

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
FILM, TELEVISION, AND THEATRE
2008 - 2009 THEATRE SEASON

{ Spurt of Blood }
Jet de Sang

By Antonin Artaud
Directed by Mark Pilkinton

in a new translation by Krysta Dennis
theatrical concept by Jacqueline Dineen and Mark Pilkinton



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 THROUGH
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2008

PHILBIN STUDIO THEATRE
DEBARTOLO CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



[FROM THE DIRECTOR]

MARK PILKINTON

Produced for the first time 40 years after it was written in the mid-1920s, *Spurt of Blood* is regarded by many as surrealistic, proto-Absurdist theatre that is completely unstageable. With its sparse diction and almost nonexistent “plot,” *Spurt of Blood* challenges the traditional Aristotelian concept of theatre. Father of the concept of “Theatre of Cruelty” popularized by Peter Brook in his seminal production of *Marat/Sade* in 1965, Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) believed that theatre should affect audiences viscerally by breaking through the patina of 2,000 years of numbing and pernicious civilization. *Spurt of Blood* openly and aggressively forces audiences to rethink their concept of theatre. Like Ionesco and the Absurdist he inspired, Artaud felt that language gets in the way of communication as often as it facilitates it.

This fantastical and shocking drama, here presented in a formal “Readers’ Theatre” format for your edification and enjoyment, provides a glimpse into the mind of a theatrical genius and certified madman who was a major force in theatre theory in the second half of the 20th century.

Under my tutelage as faculty director, we have created for the first time a company of FTT majors who, as a result of having studied Artaud on the page in formal coursework want to bring the man and his work to the stage. At the end of the day, we have concluded that critics may have been right all along: *Spurt of Blood* is indeed unstageable, and that perhaps only the presence (and genius) of Artaud himself could take this play to the theatrical level he originally intended.

[FROM THE DRAMATURG]

JACQUELINE DINEEN*

I was first introduced to Antonin Artaud’s *Spurt of Blood* in the class “Theatre, History, and Society” where Prof. Pilkinton posed the question: “Wouldn’t it be interesting to try to produce Artaud’s unproducable play?” Almost two years later, in conjunction with my honors FTT thesis, I decided to pursue further that same question with Prof. Pilkinton by taking on the role of dramaturg in *The Spurt of Blood* company. We have accepted the challenge of taking Artaud’s six-page play—which he himself never saw produced—and turning it into a full production. Our goal is to invite you, the Notre Dame audience, to experience Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty in your own individual way. This brief

performance seeks to awaken the audience’s imagination through the simple movements of the actors, while the presence of the narrator enables you to provide your own vivid and sensual details to the production. As you will experience, Artaud’s use of the word “cruelty” is not meant to evoke images of violence, but rather to incorporate everything that makes us human and to confront it on the stage. Artaud said, “Either we restore all the arts to a central attitude and necessity, finding an analogy between a gesture made in painting or the theatre, and a gesture made by lava in a volcanic explosion, or we must stop painting, babbling, writing, or doing whatever it is we do.”

*FTT major

[FROM THE ARCHIVES]

This is the first time *Spurt of Blood* has been produced at Notre Dame.

[SPURT OF BLOOD STUDY GUIDE]

MARY FISHER^o

While undisputedly influential, Antonin Artaud (September 4, 1896–March 4, 1948) remains one of the most controversial and discussed figures in 20th-century theatre history. Born to parents of Greek origin in the French city of Marseille, Artaud survived a tumultuous upbringing marked by frequent institutionalizations.

Though Artaud made many important contributions to theatrical theory, few notions pervade contemporary theatrical discourse as thoroughly as does his concept of “Theatre of Cruelty,” in which he implored his peers to restore to theatre a “passionate and convulsive conception of life.” Originally delineated and described in *The Theatre and Its Double*, one of the most significant theoretical treatises on theatre of the 20th century, Artaud’s precepts for “Theatre of Cruelty” remain essential for theatre artists today. *Spurt of Blood*, with its violent rigor and extreme condensation of scenic elements, evokes the ritualized physicality of the Balinese dance performance Artaud so revered. Although the playwright himself did not live to see it performed, the work endures as an archetype of the “Theatre of Cruelty” Antonin Artaud championed.

THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Though Artaud completed *Spurt of Blood* in Paris on January 17, 1925, the play was not mounted for nearly 40 years, owing in part to its reputation as a piece of unstageable, surrealist, proto-Absurdist theatre. Though a publicity blurb for Artaud’s Théâtre Alfred Jarry indicated that the play would be performed as part of its 1926

theatre season, a production never came to fruition. Instead, *Spurt of Blood* premiered unsuccessfully in 1964 as part of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Season of Cruelty, although Peter Brook’s seminal production the same year of *Marat/Sade* is credited with making Artaudian theatrical principles commercially viable.

SELECTED THEMATIC CONCERNS

Theatre of Cruelty: Believing that text had for too long been a tyrant over meaning, Artaud championed a theatre that vacillated between thought and gesture. Only by communicating in this “language” and confronting the audience with the grotesque were actors able to completely strip away their masks and cast asunder all that is sacred as a human being.

- The creation of the world and its desecration by humanity
- The enduring conflict existing between the individual’s emotional life and the values and practices championed by his or her society
- The fundamental nature of sin and blasphemy
- The inversion of innocence, devotion, and love with depravity, loathing, and cruelty
- The manner in which dominant social forces conspire to hinder the realization of love in its idealized form
- The wrath of the natural world

^o FTT major/alumna

SPURT OF BLOOD'S LASTING IMPACT

In addition to providing a glimpse into the mind of a theatrical genius and certified madman, *Spurt of Blood's* feverish surrealism and raw physicality greatly expanded and redefined the boundaries of theatre in the second half of the 20th century. Beyond innovatively using lighting's ability to dematerialize stage action to disorient the spectator, *Spurt of Blood* serves as the

true culmination of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. By hurling spectators into the center of the action and forcing them to engage with the work on an instinctive, sensual level, Artaud shocked viewers out of their complacency and redefined theatre as a place of exorcism, not escape. *Spurt of Blood* leaves the spectator no choice but to acknowledge the dramatic and lasting impact Artaud's important insights had on theatre's role and function within society.

Spurt of Blood is presented with permission of Editions Gallimard.

[ACKNOWLEDGMENTS]

We are deeply indebted to our faculty and staff advisors Ken Cole, Rick Donnelly, Kevin Dreyer, Siiri Scott, Chris Sopczynski, Marcus Stephens, and Jane Zusman.

The faculty and students of the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre would like to thank Daniel and Marie Messina for their generous support for our costumes.

The Messinas have endowed a fund to underwrite the creation of the wonderful costumes for all of our theatre productions.

It is always gratifying when our work is recognized, and we, therefore, in turn want to recognize the Messinas, who make it possible for the work to continue and flourish.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Burger King (Quality Dining, Inc.) at the Huddle.

[ANNOUNCEMENTS]

- The use of camera or recording devices during the performance is prohibited.
- Notre Dame has been designated as a smoke-free environment.
- Please turn off your cell phones and pagers.

- There will be no intermission.
- This production is for mature audiences and contains language and situations some may find offensive.

[CAST]

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Young Man.....	John Maltese*	A Giant Voice.....	Eduardo Velázquez III*
Young Woman	Meghan Hartmann*	Madam.....	Shay Thornton*
Knight	Devin Preston*	Narrator.....	Stephanie Elise Newsome*
Wet-Nurse.....	Molly Key*	Cobbler.....	Kimberly Mering*
Beadle	Kathleen Hession*	Judge	Jacqueline Dineen*
Priest.....	Robert Jenista*	Popcorn Vendors	Maura Galbraith*
			Stephanie Elise Newsome*

[ARTISTIC STAFF]

Director.....	Mark Pilkinton	Costume Designer.....	Maura Galbraith*
Producer.....	Kevin Dreyer	Lighting Designer.....	Kimberly Mering*
Assistant Director	Kathleen Hession*	Technical Director	Caitlin Madden*
Dramaturg.....	Jacqueline Dineen*	Stage Manager	Carolynn Richer*
Set Designer.....	Jennifer Stelloh*		

[PRODUCTION STAFF]

Assistant Stage Manager.....	Kathryn Stelloh*	Costume Shop Supervisor	Jane Zusman
Property Master.....	Robert Jenista*	Costume Shop Assistants	Katherine Conover, Rebecca Gilman, Laura Godlewski, Christie Hannon, Angelica Hernandez*, John Maltese*, Megan Novak, Jasmine Reed
Light Board Operator.....	Caitlin Madden*		
Stage Hand	Michaela Gorman*		

*FTT major

[DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION, AND THEATRE FACULTY]

Donald Crafton
(Chair)
Christine Becker
C. Kenneth Cole
James Collins
William Donaruma
Richard E. Donnelly
Kevin Dreyer
Luke Gibbons

Jill Godmilow
Karen Heisler
Peter Holland
Anton Juan
Harry Karahalios
Aaron Magnan-Park
Theodore E. Mandell
Susan Ohmer
Brett Paice

Mark Pilkinton
Yael Prizant
Scot Purkeypile
Siiri Scott
Gary Sieber
Jay Paul Skelton
Pamela Robertson
Wojcik
Nejla Yatkin

EMERITI
Reginald Bain
Harry Kevorkian
Frederic Syburg

STAFF
Christina Ries
Chris Sopczynski
Jackie Wyatt
Jane Zusman

[MARIE P. DEBARTOLO CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS]

Anna Thompson
(Executive Director)
Tom Barkes
Margot Borger
Anna Bushlack
Daniel Clark

Tony Costantino
Terri Douglas
Kyle Fitzenreiter
Aaron Garman
Ronald Grisoli
Cynthia Haas

Leigh Hayden
Douglas Hildeman
Josh Ingle
Kathleen Lane
Sean Martin
Tadashi Omura

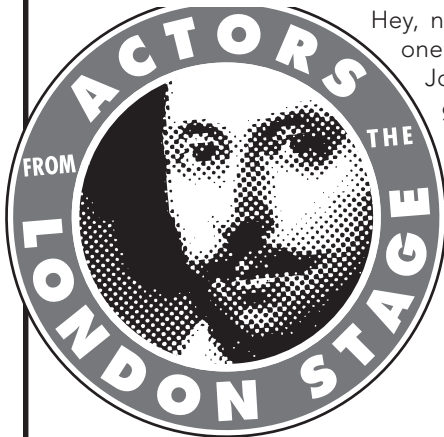
Lori Pope
Sarah Prince
Patrick Ryan
Alex Scheidler
Denise Sullivan
Jon Vickers



 UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
Department of Music

Presents:
The Notre Dame Chamber Players
October 1, 2008 7:30 p.m.
DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
music.nd.edu.

ACTORS FROM THE LONDON STAGE PRESENT
Much Ado About Nothing



Hey, nonny, nonny! Don't miss your chance to see one of the world's most beloved comedies. Join Beatrice and Benedick for Shakespeare's greatest battle of wits January 28-30, 2009.

THREE PERFORMANCES ONLY

Wednesday, January 28, 2009, at 7:30 pm

Thursday, January 29, 2009, at 7:30 pm

Friday, January 30, 2009, at 7:30 pm

(All performances at Washington Hall)

Tickets available now!

Call the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center

Ticket Office at **574.631.2800**

or visit **performingarts.nd.edu**

AFTLS PROUDLY PRESENTED BY
 **SHAKESPEARE**
AT NOTRE DAME

To learn more about Actors From The London Stage
call 574.631.3777 or visit nd.edu/~aftls

2008–2009
UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

T D

By Pierre Marivaux, directed by Siiri Scott
November 11–15, 7:30 p.m.; November 16, 2:30 p.m.

G

By Yannis Limtsioulis, directed by Anton Juan
February 24–28, 7:30 p.m.; March 1, 2:30 p.m.

O T

By Thornton Wilder, directed by Jay Paul Skelton
March 31–April 4, 7:30 p.m.; April 5, 2:30 p.m.



For upcoming events at the
Department of Film, Television, and Theatre:
ftt.nd.edu



For upcoming events at the
DeBartolo Performing Arts Center:
performingarts.nd.edu