

THEATRE COLUMBUS  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
FACTORY THEATRE  
PRESENTS



# GYNTY

A Reinvention of  
**IBSEN'S PEER GYNT,**  
translated by  
**FRANK McGUINNESS**

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Henrik Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt* in 1867 in Italy, self-exiled from his home in Norway. Originally it was written to be read not staged. However 7 years later the Christiania Theatre in Norway wanted to produce it. Edvard Greig became the composer of the musical accompaniment that is now the famous *Peer Gynt Suite*. Since then the play has had countless translations and diversely staged interpretations all over the world. *Peer Gynt* has over 50 characters in it and a wild variety of scene settings. Ingmar Bergman, Peter Stein and many others have directed lavish extravaganzas; others like John Barton have found ways to perform it on small stages with small casts and minimal sets.

Our own approach stems from *Peer Gynt's* origin as a narrative poem in a dramatic form. We wanted to centre on the listening to and the speaking of the text. At some point the idea came that we turn this fifty character play into a staged "radio play" performed by 5 actors. We thought of radio in the 30's and 40's – Orson Wells and The Mercury Theater performing classical literature on radio, *Dracula*, *Julius Caesar*, *Treasure Island*. We were reminded of the images of people huddled up in groups around the radio, entranced engaged and suspended in another world. The power of the voice, suspended in some mysterious zone. A story is told. We listen.

*Peer's* world fluctuates between reality and illusion. Sometimes it is not clear which of these regions we are in exactly. What better place than this murky territory in which to investigate the "self", time and death.

Ibsen wrote plays that poetically contemplate the desire to live differently than one does. *Peer* is the consummate actor, playing out new roles as best serves the situation. Is he true to himself or not? Has *Peer* lived his life as if it were a dream? What are we left with at the end of the play? Like a true modernist, Ibsen dared to ask questions, not answer them. And we are left, in a suspended hush, with his story.

**LEAH CHERNIAK**  
**THEATRE COLUMBUS**

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A Reinvention of  
**IBSEN'S PEER GYNT**,  
translated by **FRANK McGUINNESS\***

Directed by: Leah Cherniak  
Set & Costume Design: Tamara Marie Kucheran  
Music composed & performed by: Kirk Elliott  
Lighting Designer: Andrea Lundy

Performed by:  
Emma Campbell  
Oliver Dennis  
Kirk Elliott  
David Jansen  
Marcel Jeannin  
Martha Ross

Stage Manager: Nan Shepherd  
Assistant Stage Manager: Katharine Meswak  
Production Manager: Kim Purtell  
Carpenters: Ian Chapell and Nathaniel Kennedy  
Painter: Shay Hahn  
Crew: David Estrien, Geoff McBride  
Publicist: Camilla Holland  
Poster Photography: Philip Langdon  
Production Stills: John Lauener  
Graphic Design: Messenger

Peer Gynt was first workshopped in January 1997. Special thanks go to Cécile Bélec, John Millard and Banuta Rubess for their work at this time. We are indebted to Oliver Dennis, Diane Flacks, Randi Helmers, Shauna Janssen, Ross Manson, Alon Nashman, Lauren Piech, Vik Sahay, Michael Simpson & Kristen Thomson for their invaluable participation at this early stage. More recently, we thank Paula Danckert and Peter Hinton at Playwright's Workshop in Montreal.

## **PART 1**

Acts 1, 2 & 3: In the mountains of Norway, Troll palace, Peer's home

## **PART 2**

Acts 4 & 5: Morocco, Sahara Desert, Cairo, insane asylum, ship at sea, Norway

**THERE WILL BE A 15 MINUTE INTERMISSION**

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## THE CHARACTERS

**EMMA CAMPBELL:** Solveig • Ingrid, the bride • a herdgirl • the Woman in Green • a Troll princess • Trumpeterstrale, a Swedish businessman • Anitra • a fellah, inmate of the asylum • the Strange Traveller

**OLIVER DENNIS:** Kari, an old woman • Mads Moen, marrying Ingrid • Solveig's father • a herdgirl • the Boyg, an invisible troll • Mr. Cotton, an American businessman • slave • receiver • Huhu, inmate of the asylum • PEER GYNT

**DAVID JANSEN:** Aslak, a blacksmith • Mads Moen's father • Helga, Solveig's little sister • the Troll King • PEER GYNT • Captain of the ship • the Priest • the Thin Man

**MARCEL JEANNIN:** PEER GYNT • Monsieur Ballon, a French businessman • overseer • thief • Professor Begriffenfeldt, Ph. D. Director of the lunatic asylum at Cairo • the Cook • the Buttonmoulder

**MARTHA ROSS:** Ase, Peer's mother • Mad Moen's mother • a herdgirl • Troll courtier • Herr Eberkopf, a German businessman • the Sphinx at Giza • Hussain, inmate of the asylum

All actors play wedding guests, trolls, monkeys, inmates of the asylum, crew of the ship and various other roles.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### EMMA CAMPBELL – ACTOR

Having just moved to Toronto, Emma is delighted to be a part of Theatre Columbus' production of *Peer Gynt*. Selected theatre credits include Abigail in *The Crucible*; Centaur/Gordon MacCall, Speth in *Songs of Sex*; Montreal Fringe/Peter Hinton, Margaret More in *A Man for All Seasons*; Stratford Festival/Marti Maraden, Claire in *Lucky Lady*; GCTC/Micheline Chevrier, Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* both for Repercussion Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park. Film credits include *Ultimate G's* (Imax), *Xchange* (HBO), *Little Men* (Paramount), *Varian's War* (Showtime), and the upcoming *FearDotCom*. Television credits include *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (CTV), *Jackie O: A Life* (CBS), *The Sleep Room* (CBC) and a recurring role in the upcoming series *The Neverending Story* on CBC.

### LEAH CHERNIAK – DIRECTOR

Leah is Co-founder and Co-artistic Director with Martha Ross of Theatre Columbus. For the company she has directed *Lonely Nights & Other Stories*, written collectively by the company, *Doubt*, by Michael Redhill, the Chalmers' Award winning *The Betrayal*, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Cherry Orchard* (co-director) among others. Leah directed and co-wrote *The Anger In Ernest and Ernestine*, which was published in 1990 and has been performed in theatres across the country and internationally. She has worked with a variety of theatres across Canada and in 1992 she received the Pauline McGibbon Award for Directing. In 1997 she played Jelly in *The Attic*, *The Pearls & 3 Fine Girls* and later directed it for the Thousand Islands Playhouse in Gananoque. She directed *The Crimson Veil*, a musical by Allen Cole, Tomson Highway's *Rose* at the University of Toronto and his play *The Trickster Tale* for Theatre Direct. She taught clown at the National Theatre School for 14 years.

### OLIVER DENNIS – ACTOR

Past Theatre Columbus credits include: *Porch People*, *Dr. Dapertutto*, Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night, 1494*, *Knee Plays II*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Betrayal* and *Lonely Nights and Other Stories* as well as various workshops. Other theatre credits include Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Mitch in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Dr. Gibbs in *Our Town*, Don Carlos, *The Misanthrope* and *The Mill on the Floss* (Soulpepper Theatre Company); *The Tempest* (Canadian Stage Co); Art (Theatre Aquarius); Ratty in *The Wind in the Willows*, Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol*, *Great Expectations*, *Dracula* (Grand Theatre, London); Kemp in *Vigil* (NAC/Grand); Touchstone in *As You Like It* (Royal Bank Festival of Classics, Oakville); Jack Worthington in

*The Importance of Being Ernest* (Theatre New Brunswick). Upcoming: *A Winter's Tale* and *A Chorus of Disapproval* (Soulpepper Theatre Company)

### **KIRK ELLIOTT – MUSIC**

Kirk Elliott has been described as "the Leonardo da Vinci of Canadian music" and "a one man cottage industry of sound" (Max Ferguson and Jurgen Gothe, CBC Radio). A composer and multi-instrumentalist, he has written and performed music for the National Film Board, Danny Grossman Dance, Expo 86, TV Ontario, Toronto Dance Theatre and the Discovery Channel. His own recordings, one a Juno award winner, include over a dozen CD's for adults and children.

### **DAVID JANSEN – ACTOR**

Most recent theatre credits: *Down Dangerous Passes Road* (Factory Theatre) *You Are Here* (da da Kamera/Theatre Passe Muraille), *The Tempest* (CanStage), *History Play* (Theatre Extasis), *Acre of Time* (Tarragon), title role in *Macbeth*, *Private Lives* (Atlantic Theatre Festival), *King Lear* (MTC), *Hello ... Hello* (Pochsy Productions). Five seasons at the Stratford Festival, including *As You Like It*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Death of a Salesman*. Film and television: *Nikita*, *Wind at my Back*, *External Affairs*, *Common Ground*, *The Rescuers*, *A Taste of Shakespeare*. Other credits: Co-founder of Wild Pig Theatre (Greek, Conquest of the South Pole, big face). 1995 Dora Award for Best Actor (Conquest); Tyrone Guthrie Award, 1994 & 1997.

### **MARCEL JEANNIN – ACTOR**

Marcel has performed in various theatres across Canada, notably the Centaur Theatre, the National Arts Centre, the Stratford Festival and the Globe Theatre in Regina. He is associated with Clowns Gone Bad Theatre Company and was a performer and co-creator of the 1999 Just for Laughs Festival hit, *Mocshplat and Umlout* at the Theatre National. A sought-after workshop participant, he has assisted in the development of over 100 plays for N.A.C, Theatre New Brunswick, and Playwrights' Workshop Montreal and is a frequent guest-artist at the National Theatre School. His television credits include Givenchy in *The Audrey Hepburn Story* (ABC), Nils in *Revenge of the Land* (CBC) and Thaddeus in the Sherlock Holmes mystery, *The Sign of Four* (Hallmark). Film credits include *Grey Owl*, *One-Eyed Kings* and *Affliction*. He lends his voice to numerous cartoons including *Inuk*, *Mona the Vampire*, *Lucky Luke* and is the narrator for the series' *Odysseys and Survival*.

### **TAMARA MARIE KUCHERAN – SET & COSTUME DESIGN**

Originally from Victoria B.C, Tamara has designed for the Victoria Shakespeare Festival and Theatre S.K.A.M. Now making her home in Toronto, recent design credits include Design Consultant *Clodia* (Toronto); Costume Design *After the Dance* (Montreal); Costume Design *Science Fiction* (Toronto); Costume Design *Le Roi Lear* (Montreal); Set and Costume Design *Three Sisters* (Montreal). Tamara is a graduate of the University of Victoria Theatre Department and the National Theatre School of Canada.

### **ANDREA LUNDY – LIGHTING DESIGN**

Andrea is an award winning lighting designer as well as a Production Manager. She has been nominated for 11 Dora awards and a Soiree de Masque Award for outstanding lighting design and she has won 4 Doras for *The Attic*, *The Pearls* and *Three Fine Girls*, *Possible Worlds*, *Insomnia*, and *Oedipus*. Andrea has designed and/or PM'd a number of Columbus shows including *Attic*, *Doubt*, *Betrayal*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Knee Plays I and II* and *Twelfth Night*. Recent design credits include *Plan B*, *Elisa's Skin*, *Sibs*, *Slavs*, *Faust* and *Anything That Moves* (Tarragon) *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Mirvish Productions), *Smudge* (Nightwood Theatre), *Goodnight Desdemona*, *Good Morning Juliet* (Canadian Stage), and *Betrayal and School for Wives* (Soulpepper Theatre). Other companies she has worked with include The National Arts Centre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Blyth Festival, Factory Theatre, Theatre New Brunswick, Augusta Company, da da kamera and Neptune Theatre. Upcoming credits include *Good Life* at Tarragon Theatre, *Adam Baum* at Canadian Stage and *Old Ladies* at the Shaw Festival.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **KATHARINE MEZWAK – APPRENTICE STAGE MANAGER**

Katharine is completing her final year at Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute. For the past five months she has been a co-op student at the Tarragon Theatre. This is her first professional show. Katharine hopes to attend a Theatre Arts Tech Production program in the fall.

### **KIM PURTELL – PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Since graduation from the University College Drama Program at the University of Toronto 3 1/2 years ago, Kim has worked as a lighting designer, production manager and director. She recently production managed *Vocano's Mortality* and designed lights for Theatre Smith-Gilmour's *Chekhov Longs*, *In the Ravine*, da da Kamera's *In On It* and Red Red Rose's *Antigone*. She is the resident lighting designer for da da Kamera and has toured internationally with their production of *In On It* as well as with Theatre Smith-Gilmour's *Chekov Shorts*. Recent directing credits include *Paralysis* and *The Contract*.

### **MARTHA ROSS – ACTOR**

Martha Ross is Co-artistic Director and co-founder of Theatre Columbus with Leah Cherniak. Since 1983 she has been performing and writing for the company. Her most recent Theatre Columbus performance/writing was in *Lonely Nights & Other Stories*, at Factory Theatre in 2001. She also performed in and co-wrote *The Betrayal*, which won the prestigious Floyd S. Chalmers Canadian Play Award in May 1999. Her writing credits include *Ratbag* (with music by John Millard), the award winning *Paranoia* (written in collaboration with the company) and *Dr. Dapertutto*. Both *The Anger in Ernest and Ernestine* and *The Attic, the Pearls & Three Fine Girls* were written in collaboration, and have both been published and performed nationally and internationally. She wrote *The Dog and the Angel* for the Caravan Farm Theatre (1999) and is currently on the collective team for *Alex Fallis*, *The Power of a Smile*. When not performing for the company, she teaches Shakespeare to 11 year olds in the public school system.

### **NAN SHEPHERD – STAGE MANAGER**

Finally a chance to work with Theatre Columbus! Nan's recent stage management credits include *Elisa's Skin* and *SLAVS!* (Tarragon Theatre). She was assistant stage manager for *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *The Lion King* (Mirvish Productions), *Good Night Desdemona* (*Good Morning Juliet*) (Canadian Stage Company) and *Anything That Moves* (Nightwood Theatre). Nan holds a degree in biology from the University of Waterloo.

### **FRANK McGUINNESS - TRANSLATION & ADAPTATION**

Born in Bunrana, Donegal, Frank McGuinness lives in Dublin where he lectures in English Literature at University College. He is well-known for his award-winning original plays and his adaptations of the classics for theatre and television. His original plays include *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, which won the New York Critic's Circle Award for Best Foreign Play in 1993, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme*, which won numerous prizes in London and Dublin, and went on to tour to Paris and Bonn, and *Dolly West's Kitchen*, which opened at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and moved to The Old Vic in London where it was nominated for the Olivier Award for Best New Play. His adaptations have been seen in London, Dublin and New York and include the works of Sophocles, Chekhov, Brecht, Strindberg as well as Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* and *Hedda Gabler*. His screen credits include work for the BBC and a feature film adaptation of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

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**CrossCurrents features plays in development whose themes involve the intersection of different cultures. Details can be found at [www.factorytheatre.ca](http://www.factorytheatre.ca). CrossCurrents has been funded by the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation and the Ideas Canada Foundation.**