

¡Farsa/Farce!

The Agony of Ecstasy
By Sabina Berman

The Virtuous Burglar
By Dario Fo

Director: David Gram

Dramaturg/Assistant Director
Rachel Sarles*

Scenic Designer
Laine Hamburg*

Costume Designer
Whitney Locher

Stage Manager
Bailey Graham*

Assistant Stage Manager
Crystal Orser*

Dialect Coach
Antonio Vettrano

Dialect Captain
Katherine Lengyel*

Sound Designer
Jaden Leverett*

Lighting Designer
Kerro Knox 3

Properties
Amanda Pordon*

Choreographers
Emily Kloc* and Emily Reschke*

October 5 – 8, 2023
October 12 – 15, 2023
Varner Studio Theatre

* We are pleased to acknowledge and celebrate the work of our students on the production team.

Video/audio recording of any kind is STRICTLY prohibited.

ACT I:

El suplicio del placer **(“The Agony of Ecstasy”)**

By Sabina Berman, México
Translated by Adam Versényi

One: El Bigote (“The Moustache”)

She..... Casey (Ace) Van Dyke
Understudy: Emma Garrett
He..... Caleb Korneisel
Understudy: Aurora Ave-Lallemant

Two: La Casa Chica (“The Love Nest”)

She..... DeNetria Gibson
Understudy: Emily Kloc
He..... Alexander Hernandez
Understudy: Phillip Christiansen

Three: La Pistola (“The Pistol”)

She..... Emily Reschke
Understudy: Katherine Lengyel
He..... Adam Rivera
Understudy: Pietro Cataldo

Four: Los Dientes (“Teeth”)

Dentist..... Aidan Phillips
Understudy: Lauren Kreuer
Nurse..... Sarita Alvarado
Understudy: Ximena Perez
Puppeteer/Ms. Berman..... Emma Garrett

ACT II:

Non tutti i ladri vengono per nuocere (“The Virtuous Burglar”)

By Dario Fo, Italy

Translated by Joseph Farrell

Burglar.....	Aurora Ave-Lallemant
	Understudy: Alexander Hernandez
Burglar’s Wife.....	Katherine Lengyel
	Understudy: Sarita Alvarado
Man	Phillip Christiansen
	Understudy: Aidan Phillips
Woman.....	Lauren Kreuer
	Understudy: DeNetria Gibson
Anna.....	Emily Kloc
	Understudy: Casey (Ace) Van Dyke
Antonio.....	Pietro Cataldo
	Understudy: Caleb Korneisel
Two More Burglars.....	Emma Garrett & Ximena Perez
	Understudies: Emily Reschke and Adam Rivera

Time and Place:

The Agony of Ecstasy – Present, Mexico City, Mexico.

The Virtuous Burglar – 1960, Milan, Italy.

CONTENT DISCLOSURE:

These two plays explore themes of gender identity, sexual orientation, class disparity, adultery, and domestic violence. The play examines these themes through the lens of the Mexican and Italian cultures. Be advised: There are sounds of gunshots, loud noises, violence, and more.

Running Time: 2 hour, 15 minutes

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director and Shop Supervisor Joe Beck
Assistant Technical Director.....Randy Manger
Costume Shop Supervisor..... Christa Koerner
Costume Shop Assistant Shelby VanOphem

Costume Shop Staff

Katie Lengyel, Kathryn West, Tuger Xiong, Jaci Taylor, Laine Hamburg,
Mary Kate Pardington, Xandra Cross, Elizabeth Dyer, Faith Green

Faculty Advisors

Jeremy Barnett, Whitney Locher, David Gram,
Kerro Knox 3, Sam Transleau

Hair and Makeup Whitney Locher
Sound Board Operator..... Riley Fontento
Light Board Operator..... Jay Harrison
Wardrobe Head..... Toni Davison
Dresser/Wardrobe..... Molly Gamber, Jeremiah White
Stage Crew Wyatt Cleaveland, Tyler Girard
Props Runner/Deck Crew Sam Vargo
Audience Management Isabeli Buendia
Promotional Photos..... Crystal Orser
Interim Marketing Manager Brandon Thibault

The *Farsa/Farve!* Company would like to extend a warm thank you to...

The Department of Theatre Faculty and Staff, Katherine Boersma,
Megan Herald, Kristina Allen, Meadow Brook Theatre,
Joe Kocenda, and Xandra Cross

MEET THE CAST AND CREW!



Adam Rivera, sophomore, BFA Acting (he/him) is beyond excited to be a part of *¡Farsa/Farve!* in *The Agony of Ecstasy*. You may have also seen him in previous Oakland productions such as *A Little Night Music* and *Yo, Vikings!*. ¡Él espera que ustedes disfruten estas obras!



Aidan is ecstatic to be in another wonderful OU Theatre production! You may have seen him as Orcus/Ronnie in *She Kills Monsters* or as Frid in *A Little Night Music*. He is thankful to all who have helped him get to where he is today. Especially his awesome family!



Alexander Hernandez (He/Him) is a Junior Musical Theatre major and is so glad to share joy and laughs with you. He would like to thank his family for always pushing him forward and the Hassenrik's for opening up their hearts and home to him. Alex is super excited because this is the first show his mom will come see, be nice to her please, she's the little Mexican lady giggling in the front.



Aurora (Xe/Xer/She/Her) is ecstatic to be performing in her fifth show on stage here at Oakland and is honored to bring The Burglar to life in *The Virtuous Burglar!* She hopes you enjoy the comedy that awaits you, and is excited to see everyone here!



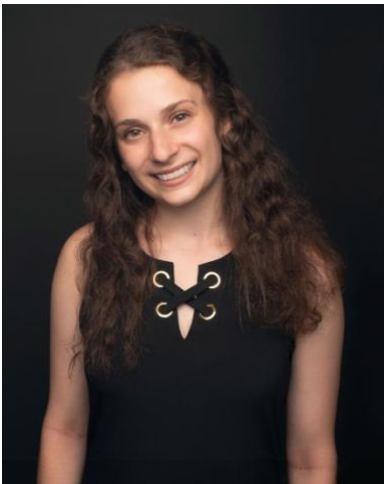
Caleb Korneisel (He/Him) is a BFA Acting major here at Oakland University. You may have previously seen his work here as a Narrator in *Failure: A Love Story* or as Antonio in *Twelfth Night*. He's excited to showcase the hard work that both the cast and crew has put into this production!



Ace (she/they) is ecstatic to be starting her Senior year as a BFA Actor with *Farsa/Farve!* Recently at OU, you may have seen them as Alice in *Pizza Man*, or as multiple characters in the student-devised piece, *Nowhere*. Other credits include Zazzalil in *Firebringer* and Daughter in *Trail to Oregon* (RPG Ent./Planet Ant).



DeNetria Gibson (any pronouns) is a second year acting major, who is excited to be performing in *¡Farsa/Farve!* as She in *The Agony of Ecstasy*. You might have seen her in previous works such as Pasha in *Yo, Vikings!* and Maria in *Twelfth Night*. She dedicates these performances to her friends and family!



Emily Kloc (she/her) is in her second year as a BFA Acting and BA Dance double major. She is thrilled to have the special opportunity to play Anna in *¡Farsa/Farve!* You may have seen her recently as a Chorus Member in *The Trojan Women*, as Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, or as a dancer at the Oakland Dance Theater shows. She would like to thank her family for their unwavering support, as well as the rest of the cast and crew of *¡Farsa/Farve!* for being so incredible and lovely to work with!



Emily Reschke is a junior Acting major and dance minor here at Oakland University. She is playing the role of She/Maria in the piece *The Pistol* and she is also one of the choreographers for this production. She is so excited to be a part of this production and for you to experience these worlds of Farce!



Emma Garrett (She/her) is going into her second year at OU as a BA Theatre student and making sure to get the most out of it. After being largely part of the tech program last year as a part of the freshman design duo ;) This is her first time appearing on stage in a main stage production! She hopes you love the world we have created. Thanks to David and the team for letting her channel her big mouth energy on stage!



Katherine Lengyel (Maria, u/s Maria) is excited to kick off her senior year with the cast of *¡Farsa/Farve!* OU credits include *Sense and Sensibility* (Margaret), *She Kills Monsters* (swing, dance captain), and *Twelfth Night* (swing, fight captain). Many thanks to David Gram for letting her add “dialect captain” to the list!



Lauren S. Kreuer (she/her) plays the role of Woman in *¡Farsa/Farve!* and understudies’ the Dentist in *Teeth*. She is a BFA Musical Theatre major at OU. Lauren played in the Chorus for *Trojan Women* last season at OU. She is thrilled to be part of this production and showcase the hard work of the cast and crew. Lauren thanks the director, David, for providing this amazing opportunity! She also thanks her family and friends for their continued support.



Pietro Cataldo (He/him) plays Antonio. This is Pietro's first Main Stage show at Oakland University, he is super excited to be a part of *¡Farsa/Farce!* and he is thrilled with the people that he is working with. He is very proud of all the hard work his cast mates have put in and has a wonderful time working with his fellow actors and the amazing production team!



Phillip Christiansen is excited for the opportunity to perform as Man in *¡Farsa/Farce!*. He has been in other productions at OU such as *Twelfth Night* and *She Kills Monsters*. He also enjoys making music in many forms and engaging in a plethora of outdoor activities.



Sarita Alvarado is a Long Island native with a passion for performing and social justice. Sarita would like thank their Abuela, Brenda Alvarado for the endless support throughout this process. Gracias por las interminables llamadas telefónicas ¡Mi acento sonaría ridículo sin ti! Sarita hopes you enjoy the show!



Ximena (He-Meh-Nah) Perez (She/her) is a sophomore acting major at OU. You may have seen her in *Love and Information* last semester. She thanks you for coming!



Jaden Leverett is a Senior Theatre Design & Technology Major here at Oakland University. Jaden would like to thank his family and friends who helped him make it this far and who continue to push him each and every day! He was fortunate enough this past summer to work for Maine State Music Theatre as a member of their Sound Staff. Please enjoy the hard work that was put into the show from my peers and I!



Amanda (she/her) is honored to be working with the cast and crew of *jFarsa/Farve!* Amanda's previous credits include stage managing *Così fan tutte*, *Twelfth Night*, *Spelling Bee*, *She Kills Monsters*, and *Exes*. She was also the props master for *Sense and Sensibility*. Most recently, Amanda worked with Ohio Light Opera as an Assistant Stage Manager on *Camelot*, *H2\$,* and *Orpheus in the Underworld*. They also allowed her to be the stage manager for their production of *No, No, Nanette*. She'd like to thank her family, friends, and faculty members for supporting her.



Rachel Sarles is a Senior Musical Theatre Major participating in her fourth mainstage show with OU and first as Assistant Director/Dramaturg! Favorite past roles include Olive Ostrovsky in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and Emma Katz in *Yo, Vikings!* She would like to thank her Mom and Tom for supporting her (even when she's not performing :) and David for giving her the opportunity to expand her skillset as a multi-hyphenate artist during this process!



Bailey Graham (she/they) is a 3rd year in the theatre department. They've assistant stage managed in OU's *A New Brain* and *A Little Night Music*. Their first stage management project was this summer's touring show *Yo, Vikings!* They would like to thank their family and friends for helping them through this process. They're excited to call the show for the first time and to help make the hard work that was put into this show come to life.



Laine Hamburg is a current third-year student at Oakland University, studying Theatre Design and Technology with a focus in Costume Design. She has designed costumes for OU's children show *Yo, Vikings!* and designed hair and makeup for OU's *A Little Night Music*. She has an interest in all things costume and scenic, and this is her first time designing scenic design for a show! I hope all enjoy the show!



Crystal Orser (they/them) is thrilled to be making their Oakland University debut as the Assistant Stage Manager for *¡Farsa/Farce!* They are a freshman BA Theatre student with an interest in directing and playwriting. Some of their past stage experience include *Edgar* (playwright, director), and *Sense and Sensibility* (director). They'd like to thank the cast, crew, and faculty for their support on this show. Now sit back, relax, y disfruten del espectáculo!

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Welcome to ¡Farsa/Farce! (An Affair of International Laughter).

The genre of farce has been a constant in both my professional and scholarly work for nearly twenty years. In that time, I have had the good fortune to direct numerous plays and musicals with farce elements, interview theatre artists about the form, and teach workshops and masterclasses that focus on comedic techniques associated with farce. What keeps me coming back is the power of laughter. Watching passionate people go to extreme and irrational lengths to achieve their heart's desire, striving with all their might not to fail, brings a smile to my face. Yet it is a genre which scares even the seasoned professional. It requires a high-level of specificity, physicality, virtuosity, and risk-taking. Farce is a theatrical machine with numerous moving parts, which must fire on all cylinders to elicit that prized reaction from audiences: laughter. When it achieves that reaction, it is sublime, not to mention extremely rewarding. Unlike a 'serious drama', where laughter may be unexpected or surprising, farces are expected to produce laughter. This can put an enormous amount of pressure on those producing it.

Sabina Berman and the late Dario Fo, the two playwrights whose work is featured in ¡Farsa/Farce! recognize that the container and tropes of the genre offer audiences a disarming way to address hot button issues like identity, gender dynamics, sexual orientation, and class disparity. Yes, these pieces feature escalating situations, showcases of physical comedy and violence, mistaken identity, missed communications, and a multitude of entrances and exits. It is clear though that Berman and Fo understand how these same comedic tropes can be used not only to make us laugh, but simultaneously make us uncomfortable. By employing the structures of farce, the two playwrights seek to engage the audience in laughter, with the goal of producing a cultural dialogue that resonates beyond the final blackout.

Producing this work has been a joy, and I would like to thank the entire company of ¡Farsa/Farce! for bringing their wonderful sense of play and imagination to the process. A sincere thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Theatre, and the greater SMTD for their ongoing support of my research. And as always, a big THANK YOU to YOU, our audience, for your ongoing support of our students' work and the work of Oakland University's Department of Theatre.

Grazie,

David Gram

Director, ¡Farsa/Farce!

DRAMATURGICAL NOTES

The Agony of Ecstasy

Today's world seems to be in a never-ending battle of the sexes. There is a constant power struggle that leads to jealousy, anger, fear, or pain. So why do we seek out relationships with the ones who bring us agony? In Sabina Berman's *The Agony of Ecstasy*, each of the four short plays tackle the intimate connection between Man and Woman. Each scenario has its own defined world with expectations on gender and sexuality. How do perceived gender rules influence a relationship, and what happens when those rules start to bend? Berman is a Mexican woman who was raised in a culture where these definitions become their own category of masculinity and femininity: *Machismo* and *Marianismo*. In the United States, these phrases are akin to toxic masculinity/femininity. The play explores how this mentality of what a man or woman is can weave its way into a relationship and spark conflict of interest or desire. Berman explains in an interview: "*Yo soy feminista radical, pero no soy propagandística. Espero que mis textos trasciendan el momento coyuntural donde están las mujeres y los hombres.*" (I am a radical feminist, but I am not a propagandist. I hope that my texts transcend the conjunctural moment where women and men are). Through the use of farce, Berman is able to encourage laughter and joy in the midst of bringing her perspective on gender roles to the conversation. Her goal is not to lecture, but rather educate through humor. In this production, we examine how the juxtaposition between 'man' and 'woman' can become more complex when two cultures collide. Interracial relationships are ever present in the United States and across the globe. These 'couples' face many barriers like language, religion, and morality, as well as simpler ones such as style and food preferences. Yet, there is beauty in the search for interpersonal satisfaction. How do we navigate the pain brought on by relationships to obtain pleasure?

Rachel Sarles

Dramaturg/Assistant Director, *The Agony of Ecstasy*

The Virtuous Burglar

Written in 1958, Italian playwright Dario Fo's *Non tutti i ladri vengono a nuocere* ("The Virtuous Burglar"), is a situational farce whose theatrical lineage can be traced back to the boulevard farces of French playwright Georges Feydeau, and the stock characters of the commedia dell'arte. Originally presented at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, with three other short farces under the collective title *Ladri, manichini e donne nude* ("Thieves, Dummies, and Naked Women"), *Non tutti i ladri...* inverts the social order, casting a Burglar as the hero of the piece, and the surrounding bourgeois characters as scheming hypocrites. Sixty years on, although the play may no longer be considered as 'risqué' as it was when it first premiered, its satirizing of class disparity and entitlement (the 'Haves vs. the Have-Nots') remains resonant.

In farce, Dario Fo saw a form that adaptor and Fo scholar, Joseph Farrell, believes allowed him "to fashion a theater as a public arena where values, mainly but not exclusively political values, were aired and discussed. He was the first to attempt to weld this seriousness of purpose onto the supposedly lightweight genre that is farce... His comedy, or farce, has an underlay of a seriousness that tragedy cannot attain, or at least cannot attain for a contemporary audience."¹

Fo, who would go on to write politically charged farces like *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* ("Accidental Death of an Anarchist") and *Non si paga! Non si paga!* ("Can't Pay? Won't Pay!") recognized that laughter was a great weapon, especially in the fight against oppression and right-wing regimes. Although "The Virtuous Burglar" precedes the aforementioned plays and falls more in line with classically structured 'domestic farces', there is still a sharp social commentary buried among the misunderstandings and mistaken identities that give *Non tutti i ladri...* a farcical edge.

¹ Farrell, Joseph and Scuderi, Antonio (Editors). *Dario Fo: Stage, Text, and Tradition*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2000.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

Oakland University resides on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabe, known as the Three Fires Confederacy, comprised of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi. The land was ceded in the 1807 Treaty of Detroit and makes up southeast Michigan.

In recognizing the history and respecting the sovereignty of Michigan's Indian Nations, Oakland University honors the heritage of Indigenous communities and their significant role in shaping the course of this region. Further, we recognize the wrongs done to those forcibly removed from their Homelands and commit to fostering an environment of inclusion that is responsive to the needs of First Peoples through our words, policies, and actions.

The preservation and perpetuation of customs and traditions of Indigenous nations are essential to our shared cultural heritage. A deep understanding of Native peoples' past and present informs the teaching, research, and community engagement of the university in its ongoing effort to elevate the dignity of all people and serve as shared stewards of the land.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Oakland University is committed to creating and supporting a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for all community members; as well as those visiting our campus. Diversity, equity and inclusion objectives are grounded in the realization that one cannot build a foundation of collaboration while focusing on differences between contributors. Instead, the foundation must be built on the shared aspirations, commitments and surmountable challenges of all. At OU, learning and diversity are inevitably linked by the common pursuit of knowledge and understanding.



The Kennedy Center

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by
David M. Rubenstein.

Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.

Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; and the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation.

Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,500 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

VARNER RECITAL HALL SEAT NAMING

Want to leave your mark on Varner Hall? You have the chance to name a seat in the recital hall. This opportunity is part of **Varner: Act II**, a special fundraising campaign, debuting in conjunction with a comprehensive renovation of Varner Hall, that will support SMTD students and provide student enrichment experiences beyond the classroom. Your gift to name a seat can celebrate your personal love for the arts or honor a loved one. For more information and to support Varner: Act II, visit oakland.edu/smtd/give/varner-act-ii

UPCOMING THEATRE EVENTS

Chaos

By Laura Lomas

October 27 – 29

Varner Lab Theatre | \$6 general

Varner Act II Gala

November 9 – 12 | November 16 – 19

Varner Studio Theatre | \$25 general, \$20 senior, \$15 student

For a full listing of events, visit
oakland.edu/smtd/performances-and-events.