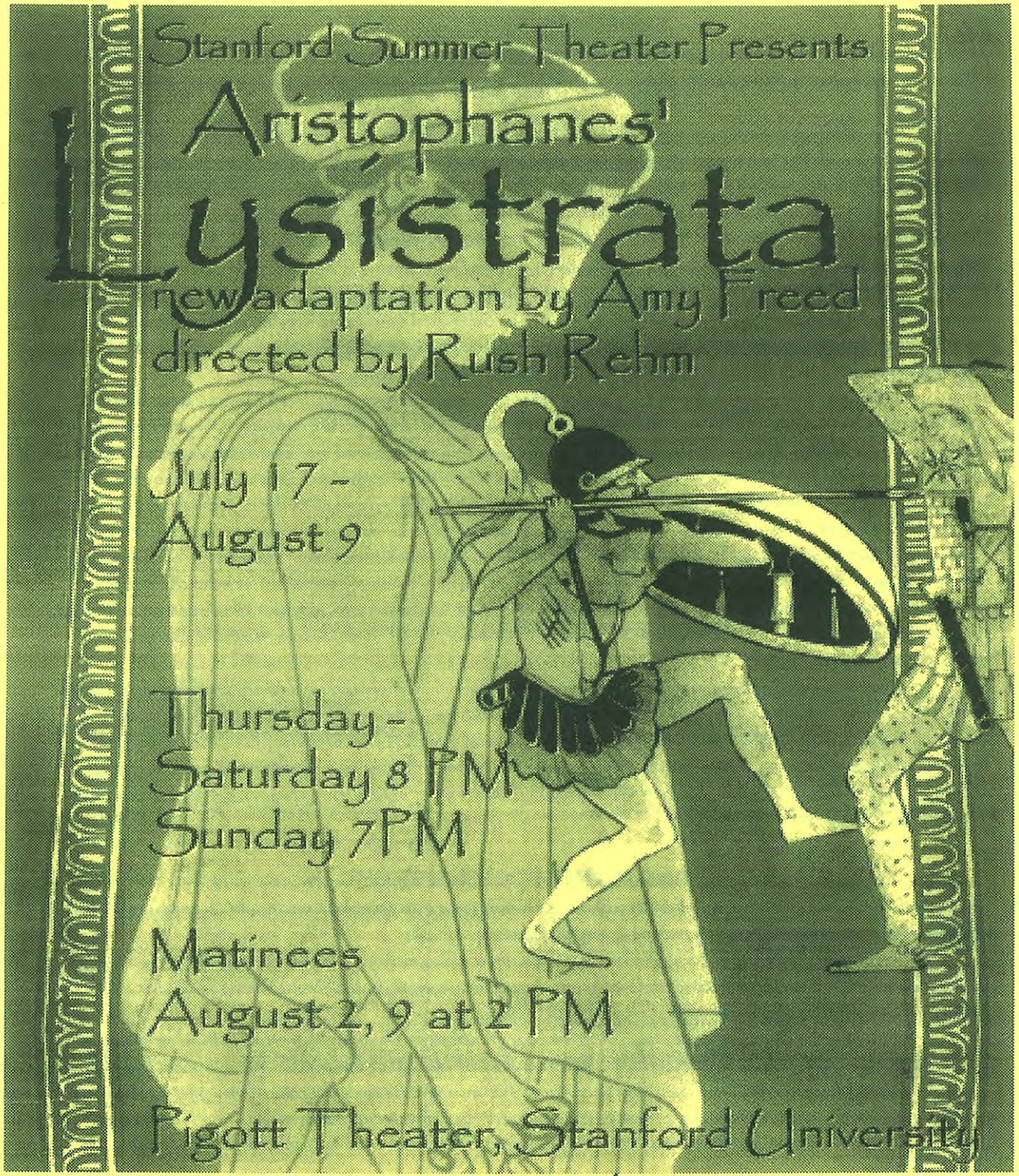
Stanford Summer Theater Presents

Aristophanes'
Lysistrata

new adaptation by Amy Freed

directed by Rush Rehm



July 17 -
August 9

Thursday -
Saturday 8 PM
Sunday 7PM

Matinees
August 2, 9 at 2 PM

Pigott Theater, Stanford University

– "Lysistrata" runs 85 minutes without an intermission –

~ A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR ~

Unlike the contemporary American stage, theater in ancient Athens was part and parcel of the political life of the city. The theater offered a place for Athenians to gather and consider issues of moment through the clarifying lens of live performance.

The most famous comic playwright of classical Athens, Aristophanes (ca. 445-385 B.C.) wrote Lysistrata in 411 for the Lenaia festival. The Lenaia took place each winter, which effectively eliminated foreigners from attending (the seas were too rough to travel) and gave the festival a particularly Athenian flavor. Aristophanes responded with the greatest anti-war comedy ever written—a raucous, bawdy fable in which women seize the reins of power by saying no to sex, driving their war-crazed men back to their senses. The body reigns supreme in Aristophanes, who knew—as did all Athenians—what war wreaked on the bodies of its victims.

In 411 BC, Athens felt the costs of war with particular force. They had been fighting the Spartans and her allies since 431 BC. Like most conflicts, the Peloponnesian War had a complicated genesis, but resistance to the expansionist Athenian empire played a major role. In 413-412 B.C., just prior to the production of Lysistrata, the Athenians suffered a major defeat in Sicily, which Athens' hubristic military policy had led them to invade.

Of course, similarities between the ancient world and our own are never exact, but the historical parallels in this case seem remarkable. One radical difference between ancient Athens and contemporary America involves the proximity and reality of war. For Aristophanes and his audience, war was everywhere. Families buried their own dead. Men would leave the theater and in a few weeks find themselves on the battlefield or rowing in the Athenian fleet. Due to deaths in battle, civil unrest, and plague that visited the crowded city, the population of Athens fell by nearly 50% during the course of their 27-year conflict with Sparta. For us, however—especially in the post-Vietnam era—war has become a media event, one in which Americans kill, but rarely die. But we should never forget that the enemy casualties number in the millions—killed directly by U.S. forces (as in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Cuba, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Serbia, Afghanistan), or indirectly by client states supported by US military aid, armaments, and logistical support (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, Colombia, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Philippines, East Timor, South Africa, Angola, the Palestinian occupied territories, and scores of others).

The miracle of Lysistrata, and of Greek theater generally, is that it flourished in a time of conflict and war. It was not bourgeois entertainment for privileged elites, but civic drama born out of chaos, distress, and hope. How the ancient Athenians pulled this off still amazes us, and draws us back again and again to the roots of our theater. But to engage the challenge of Athenian drama as if the original context could be forgotten strikes me as irresponsible. For the ancient Greeks, war was real. And for Aristophanes, it was sufficiently real to inspire a comic masterpiece, Lysistrata, whose name tells the tale: it means "unraveler of armies."

--- Rush Rehm

~ A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT ~

When I was approached to work on an adaptation of Aristophanes' Lysistrata, I had not read the play in many years. I had dim memories of dusty choral passages and frightening phallic sexual comedy.

After reading several of many excellent translations, I was disarmed and charmed by the play. The old text is raunchy and happily obscene, but what it proposes is not: a world re-organized by the forces of love, sanity, sex and laughter. It ends up relegating as obscenity that which truly is obscene – war.

In this adaptation I've tried to stay true to the play's brightness of spirit and adhere to its basic structure. I updated lost and obscure references and added jokes. Aristophanes may best be understood, not as a social philosopher, but as the Mel Brooks of his day. And like a Mel Brooks or a Chaplin, he understands the power of laughter to undermine mankind's monsters.

--- Amy Freed

Adaptation by **Amy Freed**

starring (in alphabetical order)

Annie Abrams *as* Myrrhine
Anne Gregory *as* Lysistrata
Audrey Dundee Hannah *as* Siliconia & Ula
Geoff Hoyle* *as* Lampushka & Testiclese
Jordan Kaplan *as* Farticus & Lardoss
Mandana Khoshnevisan *as* Spankmene & Zilla
Kay Kostopoulos* *as* Kalonike & Salubria
Stephen Pratt *as* Viagrus & Young Soldier
Geoff Sobelle* *as* Prophylactus & Kinesias
Zack *as* Spitticus & Sphincter

Producer & Director **Rush Rehm**

Composer & Musical Director **Bruce Barthol**

Set Designer **Mark Guirguis**
Costume Designer **Connie Strayer**
Lighting Designer **Chad Bonaker**
Stage Manager **Alexis Boozer**
Visuals Co-Director **Kalilah Robinson**
Costume Shop Supervisor **Birgit Pfeffer**
Asst. Costume Designer **Devon Sherman**

Technical Director **Ross Williams**
Master Carpenter **Paul Strayer**
Master Electrician **Kenny McMullen**
Asst. Stage Manager **Kalilah Robinson**
Visuals Co-Director **Megan Cohen**
Costume Stitcher **Katie Furuyama**
Costume Crew **Mindy Lieu**

Press, Publicity & Box-Office **Dan Anthony**
Assistant to the Director **Ed Iskandar**
Build Crew **Duchess, Kelly Dunagan & Rebecca Thal**
Production Interns **Amin El Gamal, Ryan Gill & Scott Lin**

* The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

~ ABOUT THE SST ~

Founded in 1997 by **Rush Rehm**, **Aleksandra Wolska**, and **Jarek Truszczynski**, **Stanford Summer Theater** brings high quality professional theater to the South Bay. Previous productions include Anton Chekov's Uncle Vanya, The Shark Bites: A Brecht-Weill Cabaret, Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot, Eugene Ionesco's The Chairs, and Max Frisch's Biedermann and the Firebugs. This summer's production of Lysistrata could not have happened without the generous support of Stanford University community, in particular Stanford Summer Session and Continuing Studies, the School of Humanities and Sciences, the Office of the President, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Stanford Summer Research College, and the Departments of Classics and Drama. We extend our sincere gratitude to Charlie Junkerman, Sharon Long, Keith Baker, President John Hennessy, John Bravman, Susan Brubaker Cole, Richard Martin & Alice Rayner.

~ ABOUT THE ACTORS ~

Geoff Hoyle (Lampushka / Magistrate) trained with Marcel Marceau's teacher, Etienne Decroux and at the Gymnase du Cirque in Paris. He has appeared in theatres all over the world, most notably in his original solo shows, including The Convict's Return, The First Hundred Years and Feast of Fools, and has performed with Cirque du Soleil and Circus Flora. He created the role of Zazu, the hornbill, for the original Broadway cast of The Lion King, and recently starred in SST productions of Waiting for Godot (Vladimir) and The Chairs (Old Lady). **Kay Kostopoulos** (Kalonike / Salubria) holds an MFA in Acting from A.C.T., and currently teaches undergraduate Acting and Acting Pedagogy for graduate students at Stanford. She last performed in SST's Biedermann and the Firebugs as Babette, opposite Lysistrata director **Rush Rehm**. Amongst her numerous roles, two of her favorites have been Agnes X and The Coach in Still Warm, and Anne Sexton in The Psychic Life of Savages, both by **Amy Freed**. Other recent roles include Goneril in King Lear and Mistress Page in The Merry Wives of Windsor for SF Shakes, and Dionysia in Pericles and The Countess in All's Well That Ends Well for Cal Shakes. **Geoff Sobelle** (Prophylactus / Kinesias) (English '97), has studied physical theatre with Jacques Lecoq in Paris, and is a member of Pig Iron Theatre Co. in Philadelphia, for whom he performed in James Joyce Is Dead And So Is Paris, which will be reprised this Fall at Stanford. Other recent roles include Jaques / Oliver / Silvius in As You Like It and Lucky in SST's Waiting for Godot. **Anne Gregory** (Lysistrata) (Drama '03) was awarded the Eleanor Prosser Award for Academic Excellence upon graduating from Stanford. She performed the role of Dottie in Killer Joe as her acting thesis, and recently appeared in Much Ado About Nothing (Hero), Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights (Marguerite Ida / Helene Annabel) and Merrily We Roll Along (Beth). **Annie Abrams** (Myrrhine) (Drama '03) was awarded the Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts upon graduating from Stanford, where she performed the role of Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing as her acting thesis. Other notable roles include The Maid in SST's Biedermann and the Firebugs, Ela Delahey in Theatreworks' Charley's Aunt and Val in A Chorus Line. **Audrey Dundee Hannah** (Siliconia / Ula) trained and performed in Chicago with Second City apprentice company Off Off Campus. She has appeared in Kaspar and The Wheel at Stanford, and recently completed shooting two film projects, Agamemnon and Pupil. She will be performing an original one-woman show entitled Love For Sale as her acting thesis at Stanford next April. **Jordan Kaplan** (Farticus / Lardoss) (Drama '03) just graduated from Stanford, where he won the Golden Award in Creative Arts at Stanford and performed Warren Leight's one-man show Stray Cats as his acting thesis. He has appeared in A.C.T.'s The Beard of Avon and in Shakespeare Santa Cruz's productions of The Merry Wives of Windsor, Coriolanus and She Stoops To Conquer. **Mandana Khoshnevisan** (Spankmene / Zilla) (English '00, MA English '01) recently performed the role of the Fireman in SST's Biedermann and the Firebugs, and appeared in Marat / Sade (Rossignol), The Vagina Monologues and Into the Woods (The Baker's Wife) at Stanford. **Stephen Pratt** (Viagrus / Young Soldier) holds a BS in Business from Oregon State University, and recently performed a role opposite James Coburn in the film American Gun. He received his training at A.C.T., and has appeared in productions of A Few Good Men, Ring Lardner's Reunion, Shakespeare's Women, and Still Warm in the Bay Area. **Zack** (Spitticus / Sphincter / Keyboards) holds a BFA in Acting from NYU and an MFA in Directing from UCLA, and is a current doctoral candidate in Drama and Humanities at Stanford. He is the Artistic Director of the theatre troupe Common Cultural Practice, and recently appeared in Deborah Slater Dance Theater's Survival of the Fit Enough, SST's Biedermann and the Firebugs and Portrait of Dora (portraying Sigmund Freud). At Stanford, he has directed productions of Karel Capek's RUR and Tom Stoppard's Arcadia.

The Director wishes to thank:

Kate Adams, Chris Ayer, Chris Chan, Raina Cornejo, Mark Dalrymple, Draper's Music Center, Alison Duxbury, The Leland Stanford Junior University Marching Band, Chris Lew, Paula Oxman, Cece Paape, The Rose Family, Steve Sano, Jim Shelby, Katie Sigismund, Seltzer Sisters, The Stanford Department of Music & Noelle Thomas

Finally, Special Thanks to **Annie Abrams** & **Geoff Sobelle** for their extraordinary work above and beyond.

– Bathrooms are located outside Pigott Theatre, in the Memorial Auditorium Lobby; please follow the signs –