

JUST **WHO** WERE THOSE WOMEN?

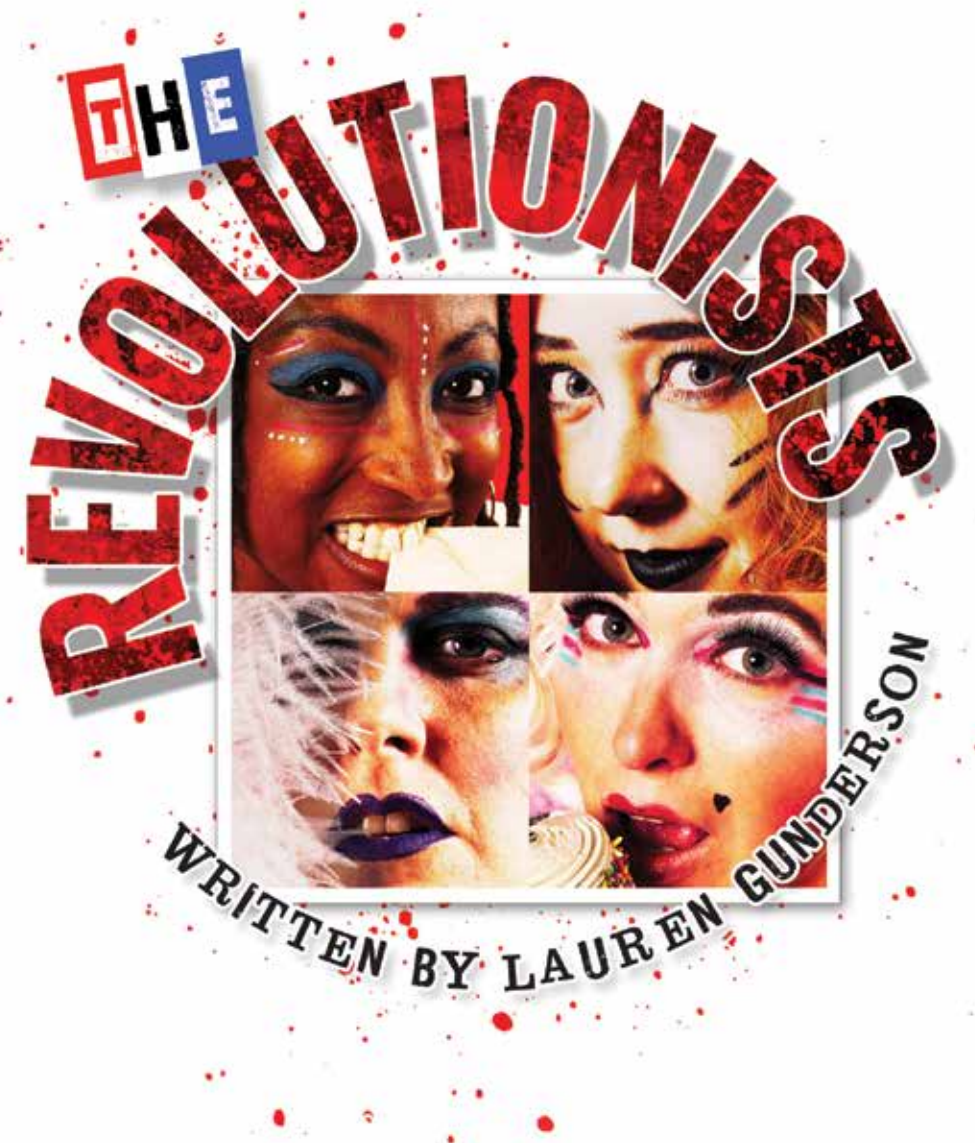
In Lauren Gunderson's *The Revolutionists*, four strong women meeting in the home of a prolific French writer discuss the winds of revolution sweeping society during the French Reign of Terror in 1793-94. Three are historical figures and one is a composite character.

- **OLYMPE DE GOUGES** was a French writer and social reformer who is considered by many to be among the world's first feminists. Born in 1748 and married at age 16, she moved to Paris after her husband died, vowing never to marry again. She had strong views on a wide variety of political and social topics, among them divorce, maternity hospitals, road improvements, women's and children's rights, and abolitionism. Among de Gouges' many plays, books, and pamphlets was *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the [Female] Citizen*, a response to a similarly-titled law about the rights of men. As a passionate advocate of human rights, de Gouges welcomed the revolution, but she lamented the failure of the new government to advance women's rights and objected to the violence that followed the overthrow of the king. Despite her opposition to slavery, she also condemned the revolt of slaves in present-day Haiti because of her dislike for violent revolutions. Her criticism of the French revolutionary government eventually led to her arrest.

- **MARIANNE ANGELLE** is the only character in *The Revolutionists* who is not based on a single historical figure. Instead, she is a composite of the free black women of the island nation of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti) who fought to overturn French rule in the 1790s. Saint-Domingue was rich in sugar, coffee, and cotton, and French planters brought in Africans to work the plantations, subjecting them to an especially harsh system of slavery. At the time, there were an estimated 500,000 slaves, 32,000 white people, and 28,000 free black people. The revolution was the only slave uprising in history that led to the founding of a state free from slavery and governed by non-whites and former slaves.

- **CHARLOTTE CORDAY** was a supporter of the revolution, but objected to the radical turn toward the use of terror by leaders of the new Republic. She was especially angered by the massacre of hundreds of prisoners during a five-day killing spree which she blamed on Jean-Paul Marat, a newspaper publisher and influential member of the radical movement responsible for the Reign of Terror. Corday was a noted proponent of equal rights for women, but it was her decision to murder Marat that earned her a place in history. Convinced that the death of Marat would help avoid a civil war and preserve the Republic, she went to his house seeking an audience. After a 15-minute discussion, she pulled from her corset a butcher knife and stabbed Marat in the chest, severing an artery that caused him to bleed to death. During her four-day trial she testified that she killed one man to save 100,000.

- **MARIE ANTOINETTE** is the best known of the quartet. The last queen of France, she became increasingly unpopular among her subjects because of her lavish spending, promiscuity, and her opposition to social and financial reforms. She was scorned as "Madame Deficit" because of France's financial crisis. During the revolution she and King Louis XVI were placed under house arrest at the Tuileries Palace in October 1789. The Queen's attempt nine months later to flee to Varennes and her support for a war by European countries against the French Republic further enraged her subjects, and mobs attacking Tuileries forced the royal couple to flee the palace. They were then imprisoned, and the monarchy was abolished.



SEPTEMBER 10 - OCTOBER 2, 2021 2021/2022 season

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Voyage's First Step

I'm going to take the unusual step of being a bit more philosophical, rather than the normal exuberance that you might expect from a "President's Message" for the opening of CP's 73rd Season. The beginning of a season is usually a time to celebrate - and we DO celebrate, but these strange times also color our celebrations with some anxiety. How will things work out? When will things get back to "normal"? I feel all of these things right along with everyone else. We plan, we replan, and we plan again. And still, things change. All I know is that we have to begin our journey (or voyage to be in keeping with our season's theme), because if we don't we'll never get anywhere.

And so we continue to move forward. We're back to our in-the-round configuration, and we're back to a (hopefully) full season. *The Revolutionists* is a particularly appropriate play to start with, given our times. It is an amazing comedy where characters live, laugh, plan, and create - all while acknowledging an ever-present danger lurks in the shadows. We, too, need to live and laugh, but we can't ignore what's out there either. Part of the excitement of a voyage is NOT knowing what is around every corner. It IS discovering something new and what is possible when we step outside our insulated worlds.

As I write this, I don't know what the pandemic situation will be, or what health and safety protocols will be in place - I only know that we will do everything we can to keep our community safe while we stage our productions. Things will evolve as our voyage progresses through the season - hopefully for the better. But we will be ready to deal with whatever happens because we ARE a community. You have given CP so much kindness and support and we will certainly give you the best - and safest - live theatrical experiences we can.

So to sum it all up, to quote J.R.R. Tolkien...
 "I think I'm quite ready for another adventure!"

— STEVE TOBIN

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 Assistant Director.....David Cooper
 Producer.....Robin Schwartz
 Stage Manager.....Ernie Morton
 Assistant Stage Manager.....Hannah Housley
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 Costume Designer.....Amy Atha-Nicholls
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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

It's an odd thing, to make theatre during a pandemic. It's odd to have to intentionally decide whether or not to even pursue theatre in a pandemic. Ultimately, you're reading this because, decide we did. We thought it was THAT important, to hopefully in some small way give our audience relief, entertainment, distraction, and connection. **Thank you for being here.**

I didn't mean to like *The Revolutionists*. It was begrudgingly read at the recommendation of a colleague (Thanks, Gwen!), and that's all it took. I was quickly struck by its layers and its female-centeredness. I started to think of my modern-day revolutionary sisters fighting for rights and freedoms. It's sobering to me to think how much these patterns deeply persist and how we have the same, only slightly altered fights, over and over again.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



JENNIFER COOPER is returning to direct a Colonial Players season production after previously directing *The Babylon Line*, recognized with a 2018-2019 Ruby Griffith Award as First Runner Up for Outstanding Achievement in a Play. Her work was again acknowledged with a 2019-2020 Ruby Griffith Award as First Runner Up in a Musical for *Mamma Mia!* at Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre. With an undergraduate degree in theatre, Jennifer took a (long!) hiatus from the world of theatre to focus on her most important priority — her family. She returned to theatre with CP's 2017 One Act Play Festival as director of David Ives' *The Universal Language*, which went on to win

Revolution is something that has always had a soundtrack in my mind. It is scored by punk and rock music and expressed in art. It is not quiet, or reserved, or polite. It is sometimes held together with ink and ribbons. And safety pins.

It persists though. Mostly because it HAS to. Here's to my sister revolutionaries for your perseverance despite fatigue, soul-numbing repetition, and seeming defeat. I see you. This is why we fight.

Viva La Revolution!

— JENNIFER COOPER

awards for Excellence in Directing, Outstanding Production, and Technical Excellence at the 2018 Maryland Community Theatre Festival. Some of her previous directing work includes *Agnes of God*, *Spoon River Anthology*, and *Tartuffe*. Stage credits include Procne (*The Song of Procne*), Rizzo (*Grease*), Audrey (*Little Shop of Horrors*), Rita (*Educating Rita*), and Mary Poppins (*Mary Poppins*). "Thank you to The Colonial Players for this opportunity to be a louder part of the revolution, and to my cast and creative team for perseverance, bravery, dedication, and being my 'who are we?'" To David and Noah — it is only, ever, and always because of you that I have any voice at all. For all my days I will try to make you proud xo."

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Pick a week at any time of the year, and chances are a play by **LAUREN GUNDERSON** is being produced somewhere in the United States by a regional or community theatre. Gunderson is a prolific author of more than 20 plays and musicals and was the most produced playwright in America in 2017 and 2019. She has won numerous awards for her writing, including two

Steinberg/ATCA New Play Awards for *I and You* and *The Book of Will*, plus the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award. She was also a recipient of a genius grant from the McArthur Foundation. Colonial Players presented Gunderson's *Silent Sky* to the acclaim of critics and our audiences in January, 2019.

The Colonial Players wishes to express heartfelt gratitude to all supporters who donated the value of their tickets when Season 71 came to an abrupt end. Your contributions allowed the theater to continue paying utility bills, award the annual scholarship, and still help us continue to face the unknowns brought on by COVID-19.

Thank you.



THE CAST



CAREY BIBB

(Charlotte Corday)

This is Carey's debut performance with The Colonial Players and she is so excited to be acting in this production a mere 18 months after auditioning. She spent the last seven years as a teacher in Japan, Egypt, and China, and is thrilled to be back in the United States, able to perform again! She formerly acted in *A Seussified Christmas Carol* and *Almost, Maine* with The Newtowne Players in St. Mary's County. During the pandemic Carey lent her voice to podcasts such as *Starcrossed* and *Reap*, and also acted in Zoom plays in order to keep honing her skills. She'd like to thank all of the badass women (and men) involved in this production, as well as all of the badass audience members who have come to see it! Hope you enjoy the show!



SAMANTHA MCEWEN DEININGER

(Marianne Angelle)

Samantha is eager to be back on The Colonial Players stage after 10 years away! A professional singer and actor from Columbia, MD, she has performed in more than 40 musicals, plays, operas, and films throughout the country and received numerous awards. She is stepmom to two amazing children, Stuart and Eden, owns her own business, and belongs to the band, Scotch and Lies, alongside her wonderful husband, Stephen. Notable roles have included Nicki in *The Bodyguard*, Sour Kangaroo in *Seussical*, Queenie in *Showboat*, Sarah in *Ragtime*, Micaela in *Carmen*, Joanne in *Godspell*, Queenie in *The Wild Party*, Geneva in *The 1940's Radio Hour*, Erzulie in *Once on this Island*, Joanne in *Rent*, Fiordiligi in *Così Fan Tutte*, Jenny in *Company*, Reno in *Anything Goes*, Tituba in *The Crucible*, Suzanne in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, Eisa in *Trojan Women 2.0*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Reba in *You Can't Take it With You*, 1st Soprano in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and her only other Colonial Players credit, Hallie/Marguerite in *Inventing Van Gogh*. Samantha is so grateful for the opportunity to do live theater again and over the moon to be sharing the stage with these BADASS ladies!



RYAN GUNNING HARRIS

(Marie Antoinette)

Ryan received her B.A. in Theatre Performance from the College of Charleston. She is thrilled to be returning to The Colonial Players in this incredible production. She was previously seen in The Colonial Players production of *Nine*. A huge thank you to Sam, Mary, and Carey for making me laugh and making me better as an actor and a badass woman. Special thanks to Jennifer and David and the rest of the team for their encouragement and trust in me for reasons beyond my understanding. "Thank you to Amy and Leigh for making me look incredible. To Meghan, Alex, and Patrick for all of your love and support. To Mom and Dad, for everything you've done for me. To my husband, Brad, for choosing me, loving me, and encouraging me to do things I didn't think I could."



MARY C. ROGERS

(Olympe de Gouges)

Mary is happy to be back on stage in this long-awaited production of *The Revolutionists* and to share the stage with three amazing women! Mary has worked onstage, backstage, and everywhere in between with a number of community theatres in Maryland. Some of Mary's favorite roles include Maggie in *Red Herring*, Aunt Bella in *Lost in Yonkers* (WATCH nomination), Lana Sherwood in *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, and Hilary in *Tribute*. Mary thanks her husband, Abner, for being amazing and dedicates her performance to four young badasses: Nanette, Grace, Annalise, and Emma. Three cheers to the crew and production staff for their incredible work!

ABOUT OUR NEXT PLAY

In October and November, The Colonial Players will present *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage's comedy about an African American actress struggling to build a career at a time when few parts were open to people of color. Drawing from the screwball films of the 1930s, the play takes a funny and irreverent look at racial stereotypes in Hollywood. Stark, striving to build an acting career, is the African American maid to a white Hollywood star who is desperately grasping to hold on to her career. Vera's life is transformed when she is cast in a trail-blazing role in a movie starring her boss. The story behind the cameras leaves Vera with a surprising and controversial legacy that scholars will debate for years to

come. Nottage won Pulitzers for *Ruined* in 2008 and *Sweat* in 2017.

The *New York Post* had this to say about *Vera Stark*: "That this show is so informed and incisive while being wildly entertaining may be Nottage's biggest achievement here. In a way, she's beaten Hollywood at its own game." *Vogue* said the play "gnaws at racial typecasting and at smarty-pants who build myths and think they understand all there is to know about someone by reviewing films."

Our second show of the 2021-22 season opens October 22 and runs through November 13 with performances Thursday through Sunday.

COMING ATTRACTIONS FOR OUR 73RD SEASON

★ **A CHRISTMAS CAROL** December will see the return of our ever-popular production of *A Christmas Carol*, a musical version of the Charles Dickens classic written especially for The Colonial Players by Richard Wade and Dick Gessner. **Sixteen performances are scheduled from December 2 through December 12. Tickets go on sale on November 20.**

★ **THE LOST BOY** This is a heartwarming fictionalized story about James Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*. Haunted by the death of his older brother, James slowly begins to confront his family's tragic past through storytelling, an unexpected friendship, and the dream of finding Neverland. **Performances January 14 through February 5.**

★ **AGNES OF GOD** Join us for an exploration of faith and memory and the power of love as a court-appointed psychiatrist is tasked with assessing the sanity of a novice nun who is accused of murdering her baby. **Performances February 25 through March 19.**

★ **FREAKY FRIDAY** A mother and her teenage daughter magically swap places, learning in just one day the love and respect that bond parent and child. This is a joyous Disney musical comedy. **Performances April 8 through May 8.**

★ **THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME** Winner of the Tony Award for best play, this is the story of Christopher, exceptionally intelligent but ill-equipped to interpret everyday life. His story examines what it truly means to love, and the sacrifices it often takes to do so. **Performances June 3 through June 25.**



THE STAFF (continued)

Broadway (2018), *The Full Monty* (2017), and *The Wedding Singer* (2016). Outside of theatre and work, Leigh enjoys cosplaying, playing D&D, enjoying an overly-complicated cocktail, and being outdoors, preferably hiking or skiing.



ERNIE MORTON

(Stage Manager)

When Ernie read the script for *The Revolutionists* he contacted Jennifer to beg her to let him work on this show. He is so glad that he did. The cast, staff, and crew have been phenomenal. The level of talent and commitment exhibited by everyone associated with *The Revolutionists* has been inspiring. Ernie has stage managed around a dozen shows at The Colonial Players, and even with two dozen "marines" in *A Few Good Men*, none of those shows has been this badass.



ROBIN SCHWARTZ

(Producer)

Robin is overjoyed that theatre-in-the round is back at The Colonial Players! After graduating from Goucher College with a B.A. in Theatre, she directed and produced plays at Red Branch Theatre

Company and Drama Learning Center. Robin directed *Love, Loss and What I Wore* for CP this past summer. She was last seen on the CP stage as Ruth Hoch in *Book of Days*. Favorite credits include Dawn in *The Universal Language* (Outstanding Performance from the Maryland Community Theatre Festival), Thea Elvsted in *Hedda Gabler*, and Joan Dellamond in *The Babylon Line*. "So much gratitude to the whole CP team for the opportunity to create theatre with these amazing, and truly badass, artists."



GINNY WHITE

(Lighting Co-Designer)

This is Gin's first experience with lighting design at The Colonial Players. She is excited to be a part of such a creative artistic team. Gin has designed lighting and sound for several local community theatres and was the technical director at The Children's Theatre of Annapolis for many years. When not behind the scenes, she has enjoyed being on stage and appeared most recently at The Colonial Players in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.



THE STAFF



AMY ATHA-NICHOLLS

(Costume Designer)

Maker of stuff, nonsense, and mischief by decree. Amy has worn many hats, including puppeteer, costumer, pyrographer, designer, short-film producer, playwright, archer, wench (when required), and assassin on occasion (specializing in heart attacks...). Amy is in awe of the absolute rockstars involved with this production and has loved every second of working with them. Love always to R, P, & K, evermore O.



RICHARD ATHA-NICHOLLS

(Set / Video Projection Designer)

Richard loves a challenge and has had a lot of fun designing the set for *The Revolutionists*, including the projections. His last foray into set design at The Colonial Players was for *Towards Zero*, which also included projections. Usually he's found working behind the computer and mixer doing sound design and engineering for local theatres, primarily at The Colonial Players, Bowie Community Theatre, and Laurel Mill Playhouse. His sound designs have garnered two WATCH nominations. Richard has appeared on area stages and in his spare time helps run Discworld conventions. Occasionally he has been known to direct. Love to C, A, P & K. Always in my heart, O.



SHANNON BENIL

(Lighting Co-Designer)

Shannon has mainly been seen performing at CP since starting here 28 years ago but recently decided to branch out by joining the Board as Treasurer. She also first-time directed the one-weekend-only musical *I Love You Because* earlier this year. Now she is testing the waters on the technical side as a first-time lighting co-designer. She thanks Jennifer for the opportunity and support.



DAVID COOPER

(Assistant Director / Sound Designer)

David has been involved with The Colonial Players for the past several seasons. He was last seen on stage in *Book of Days*. Behind the scenes he has provided technical assistance and sound design for a number of shows. Most recently David helped to establish and run the system used for live streaming *Maytag Virgin*. Working with the badass women of *The Revolutionists* has been wonderful. "To Jennifer - my partner in everyday revolutions, I love you."



MEGAN HENDERSON

(Properties Designer / Set Decoration)

Megan is happy to be back with CP after stage managing *Love, Loss and What I Wore!* She is a teaching artist, actor, director, stage manager, and wardrobe assistant. She has previously worked with Toby's Dinner Theatre, Signature Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Drama Learning Center, Red Branch Theatre Company, and Liberty High School. Megan holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from Seton Hill University.



LEIGH RAWLS

(Makeup / Hair / Wig Designer)

Leigh is thrilled to be a part of her first CP production. Though she lives and works as a graphic designer in downtown DC, she's usually found performing, directing, and designing at Silver Spring Stage (SSS) and Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre (ASGT), among others. She most recently created the set and five huge dragon heads for *She Kills Monsters* at SSS. Prior to the pandemic, she directed, costumed, and set designed SSS's critically acclaimed production of *Perfect Arrangement*, a simultaneously comedic and heart-wrenching story about the struggle of LGBTQ+ individuals at the State Department in 1950s Washington, DC. In Annapolis, Leigh was last seen onstage in ASGT's 9-to-5: *The Musical* (2018), *Bullets Over*

THE COLONIAL
PLAYERS, INC.

presents



Directed by
JENNIFER COOPER

Commissioned and first produced by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.

THE CAST (in order of appearance)

Olympe de Gouges.....Mary C. Rogers
Marianne Angelle.....Samantha McEwen Deininger
Charlotte Corday.....Carey Bibb
Marie Antoinette.....Ryan Gunning Harris

TIME AND PLACE

Paris, 1793,
The Reign of Terror

A safe place, a study, a prison cell,
the tribunal, the scaffold

This production will be presented with one intermission
between Act I and Act II.

The Revolutionists is presented by special arrangement
with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.