

Department of Theatre and Dance

Mad Forest
A Play from Romania
by Caryl Churchill



March 21–25, 2018

L. Howard Fox Theatre



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts
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Department of Theatre and Dance
Randy Mugleston, Chair

Mad Forest

A Play from Romania

by Caryl Churchill

Director **Susan Kerner**
Music Director **Sarah Brett England**
Set Designer **Robert Dietze**
Costume Designer **Elena Knitel**
Lighting Designer **Cameron Filepas**
Sound Designer **Nicole Belenski**
Hair/Makeup Designer **Sarabeth Goldberg**
Text and Dialect Coach **Carole Healey**
Dramaturg **Andi Stover**
Movement and Acting Coach **Heather Benton**
Fight Choreographer **Rick Sordelet, Colin Kelly-Sordelet**
Romanian Language Consultant **Vicky Jacobs**
Production Stage Manager **Michele Correggio**

Program Notes

In 1965 Nicolae Ceausescu rose to power by resisting Soviet dominance, but the Romanian people paid a price for their nationalism. Ceausescu outlawed any opposition to his power. His vicious Securitate, or secret police, would disappear people, and poverty and fear fell like a shroud over Romania. To pay for a lavish “People’s Palace” and other outward shows of prosperity, the government plunged the nation into a severe austerity while falsely claiming in state-sponsored newspapers that the economy was thriving. Romanians lived under the specter of lies until finally they believed the story of their own eyes, seeing protest happening in the streets.

On December 15, 1989, László Tökés spoke out against dictator Nicolae Ceausescu to a small, nameless gathering in Timisoara, Romania. Through word of mouth, needing to see for themselves that the unthinkable was finally happening, people flooded the town square, spontaneously unleashing a firestorm of unstoppable fury against a violent, oppressive regime. Ten days later, on Christmas Day, the people had freed themselves from 25 years of authoritarian rule with the arrest and execution of Ceausescu and his wife. The Romanian Revolution reminds us that the impossible becomes possible when determination overpowers fear, and people decide to stand up.

In *Mad Forest* Caryl Churchill documents how ordinary people accommodate to life in an oppressive society, how they protect their families and livelihoods, and the price they pay in personal happiness and morality. When young people take to the streets to blow the lid off the Ceausescu nightmare, families struggle to heal a generation of wounds and to discover the costs of their newfound freedoms.

—Susan Kerner and Andi Stover

Mad Forest is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

In consideration of both audiences and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

Cast

VLADU FAMILY

Bogdan, an electrician **Joseph Respicio**

Irina, a tram driver **Giuliana Carr**

Their children:

Lucia, a primary school teacher **Elizabeth Sayko**

Florina, a nurse **Jeanette Bednar**

Gabriel, an engineer **James Hooper**

Rodica, Gabriel's wife **Karlie Kohler**

Wayne, Lucia's bridegroom **Bradley Carrington**

Grandfather, Bogdan's father **Conor Shaw**

Grandmother, Bogdan's mother **Ava Rendina**

Old Aunt, Bogdan's aunt **Catherine McElaney**

ANTONESCU FAMILY

Mihai, an architect **Christopher Learn**

Flavia, a teacher **Maddison Albregts**

Radu, an art student, their son **Cameron Style**

Flavia's Grandmother **Karlie Kohler**

Ianos **Martin Czajkowski**

Toma, age 8 **Jesse Castellanos**

Securitate Man **Fabrizio Yambao**

Doctor **Catherine McElaney**

Priest **Conor Shaw**

Angel **Ava Rendina**

Vampire **Fabrizio Yambao**

Dog **Jesse Castellanos**

Patient **Jesse Castellanos**

Patient with Sore Throat **Bradley Carrington**

EYEWITNESSES

Painter **Martin Czajkowski**

Translator **Fabrizio Yambao**

Girl Student **Karlie Kohler**

Boy Student 1 **Bradley Carrington**
Bulldozer Driver **Christopher Learn**
Boy Student 2 **Jesse Castellanos**
Student Doctor **Annelise Lipowitz**
Securitate Officer **Conor Shaw**
Soldier **James Hooper**
House Painter **Ava Rendina**
Flower Seller **Catherine McElaney**

Other Characters played by members of the Company

Instrumentalists

Vocals **Ava Rendina**
Flute **Bradley Carrington**
Mandolin **Annelise Lipowitz**
Guitars **Karlie Kohler, James Hooper**
Drums **Fabrizio Yambao**
Accordion/Melodica **Giuliana Carr**
Bass **Martin Czajkowski**

Time and Place

ACT I

Part 1: LUCIA'S WEDDING

Romania: Autumn, 1989

Part 2: DECEMBER

Romania: December, 1989

~~Intermission~~

ACT II

Part 3: FLORINA'S WEDDING

Romania, Winter/Spring, 1990

Production Biographies

Susan Kerner (Director) has directed in New York, London and Cambridge (England), Shanghai, and at theaters and universities throughout the United States including Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Meadow Brook Theatre (MI), George Street Playhouse, Luna Stage, Rutgers University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. As resident director at George Street Playhouse, she directed a wide range of classics and new plays. She commissioned and directed the world premiere of *And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank* and marked the 20th anniversary of the award-winning play with a Normal Ave. production in 2016 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park and Jersey City Theater Center. The *Star Ledger* recognized Kerner's Luna Stage production of *The Old Settler* in NJ's Top Ten of 2010. She won Best Director at the 2014 Think Fast One-Act Play Competition. Kerner has staged readings and workshops of new plays in New York City at the Actors Connection and the Anthony Trollope Society and in New Jersey at Luna Stage. Her recent productions at MSU include *Punk Rock*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Clybourne Park*, *The Big Meal*, *Equus*, *Arcadia*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Kerner has led international programs for MSU in China, Korea, Austria, Italy, Greece, and England. She holds graduate degrees from Columbia University and Boston University, was a Fulbright Scholar in India, and is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

Sarah Brett England (Music Director) has music directed/accompanied over 100 shows throughout the country with credits at Pan Asian Rep, Barrington Stage Company, Creede Repertory Theatre, SurfFlight Theatre, Half Moon Theatre, River Valley Rep, Texas Family Musicals, New Harmony Theatre, Ocean City Theatre Company, Nebraska Theatre Caravan, Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse, Allenberry Playhouse, Dancebreak 2010, and on board P&O Australia's Pacific Dawn cruise ship. She has music directed multiple productions at MSU, including *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Sing for Your Supper*, *Hair*, and the annual BFA Musical Theatre Senior Showcase. She has written arrangements for multiple musicals, including *Halloween Hullabaloo*. England received her BA in Conducting and Music Theory from the College of William & Mary. www.SarahBrettEngland.com

Elena Knitel (Costume Designer) is a junior Theatre Production/Design costume design major. *Mad Forest* is her first main-stage design. She has worked on many shows at MSU, doing both assistant costume design and wardrobe for *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Producers*. She was the associate designer of “Brahms Waltzes” in *Works-a-Foot 2016* and the assistant costume designer for the New Works Initiative show *Michigan Murders* last spring. Some other experiences include doing wardrobe for the Broadway National Tour of *42nd Street* last winter and wardrobe supervising on MSU’s recent production of *Twelfth Night* this past fall. She finds it important to tell the story of *Mad Forest* at this time and is glad to help do so.

Cameron Filepas (Lighting Designer) is a junior at MSU majoring in Theatre Production/Design with a concentration in lighting design. He has previously designed *Punk Rock* and *Company* as well as assisted both student and professional designers on productions including *Works-a-Foot 2015*, *Danceworks 2016*, *Iphigenia*, and *Michigan Murders* at MSU. Other credits include assistant master electrician on *Carrie the musical* and master electrician on *Anything Goes*. Filepas currently is the resident lighting designer for Hopewell Valley Children’s Theatre and has previously designed at the Strawberry One Act festival in the Theatre at St. Clement’s. Upcoming designs include *Wedding Band* in the Alexander Kasser Theater.

Nicole Belenski (Sound Designer) is a student in Theatre Production/Design with a concentration in both lighting and sound and a double minor in physics and mathematics in the honors program at MSU. In the past, she was assistant sound designer for *Michigan Murders* and head of microphones for Plays in the Park in Edison, NJ, on *Legally Blonde*, *West Side Story*, and *Mary Poppins*. Some credits include second assistant lighting designer on *Carrie the musical*, master electrician on *Works-a-Foot 2017*, and assistant master electrician for both *West Side Story* and *Aida*.

Carole Healey (Dialect Coach) teaches voice and speech for the BFA program at MSU, where she has directed *Henry V*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Tartuffe*, and *Misalliance*. Healey has acted and directed at most of the major regional theaters in the country, including the Mint Theater (Off-Broadway), the REP, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Great Lakes Theater, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare, Cincinnati Playhouse, Milwaukee Repertory, TheatreWorks (CA), King’s Head Theatre (London), Repertory

Theatre of St. Louis, the Olney, Cape Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public, Philadelphia Theatre Company, and many others.

Andi Stover (Dramaturg) is a dramaturg, playwright, and director who currently works as the literary manager for the Department of Theatre and Dance at MSU. She is in the midst of several projects, including working as dramaturg with choreographer Karen Bernard on her upcoming piece *Showgirls* at Brooklyn Studios for Dance in May, and creating a new multidisciplinary work set to premiere at La MaMa ETC in April 2019 with choreographer Johanna Meyer.

Rick Sordelet (Fight Choreographer) and his son, Christian Kelly-Sordelet, are the creators of Sordelet, Inc., an exciting new stage combat company bringing more than 30 years of action movement experience to the entertainment community. Sordelet has worked on 72 Broadway productions, including *Disney's The Lion King* and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, as well as the national tours of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* and *Les Misérables*. His credits include 52 first-class productions worldwide. Opera credits include *Cyrano* (starring Placido Domingo) at the Metropolitan Opera; *Don Carlo* (directed by Nicholas Hytner) and *Heart of the Soldier* at San Francisco Opera; and *Cold Mountain*, *Don Giovanni*, *Roméo et Juliette*, and *La Fanciulla del West* at Santa Fe Opera. He has worked on films such as *The Game Plan*, *Dan in Real Life*, *Brave New Jersey*, and *The Sounding*. On television, he and his son worked as stunt coordinators for the hit CBS comedy series *Kevin Can Wait* and spent 12 years as stunt coordinators for *Guiding Light*. He is an instructor at the Yale School of Drama and a board member for the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Sordelet received the Edith Oliver Award for Sustained Excellence at the Lucille Lortel Awards from the League of Off-Broadway Theatres and Producers, and a Jeff Award for Best Fight Direction for *Romeo and Juliet* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He is the author of the play *Buried Treasure* and the cowriter of the upcoming feature film *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, directed by Bryan Singer. www.sordeletink.com.

Vicky Jacobs (Romanian Language Consultant) was born in Romania and immigrated to the United States in 1973. She studied at the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest. From 1973 to 1977 she worked at an international company and traveled throughout Asia and Europe. She married in 1976 and joined her husband in founding JTActif, a manufacturing company of high-performance athletic

clothing, doing designing and marketing for 25 years. Together, they have traveled the world. Jacobs has always been interested in theater and movies, attending numerous plays and film festivals. She is presently curating the New Jersey Jewish Film Festival in West Orange, NJ.

Michele Correggio (Production Stage Manager) is earning her BFA in Theatre Production/Design with a concentration in stage management. Her credits include production stage manager for *Works-A-Foot* and assistant stage manager for *Carrie*, *Punk Rock*, *Dance Collage*, and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

Cast Biographies

Maddison Albregts (Flavia) is a junior BFA Musical Theatre student. She was last seen as Norma in MSU's production of *Carrie* as well as Featured Grandma in *The Producers*.

Jeanette Bednar (Florina) is a sophomore BFA Acting major. She played Big in last semester's studio series, *Matsukaze*. She is excited to be performing in her first main-stage production at MSU.

Giuliana Carr (Irina) is a senior BFA Acting major. Previous MSU credits include *Twelfth Night* (Viola), *Michigan Murders* (Genevieve), *Pride and Prejudice* (Miss DeBourgh), *The Beckett Shorts*, and Theatre on the Move.

Bradley Carrington (Wayne/Boy Student 1/Patient with Sore Throat) is a junior BFA actor and excited to be working on *Mad Forest*. This is his fifth production at MSU, but his first time performing in the L. Howard Fox Theatre. It is also the first time in years that he has picked up his flute, and he has enjoyed getting reacquainted.

Jesse Castellanos (Toma/Dog/Patient/Boy Student 2) is originally from Miami, FL, and is currently a sophomore at MSU. You may have recently seen him as Sir Andrew Aguecheek in last semester's production of *Twelfth Night*. @thejessecastellanos

Martin Czajkowski (Ianos/Painter) is a sophomore BFA actor whom you may have seen as Nicholas in *Punk Rock* and a Soldier in *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

Christopher Learn (Mihai/Bulldozer Driver) is excited to play the part of Mihai in MSU's production of *Mad Forest*. His past MSU theater credits include the role of Vice Principal Panch in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Johnny in *Misalliance*, and Cleanté in *Tartuffe*.

Annelise Lipowitz (Student Doctor) is an actor, filmmaker, and conspiracy theorist. She recently made her MSU debut as Feste in *Twelfth Night* and is excited to be ending her Montclair career in such an inventive and inspiring play. Trăiesc Romania!

Catherine McElaney (Old Aunt/Doctor/Flower Seller) is a senior BFA Acting major with a minor in Classics. Past credits at MSU include *Matsukaze* (Pining Wind), *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Woman of the Court), *Tartuffe* (Marianne), and MSU's touring show *Breaking the Cycle* (Ensemble). Previous professional credits include multiple voice-overs for Nickelodeon and an audiobook of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (Anne Frank).

Joseph Respicio (Bogdan) is a junior BFA Acting major at MSU and thrilled to play the role of Bogdan. His other roles include Soldier in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Gunner in *Misalliance*, and Antonio in *Twelfth Night*.

Elizabeth Sayko (Lucia) is a junior in the BFA Acting program. This is her third production at MSU; her past credits include Young Ellen in *Michigan Murders* and Ruth in *Jon*. She is thrilled to be a part of this wonderful, crazy play and thanks all the cast/crew and anyone else who had something to do with putting this production on!

Conor Shaw (Grandfather/Priest/Securitate Officer) is ecstatic to be in his first show at MSU. He played the roles of Narrator and Policeman in *The South County Money Boys Musical: Back to the Past*, directed by Milo Simpson, and then was lucky enough to be cast in its loosely related sequel, *The South County Money Boys Musical: A Christmas Special*, directed by Wylie Simpson.

Cameron Style (Radu) is a sophomore BFA Acting major. His last production was *Twelfth Night* (Fabian). He is excited to tell the story of *Mad Forest*, a piece of history that needs to be known.

Fabrizio Yambao (Securitate Man/Vampire/Translator) is a sophomore BFA Acting major. He has previously been in *Michigan Murders* and *Matsukaze* at MSU.

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Assistant Costume Designer **Courtney Haynes**
Assistant Lighting Designer **Michael Esposito**
Assistant Dialect Coach **Christopher Negron**
Props Master **Zachary Horan**
Light Board Operator **Bryant Montalvo**
Sound Board Operator **Michaela Pietrinferno**

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Backstage Crew **Vienna Bonato, Alexa Draganosky, Jeffery Schnoor, David Zarish**

Programs in this season are made possible in part by funds from:

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The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts



New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation



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