi: “Know thyself” - in other words, remember that you’re human, not divine. Or, as it is put in modern parlance: “Your arms are too short to wrestle with God.”

It was Oedipus’ cleverness that gained him authority in Thebes. He answered the Riddle of the Sphinx and, in doing so, delivered the town from its annual tribute of human sacrifices to the half-woman, half-lion. She stopped all travellers and asked the same question: “What goes upon four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?”

Those unable to answer were killed and devoured. Oedipus gave the correct answer: “Man: who crawls on all fours in the morning of his life, walks erect in the noon of manhood, and totters on a cane in the twilight of his existence.” Defeated, the sphinx threw herself off a cliff and was destroyed. The Thebans welcomed their saviour, making him king in place of the recently-murdered Laios and gave Oedipus Laios’ queen, Jocaste.

This play is a prime example of just how profoundly Sophocles changed the nature of Greek tragedy. In Aeschylus’ plays, there is a kind of formality about the masked characters. They often don’t interact in a natural way. Sophocles not only added a third actor, making a variety of interactions between the actors possible, he also created roles for recognizable human beings. His is a theatre of character.

This emphasis on character changed the theatre forever. Prior to Sophocles, the divine background of the story was most important: the plays taught ethical and moral lessons. With Sophocles' plays, attention shifts to the human foreground, where it remains to this day. The divine aspect of Sophocles' tragedies remains (after all, theatre arose in religious ritual), but his audience became emotionally involved in the fate of human beings they watched and understood.

It is possible to spend a lifetime on various aspects of Oedipus Rex. It is a harrrowing tale of human will struggling against forces it cannot control or understand. It provides much to think and talk about. The overarching question remains: "Was Oedipus guilty?" Dissecting this question can lead to a variety of interesting topics; e.g. the contrast between modern thinking and the ethics of ancient Greece, free will versus "fate," the nature of the divine, and so on. A historical thought: Is Greece's Theban king, Oedipus ("swollen foot"), linked to Egypt's Theban king, the swollen-thighed Ankhnaton? Finally, one might wonder why what happens to an imaginary person on stage often moves us more deeply than what happens to real human beings. How and why does drama produce its powerful effect?

PRONUNCIATION NOTE:

No literary name is more commonly mispronounced that Oedipus. Americans, in particular, seem to reverse the first two letters, making **oe** sound like **eo** in l**eo**pard and j**eo**pardy: an "eh" sound

The correct pronunciation is a long e, as in Ph**oe**nix, f**oe**tus, and Ph**oe**be. The ancient Greek state of B**oe**otia is pronounced **bee-OH-shee-ah** and **Oe**dipus is pronounced **EE-deh-pus.**

Othello

by Shakespeare

This is an almost fool-proof play. The plot is so tightly drawn and the characters so ingeniously played against one another that a theatre group of average competence can bring off a compelling performance.

While the title character is the one who suffers a tragic change, the audience pays closest attention to Iago. He is a picture of pure evil, unreasoning hate; or rather a hate which is excused by so many reasons that it really has none.

At any point, Iago's daring plan can go awry. The agility with which he seizes every opportunity is a kind of genius. Unlike other villains in Shakespearean plays, he is taken to be utterly honest by all the other characters, a reputation which enables him to do the utmost damage.

* * *

In the first scene, Othello's ancient (standard-bearer), Iago, and Roderigo are conversing in front of the home of Desdemona and her father, Brabantio. We learn that Desdemona has stolen away from her father to wed Othello, a black warrior of great renown, to the distress of Roderigo, a young Venetian who is also in love with the girl. At Iago's insistence, they awaken the household to tell Brabantio of his daughter's flight. Before Brabantio comes down to the street, Iago leaves so as not to be identified. Brabantio rouses his servants to come with him to arrest Othello.

Iago tells Othello that Brabantio is planning to arrest him. Othello shrugs the news off. Cassio, Othello's lieutenant, arrives to tell him that the Duke (Doge) of Venice requires his immediate presence. When Brabantio enters, to arrest Othello, he is told of the sudden summons and all exit to meet the Duke and Venetian Council.

At the council, Othello learns that he is to head for Cyprus to defend it against a Turkish fleet. Brabantio then complains to the Duke that the man chosen to head the Venetian fleet has stolen his daughter by magic. Othello protests that Desdemona married him willingly and sends for her to give testimony. He then relates the story of his wooing in the play's best-known soliloquy: "Her father lov'd me; oft invited me . ." Desdemona arrives and seconds Othello's story. Brabantio yields, but warns the Moor that, having deceived her father, she may deceive him, too. Othello laughs: "My life upon her faith!" When all have left, Iago urges the love-sick Roderigo to sell his possessions, raise money thereby, and follow them to Cyprus where, Iago assures him, he shall surely win Desdemona.

At the beginning of Act II, the Venetians arrive at Cyprus: first Cassio; then Desdemona and Iago; finally, Othello. There, they learn that the Turkish fleet has been destroyed in a storm. The war is over.

A herald proclaims a holiday to celebrate the victory-by-default.

Othello prepares to retire. He sets the watch, warning Cassio keep the peace. Iago enters and urges Cassio to have a drink, knowing the captain will quickly be drunk. Iago then tells Roderigo to draw Cassio into a quarrel. The ensuing riot brings an angry Othello from his bed and he demotes Cassio on the spot. Iago counsels Cassio to plead with Desdemona to restore him to Othello's good graces, hoping to use that as a means of making the Moor jealous.

This part of the plot works and Cassio earnestly pleads with Desdemona. When Othello and Iago approach, he leaves in some embarrassment. Iago uses Cassio's quick departure as a means of opening his campaign to make Othello suspicious. When Desdemona returns with Emilia, she gives Othello her handkerchief to wipe his brow. He drops it and Emilia picks it up. She, in turn gives it to Iago who has often asked her to steal it. Now that Iago has the handkerchief, he has the device he needs to convince Othello that Desdemona and Cassio are having an affair. Othello returns in torment, lashes out at Iago, but Iago artfully convinces him that he is being betrayed, by relating, among other false stories, that he saw Cassio wipe his beard with the handkerchief, a gift from Othello to his wife.

Desdemona earnestly pleads with Othello to forgive Cassio, which only confirms his suspicions. When he asks for the handkerchief, she cannot produce it. Othello storms out. Iago and Cassio enter and Cassio renews his request for Desdemona's aid. She says she will continue even though her husband is in a puzzlingly bad humor. After she leaves, Bianca enters, a woman of the town familiar to Cassio. He gives her the handkerchief which he found in his quarters and asks her to copy it for him.

Iago and Othello enter, Othello in a terrible state. He falls into an epileptic fit. Cassio enters, but Iago sends him away, asking him to return shortly. When Othello comes to, Iago sets him apart where he may overhear Iago speaking with Cassio about Bianca. However, he tells Othello that they will really be discussing Desdemona. Suddenly, Bianca enters and furiously returns the handkerchief to Cassio. This is the final proof for Othello and he resolves to kill Desdemona, assigning Iago to kill Cassio.

A delegation arrives from Venice and is shocked at Othello's treatment of his wife. Othello then questions Emilia, who stoutly defends Desdemona. Othello thinks she must be a party to the affair. Desdemona enters and Othello accuses her of adultery. After he leaves, Desdemona kneels before Iago to beg his help in restoring her to Othello's favor. After the women leave, Iago talks Roderigo into helping him kill Cassio.

In her chamber, Desdemona prepares for bed, talking with Emilia about her sad situation. She retires after singing the Willow Song.

Iago and Roderigo prepare to meet with Cassio, but they botch the job. Cassio wounds Roderigo and is wounded in turn by Iago. Iago then kills Roderigo, silencing a possible witness to his treachery. Othello hears Cassio call for help and assumes that Iago has kept his part of the bargain. He leaves to kill Desdemona, while others gather to assist Cassio.

In the final scene, Othello awakens Desdemona, accuses her of infidelity, refuses to heed her cries for mercy, then tries to suffocate her with a pillow. Hearing an insistent voice outside, he finishes the job with a dagger. Emilia is finally admitted to the room, finding her mistress near death. Desdemona gains consciousness briefly and tells Emilia that she killed herself. Othello rages that she lies; he did it. Then he learns the truth from Emilia. Others enter the chamber. Emilia accuses her husband who tries to kill her but is prevented. A second attempt succeeds. Iago refuses to answer any questions. In despair. Othello takes his own life.

Sources

The story comes from a collection of tales by Giovanni Battista Giraldi (Cinthio) entitled Hecatommithi, stories supposedly told by a group of men and women on a sea voyage after the sack of Rome in 1527. It is the seventh novella of the third decade - number 37 of 100 stories in all.

The only name to survive from the original, slightly altered, is Disdemona, wife of the Moor, Christophoro Moro, who is served by an ensign named Alfiero. Shakespeare stayed with the main lines of the plot, making the ensign's motive less clear and the death of Disdemona less brutal (The Moor has Alfiero beat her to death with a sack filled with sand, then pull the ceiling of her room down to make it look like an accident).

In the original story, the Moor meets a dreadful end at the hands of Disdemona's relatives, being tortured until his body ruptures.

"Othello" was performed at court on November 1, 1604, and was probably written and produced earlier in that same year. Scholars find a possible reference to the play in Dekker and Middleton's "Honest Whore," published in that same year.

A Quarto copy of the play was first registered in 1627. The Folio text (1623) is about 160 lines longer, but is believed to be based on the Quarto, which is a good one; probably an edited acting text.

Material in Othello's magnificent Act One speech is thought to have been drawn from Pliny's Natural History, translated in 1601 by Philemon Holland. Background for the play probably came from The Commonwealth and Government of Venice, translated in 1599 by Lewis Lewkenor.

An Observation

One of the most arresting aspects of “Othello” is the manner is which Shakespeare operates on two different “clocks” simultaneously. He carefully sets the principal action within a 24-hour period, yet we assume a much longer interval.

Othello and Desdemona arrive at Cyprus at night to celebrate their long-delayed honeymoon. Since they had travelled to Cyprus on separate ships, their marriage could not have been consummated earlier. That same night, the drunken brawl occurs in which Cassio is disgraced.

The next morning, Cassio sues for Desdemona’s help and Iago makes his first insinuations. By afternoon, Othello is convinced and Lodovico arrives from Venice. A state dinner is held that evening, after which Roderigo is slain, Cassio injured, Desdemona murdered, and Iago’s treachery revealed.

It is not possible that Iago could have convinced Othello of Desdemona’s infidelity in 24 hours. There simply wasn’t enough time for her to have done anything out of Othello’s sight.

Yet, we are as taken in as Othello. We assume a longer period without question, aided by references in the text. For example, Bianca chides Cassio for his absence of several days, which makes no sense, since he had just arrived from Venice as well. He would have needed time to meet her, start a liaison, lose interest, and neglect her long enough to justify her complaint: clearly a history which cannot be compressed into a single day.

But such is the power of Shakespeare’s narrative, that we suspend such critical thoughts, lost in the grip of the action. This is not the only play is which Shakespeare plays fast and loose with real time, but surely one of the most striking.

Aristophanes

Little is known about the man considered by many scholars to be the theatre's finest author of comedies. He was born around 445 B.C.E. into a wealthy family, the son of Philippus. His family probably belonged to the class of Athenians known as "Knights," "the prosperous, generally conservative stratum of society between the rich aristocracy and the peasants and urban proletariat."

Something of his life may be gleaned from his plays. We know that he was bald, that his family had an interest in the island of Aegina, that he never staged his own plays, preferring to hand them over to a producer/director, and that he had a life-long dislike for an Athenian leader named Cleon, whom he attacked in many of his plays.

His outlook is generally conservative, in opposition to the new democratic structure of his city-state. In all of his extant plays, there are direct or indirect references to the tragedies of Euripides. He makes fun of them, but seems to be drawn to some of the ideas expressed in them. So much so that the comic poet Cratinus coined a word to express the phenomenon: "Euripidaristophanization."

Eleven of his fifty-plus comedies survive, all of them touching on events and ideas prevalent in Athens during his lifetime. Although he satirized Socrates in "The Clouds," he may very well have been involved with the intellectuals who were part of that philosophic circle. He figures in Plato's Symposium, in which he and Socrates outdrink all the other guests, ending the night-long party in conversation.

Aristophanes won more first prizes than any other comic poet. He died shortly after the production of "Plutus," somewhere around 385 B.C.E. He was survived by three sons - Philippos, Araros, and Nikostratos - all of whom followed in his profession.

Peace
by Aristophanes

Aristophanes, a conservative playwright of Athens, was not merely critical of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta; he raged against it in his comedies. He made the generals look ludicrous, satirized Athenian conquests, brought up every bad move that the government made as it got further and further into war and seemed unable to stop.

In his "Peace," which was staged in March of 421 B.C.E., he was at it again. Only this time, the two warring cities, having lost their leaders in battle, were negotiating the Peace of Nikias, which was to provide a brief interval before the war flared up again.

Surprisingly, the citizens of Athens awarded Aristophanes first prize again and again, even when his criticism of them, their government, and the gods was most scathing. The success and survival of his plays is as much a tribute to the open-mindedness of Athenian democracy as to the skill of the author himself.

* * *

When the play begins, the servants of Trygaeus are busy feeding a dung beetle, stabled just off-stage. It is nasty, smelly work and they complain about it. Suddenly, they see their master riding the beetle, soaring off to Olympus to visit the gods, taking the matter of negotiating peace into his own hands.

He lands at Olympus and meets Hermes, messenger of the gods, who tells him that the divinities have moved further away from earth, completely disgusted by mankind's tendency to make war. They have buried the goddess Peace in a deep pit and are permitting the god of war to destroy all the cities of Greece by grinding them up in a huge mortar.

Unfortunately, the war god doesn't have a pestle to complete his work. While he goes looking for one, Trygaeus frees Peace from her prison, with the help of a chorus of destitute farmers. He returns to earth with two lovely attendants of the goddess and prepares a sacrifice to Peace which will stop war once and for all.

He succeeds in his sacrifice, despite the protests of a priest and war merchants. He gives one of the attendants to the president of the Senate and marries the other. The play ends in a riotous wedding feast.

That's the way Aristophanes wrote the play. As usual, the Genesius Guild will use the plot as a framework for re-writing and updating the comedy. This annual, farcical treatment of Aristophanes is a guild tradition, ending the summer's eight-week run of Greek and Shakespearean works in a burst of energy.

About the play

Adapting the play means bringing current people and situations into the plot and expanding it - sometimes dropping it altogether - in order to bring the spirit of Aristophanes' works - if not the letter - into the present.

Song parodies and dances are used to replace most of the choral interludes and some of the dialogue. The farmers traditionally become farmers' daughters (women tend to be better dancers than men). Characters are added or subtracted to create some kind of narrative thread, a thread which can be snapped suddenly, if a comic digression beckons.

The play ends in a traditional Mack Sennet chase (ask your grandparents who he was), with characters running and leaping in a frantic, three-minute routine that ends when everyone collapses in exhaustion.

The play isn't cast until the end of July, with parts normally being given as a reward for participation in other guild plays.

Since 2004 is a political year and there is global unrest, there are many possibilities for the re-write. But no one knows just how it will turn out. The play won't be re-written until three weeks before it opens.

"Ballet Under the Stars"

For the eighth year, Ballet Quad Cities, the Quad Cities' resident professional ballet company, will present a free program in Lincoln Park as part of the Genesius Guild's summer schedule of classic performances. "Ballet Under the Stars" not only concludes the guild's season, it also provides an introduction to BQC's 2004/2005 performance schedule. Copies of that schedule will be available at the Lincoln Park presentation.

The company will perform on three consecutive evenings: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, August 20, 21, and 22. The program will be drawn from the BQC repertoire of original and standard ballets and is designed to appeal to a broad age range. As is their custom, BQC will include a traditional "story" ballet in the program.

One of Ballet Quad Cities' winter events to anticipate is the company's acclaimed production of "The Nutcracker" to be presented at the Adler Theatre in Davenport, on November 27 and 28, 2004.

GENESIUS GUILD SUMMER SEASONS

1957	Sophocles:	Antigone
1958	Sophocles:	Oedipus Rex
1959	Euripides:	Iphigenia in Aulis
1960	Euripides:	Alcestis
	Shakespeare:	Henry IV, Part One
1961	Sophocles:	Antigone
	Shakespeare:	Henry IV, Part One
	Shakespeare:	Macbeth
	Aristophanes:	The Birds
1962	Sophocles:	Ajax
	Shakespeare:	Twelfth Night
	Shakespeare:	Othello
	Aristophanes:	The Frogs
1963	Euripides:	Medea
	Shakespeare:	A Midsummer Night's Dream
	Shakespeare:	Richard II
	Aristophanes:	The Clouds
1964	Euripides:	The Trojan Women
	Shakespeare:	Much Ado About Nothing
	Shakespeare:	Coriolanus
	Aristophanes:	The Acharnians
	Shaw:	Don Juan in Hell
	Shaw:	The Dark Lady of the Sonnets
	Moeller:	Helena's Husband
1965	Sophocles:	Elektra
	Shakespeare:	The Tempest
	Shakespeare:	Macbeth
1966	Sophocles:	Oedipus Rex
	Shakespeare:	Hamlet
	Shakespeare:	"Sounds and Sweet Airs"
	Aristophanes:	Thesmophoriazusae
1967	Aeschylus:	Prometheus Bound
	Shakespeare:	Julius Caesar
	Fry:	A Phoenix Too Frequent
1968	Sophocles:	Ajax
	Shakespeare:	The Merry Wives of Windsor
	Shakespeare:	Richard III
	Aristophanes:	Peace
1969	Euripides:	The Bacchae
	Shakespeare:	The Merchant of Venice
	Shakespeare:	The Comedy of Errors
	Aristophanes:	The Wasps
1970	Sophocles:	Philoctetes
	Shakespeare:	As You Like It
	Shakespeare:	Measure for Measure
	Aristophanes:	Ecclesiazusae
1971	Euripides:	Hecuba
	Shakespeare:	The Taming of a Shrew
	Shakespeare:	King Lear
	Aristophanes:	Plutus
1972	Sophocles:	Antigone
	Shakespeare:	Henry IV, Part One
	Shakespeare:	Henry IV, Part Two
	Aristophanes:	The Knights
1973	Euripides:	Medea
	Shakespeare:	Romeo and Juliet
	Aristophanes:	The Birds
	Barber:	*A Hand of Bridge*
	Menotti:	*The Old Maid and the Thief*
1974	Aeschylus:	Seven Against Thebes
	Shakespeare:	Twelfth Night
	Shakespeare:	Antony and Cleopatra
	Floyd:	*Slow Dusk*
	Dougherty:	*Many Moons*
1975	Euripides:	The Trojan Women
	Shakespeare:	A Midsummer Night's Dream
	Shakespeare:	"Sounds and Sweet Airs"
	Aristophanes:	The Frogs
1976	Euripides:	The Bacchae
	Shakespeare:	The Tempest
	Shakespeare:	Much Ado About Nothing
	Aristophanes:	The Clouds
	Mascagni:	*Cavalleria Rusticana*
1977	Sophocles:	Oedipus at Colonus
	Shakespeare:	Richard II
	Aristophanes:	Thesmophoriazusae
	Copland:	*The Tender Land*

1978	Sophocles:	Elektra
	Shakespeare:	Julius Caesar
	Aristophanes:	Ecclesiazusae
	Gilbert-Sullivan:	*The Mikado*
1979	Sophocles:	Oedipus Rex
	Shakespeare:	The Merry Wives of Windsor
	Shakespeare:	Richard III
	Aristophanes:	The Acharnians
	Gilbert-sullivan:	*H.M.S. Pinafore*
1980	Euripides:	Alcestis
	Shakespeare:	Measure for Measure
	Greissecker:	Royal Gambit
	Gilbert-Sullivan:	*The Pirates of Penzance*
1981	Aeschylus:	Prometheus Bound
	Shakespeare:	Hamlet
	Aristophanes:	The Wasps
	Shaw:	Don Juan in Hell
	Shaw:	The Dark Lady of the Sonnets
	Fry:	A Phoenix Too Frequent
	Gheon:	The Comedian
	Gilbert-Sullivan:	*The Yeoman of the Guard*
1982	Sophocles:	Antigone
	Shakespeare:	As You Like It
	Shakespeare:	Coriolanus
	Aristophanes:	Plutus
	Gilbert-Sullivan:	*The Mikado*
1983	Euripides:	Medea
	Shakespeare:	The Taming of the Shrew
	Shakespeare:	Romeo and Juliet
	Aristophanes:	The Birds
	Menotti:	*The Telephone*
	various:	*Arias*
1984	Euripides:	Hippolytus
	Shakespeare:	The Comedy of Errors
	Shakespeare:	Othello
	Aristophanes:	The Frogs
	Offenbach:	*Ba-Ta-Clan*
1985	Sophocles:	Ajax
	Euripides:	Helen
	Shakespeare:	Troilus and Cressida
	Giroudoux:	The Tiger at the Gates
	Moeller:	Helena's Husband
	Offenbach:	*La Belle Helene*
1986	Sophocles:	The Women of Trachis
	Shakespeare:	A Midsummer Night's Dream
	Shakespeare:	Macbeth
	Aristophanes:	Peace
	Offenbach:	*Orpheus in the Underworld*
1987	Euripides:	The Trojan Women
	Shakespeare:	The Winter's Tale
	Aristophanes:	The Knights
	Moliere:	The Doctor in Spite of Himself
	Offenbach:	*La Perichole*
	Shakespeare:	King Lear (Deere)
1988	Euripides:	The Bacchae
	Shakespeare:	The Two Gentlemen of Verona
	Shakespeare:	The Merchant of Venice
	Aristophanes:	The Clouds
	Mozart:	*The Impresario*
	Menotti:	*The Old Maid and the Thief*
	Shaw:	Don Juan in Hell (R.I. Library)
	Shakespeare:	"Sound & Sweet Airs" (R.I. Library)
1989	Sophocles:	Oedipus at Colonus
	Shakespeare:	Henry IV, Part One
	Shakespeare:	Henry IV, Part Two
	Aristophanes:	Thesmophoriazusae
	Mozart:	*Cosi fan tutte*
1990	Aeschylus:	The Oresteia Agamemnon The Choephores The Eumenides
	Shakespeare:	Henry V
	Aristophanes:	Ecclesiazusae
	Mozart:	*The Marriage of Figaro*
1991	Sophocles:	Oedipus Rex
	Shakespeare:	Twelfth Night
	Shakespeare:	Much Ado About Nothing
	Aristophanes:	The Acharnians
	Mozart:	*The Magic Flute*
	Eliot:	Murder in the Cathedral (various churches)
1992	Sophocles:	Antigone
	Shakespeare:	All's Well That Ends Well
	Shakespeare:	King John
	Aristophanes:	The Wasps
	Salieri:	*A Little Harlequinade*
	Mozart:	*The Goose of Cairo*

1993 Euripides: Hecuba
Shakespeare: Merry Wives of Windsor
Shakespeare: The Tempest
Aristophanes: Plutus
Mozart: *La Finta Giardiniera*

1994: Euripides: Medea
Shakespeare: As You Like It
Shakespeare: Measure for Measure
Aristophanes: Peace
Mozart: *Don Giovanni*

1995: Euripides: Andromache
Shakespeare: A Comedy of Errors
Shakespeare: Antony & Cleopatra
Aristophanes The Knights
Mozart: *Bastien and Bastienne*
Barab: *Little Red Riding Hood*
A Shakespeare Review
(Regional Rotary Meeting)

1996 Aeschylus: The Persians
Shakespeare: Love's Labour's Lost
Shakespeare: King Lear
Aristophanes: The Birds
Mozart: *A Retrospective Concert*

1997 Euripides: Alcestis
Shakespeare: Midsummer Night's Dream
Shakespeare: Romeo & Juliet
Aristophanes: The Frogs
Ballet Under the Stars

1998 Euripides: Elektra
Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew
Shakespeare: Julius Caesar
Aristophanes: The Clouds
Ballet Under the Stars

1999 Sophocles: Ajax
Shakespeare: Two Gentlemen of Verona
Shakespeare: Richard II
Aristophanes: Thesmophoriazusae
Ballet Under the Stars

2000 Aeschylus: The Suppliants
Shakespeare: Twelfth Night
Shakespeare: Richard III
Aristophanes: Ecclesiazusae
Ballet Under the Stars
"Shakespeare: A Working Professional"
"Shakespeare: His Life In His Works"

2001 Euripides: The Trojan Women
Shaw: Dark Lady Of the Sonnets
Fry: A Phoenix Too Frequent
Shakespeare: Hamlet
Aristophanes: The Acharnians
Ballet Under the Stars
"The Idea Of Tragedy"

2002 Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound
Gheon: Parade At the Devil's Bridge
The Sausage-Maker's Interlude
Anon: Miracle of St. Nicholas
3 School Clerks
Shakespeare: Macbeth
Aristophanes: The Wasps
Puccini: *Gianni Schicchi*
Ballet Under the Stars

2003 Euripides: The Bacchae
Shakespeare: Henry IV, Part One
Shakespeare: Henry IV, Part Two
Aristophanes: Plutus
Menotti: *The Telephone*
Gilbert & Sullivan: *Trial By Jury*
Ballet Under the Stars
"Shakespeare's Big Four"

2004 Sophocles: Oedipus Rex
Shakespeare: The Merry Wives of Windsor
Shakespeare: Othello
Aristophanes: Peace
Larsen: *Barnum's Bird*
Ballet Under the Stars
"The Phoenix, the Turtle, and the Swan"

(Tentative schedule for 2005 and 2006)

2005 Sophocles: Oedipus at Colonus
Shakespeare: Much Ado About Nothing
Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale (or Cymbeline)
Aristophanes: The Knights
(opera & ballet tba)
"The Oedipus Legend"

2006 **50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON**
Aeschylus: Seven Against Thebes
Sophocles: Antigone
Shakespeare: The Tempest
Gheon: The Comedian (Story of Genesius)
Aristophanes: The Birds
(opera & ballet tba)