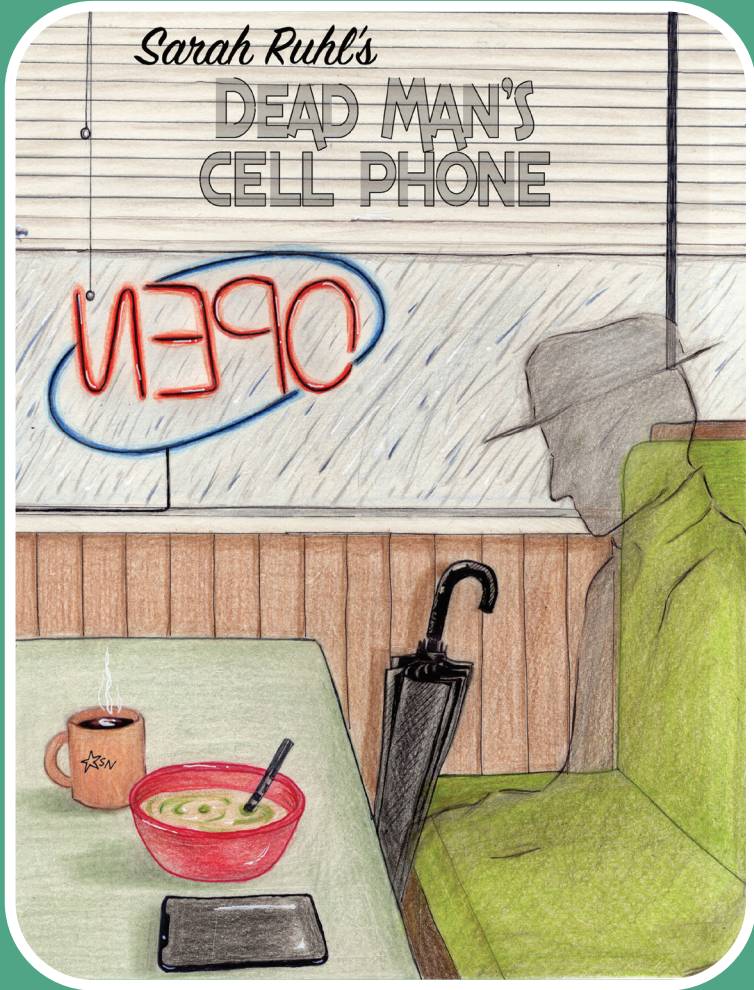


THE MONMOUTH COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

PRESENTS



NOVEMBER 13, 15, 19, 21, 2020
WELLS THEATER



1853

DIRECTORS' NOTE

by Allie Bryan, Amelia Chavez, Richard Eyre, and Noah Harshbarger
in consultation with Dr. Vanessa Campagna

Theatre Curriculum

The final project for Theatre 377: "Principles of Directing" is to contribute to the direction of a full-length play. Accordingly, each student has directed one quarter of *Dead Man's Cell Phone* by Sarah Ruhl. During this semester-long production process, students draw upon existing knowledge of theatre praxis in the areas of acting, design and tech, script analysis, and dramaturgy, as well as upon their growing knowledge of directing. Discovering and executing the different responsibilities of a director is a challenging but exciting experience. Through it, theatre majors are able to expand their appreciation for and skillset in the craft of theatre.

The Play

The epigraph to *Dead Man's Cell Phone* cites Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, "The Undertaking" by John Donne, and Mark Strand's "On Edward Hopper." These artistic inspirations introduce the play's dominant themes: the dualities of isolation/intimacy, mystery/knowledge, and life/death. Technology is one vehicle Ruhl uses to develop these themes throughout the play.

Since the invention of cell phones as a brick-sized monstrosities in the Seventies, they have risen in prominence and their use has become ubiquitous. Simultaneously, and perhaps consequently, other practices and beliefs have begun to recede. What is sacred now? How do we connect? How can we know ourselves and others? How do we make meaning in life and death? These are questions the play asks.

The questions above also relate to the theme of remembrance. Catholicism, Judaism, and allusions to popular (mis)understandings of Mormonism are incorporated into the play-world in terms of how people connect with and remember the dead. Technology is also used to explore this theme. The protagonist, Jean, "want[s] to remember everything" and suggests "Maybe the air remembers, sometimes."¹ Today, we have a plethora of memories stored in data clouds. For Ruhl's characters, the air remembers what is said and done, in some ways relieving the characters of the burden of trying to remember. This allows

(Continued on inside back cover)

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DEAN MAN'S CELL PHONE

BY SARAH RUHL

Directed by Theatre 377: "Principles of Directing" Class

November 13, 15, 19, 21, 2020

Thursday-Friday 7:30 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday 2 p.m.

Wells Theater

Produced by Special Arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Run time: Approximately two hours, with one 10-minute intermission.

Please silence all electronics.

Restrooms and drinking fountains are located in the lobby.

Photography and recording of any kind is prohibited.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY STELLA NARKIEWICZ

CAST

A WOMAN, JEAN	Grace Cornelius
A DEAD MAN, GORDON	Kenny Broge
GORDON'S MOTHER, MRS. GOTTLIEB	Melanie Delbridge
GORDON'S WIDOW, HERMIA	Gabriela Madu
GORDON'S BROTHER, DWIGHT	Andrew Cliffl
THE OTHER WOMAN / THE STRANGER	Elisabeth Riedesel

CREATIVE TEAM

Directors	Theatre 377: "Principles of Directing" Students Allie Bryan Amelia Chavez Richard Eyre Noah Harshbarger
Instructor for Theatre 377: "Principles of Directing"	Dr. Vanessa Campagna
Technical Director	Doug Rankin
Scenic and Lighting Designer	Doug Rankin
Construction and Run Crew	Theatre 173: "Intro to Technical Theatre" Students Beau Cornwell Kameron Washington Nicholas Serrano Francois Boney Alejandro Arteaga
ASL Interpreter	D Weber
Stage Manager	Cassidy Wolf
Sound Designer	Gabriela Madu
Assistant Sound Designer	Skylar Law
Props Designer	Allie Bryan
Assistant Props Designer	Amelia Chavez
Costume Designer	Rebecca Bean
Assistant Costume Designers	Emma Wohlstadter, Celeste Lythgoe
Box Office Manager	Madelyn Bird
Box Office Assistants	Meghan Bird, Brooke McCormick

MEET THE CAST



Grace Cornelius

Grace Cornelius (Jean) is a freshman theatre and art double major from Warrenville, Illinois. A Stockdale Fellow, she made her Monmouth stage debut in September by appearing in FusionFest VII. She had been set to star as Marian Paroo in her high school production of *The Music Man* last spring, but it was canceled due to the COVID-19 crisis.



Kenny Broge

Kenny Broge (Gordon) is a junior mathematics major with a 9–12 teacher licensure from Lena, Illinois. He has appeared as Uncle Tudyk in *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, Birdboot in *The Real Inspector Hound* and *FusionFest*. He is a member of Phi Delta Theta, Stockdale Fellows, Chorale and Alpha Lambda Delta honor society.



Melanie Delbridge

Melanie Delbridge (Mrs. Gottlieb) is a sophomore theatre education major from Metamora, Illinois. While at Monmouth, she has appeared in *The Nutcracker*, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, *The Real Inspector Hound* and *FusionFest*. She was also the dramaturg for *An Enemy of the People*. She is the owner and artistic director of Sugar High Theatricals in Galesburg.



Gabriela Madu

Gabriela Madu (Hermia) is a sophomore theatre and computer science major from Montego Bay, Jamaica. Previous Monmouth College theatre credits include her role as Aunt Elieri in *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. Other Monmouth activities include Chorale, Concert Band, Highland Harmonizers, CVOP and International Club.



Andrew Cliffel

Andrew Cliffel (Dwight) is a sophomore theatre and music major from Austin, Texas. Previous Monmouth College roles include Postman/Constable in *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, Major Muldoon in *The Real Inspector Hound* and *FusionFest VI*. He has also sung with the Chorale, Concert Choir and Highland Harmonizers.



Elisabeth Riedesel

Elisabeth Riedesel (The Other Woman/The Stranger) is a senior physics major from Davenport, Iowa. A Stockdale Fellow, she has performed with the Chorale and Improv Team. She is also a member of Pi Beta Phi.

DIRECTORS' NOTE *(continued)*

them to be braver, worthier, more loving, and more present in the moment. Hopefully the air remembers for us, too.

While studying Ruhl's plays and scholarship on them, we learned that Ruhl is a playwright who incorporates magic realism, and who frees herself from traditional structure and clear-cut genre classifications. Director Sarah Rasmussen has described Ruhl's plays in way that resonates with us: "A combination of humor an invitation into a deep meditation on the truly unknowable, difficult, glorious aspects of being human is at the heart of Sarah's work."²

Coming away from 'the heart of Sarah's work'

Allie: I want the audience to reflect on both the lighthearted and serious moments of the play. While there is a dark undertone present in this narrative, I found it to be entertaining, and I was able to make connections between the actions of the characters and my own personal habits and experiences. I hope that the audience can make connections from their personal lives and the current events taking place in the world as a way of being "in the moment."

Amelia: I want the audience to have that moment of "Oh wow, I should call this person" or "Man, I really need to touch base with that person". Call your loved ones. Make sure your love/admiration/aggression/sadness is known. We go on through life way too often without proper communication. Fix the discrepancies that come from that. We have the technology to easily get in contact with one another. Make it known that you care for one another. Do not risk others having a false perception of who you are and what you think.

Noah: This play is both extremely funny and extremely sad in the most relatable way. I want the audience to notice this and connect with every character in whatever way is meaningful to them. There are so many big questions in this play—more than what we have identified here. I want the audience to ask themselves these big questions while watching the play and especially after having watched the play.

Richard: After watching this play, I want the thought "What impression have I made on my family, my friends?" to cross each member of the audience's minds. We are on this Earth for a relatively short amount of time. Knowing who we are is one thing, one very important thing. But what do we mean to others? There are many interpretations of you that will last longer than you will, for better or for ill. So, I ask you all, how good or honest do you want that impression to be?

¹ Sarah Ruhl, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2008):

² Quoted in Amy Muse, *The Theatre and Drama of Sarah Ruhl*. (New York: Methuen, 2018): 135.

SPECIAL THANKS

President Clarence R. Wyatt and First Lady Lobie Stone

Dean Mark Willhardt

Dean Michelle Merritt

Dean Karen Ogorzalek

Professor Todd Quick

Pastor Jon Sims, First United Methodist Church of Monmouth

Attic Antiques



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