

Marian Zielinski (Lighting Designer) is currently the Director of Mercer University's Theatre Program. She is beginning her 24th season with Mercer, where she teaches classes in set, costume, and lighting design. She has designed professionally for Music Theatre Louisville, The Shawnee Theatre, and The Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Marian is an avid painter, fiber artist, swimmer, and photographer, and her ongoing research interests are visual semiotics and aesthetics. In August, she presented a paper titled "Resisting Sedimentation: Painting and Fluidity" at the International Human Science Research Conference in Bournemouth, United Kingdom, and is currently working on a paper titled "Communicological Reflections on Color, Culture, and Human Perception" for a conference in China this December. She is married to Dr. Frank Macke, who is also on the faculty of Mercer University.

Director's Notes

In Ernest J. Gaines' novel, *A Lesson Before Dying*, we are asked to confront the entire bitter history of black people in the South. This book is about the ways in which people declare the value of their lives in a time and place in which those lives seemingly count for nothing. It is about the ways in which the imprisoned may find freedom even in the moment of his death. Gaines addresses the basic predicament of what it is to be a human being: a creature striving for dignity in a universe that often denies it.

In Gaines' own words: "I write for the African-American youth in the country, especially the South, so that they can know who they are and where they came from and take pride in it . . . [and for] the white youth in this country, and especially the South, because unless he knows his neighbor of three hundred years, he only knows half his history."

Mercer Theatre 2005-06 Season

A Lesson Before Dying by Romulus Linney

The Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov
Adapted by David Mamet
November 11-19

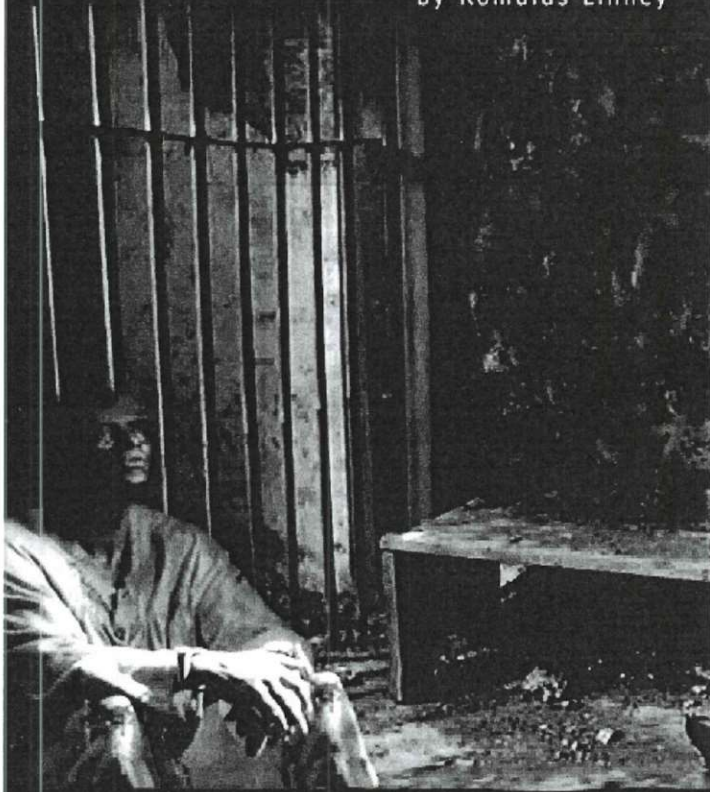
Hot 'N' Throbbing by Paula Vogel
February 17-25

Celebration a musical by Tom Jones
And Harvey Schmidt
April 6-13

UPCOMING AUDITIONS for ***The Three Sisters***

October 5 & 6 at 6:00 PM The Backdoor Theatre

Mercer University Theatre
presents
A Lesson Before Dying
by Romulus Linney



September 23, 24, 26-October 1, 2005 at 7:30pm
September 25, 2005 at 2:00 pm
THE BACKDOOR THEATRE

A Lesson Before Dying

by Romulus Linney

Directed by Sydney Chalfa

Set Design by Tony Pearson

Costume Design by Shelley Kuhén

Lighting Design by Marian Zielinski

Original music composed and performed by Micah Berry

Cast

Sam Bazemore Reverend Ambrose
Stephen McDaniel Paul Bonin
Shari Perkins Vivian Baptiste
Charles Thomas Grant Wiggins
James Thornton Jefferson
Ashley Wilkerson Miss Emma

TIME: 1948

PLACE: Bayonne, Louisiana. A storeroom in the Parish Courthouse. A table in the Rainbow Club. A schoolroom. A bench in front of the Courthouse.

Mercer Theatre Production Staff

Stage Manager Dede Coleman
Technical Director Tony Pearson
Set Crew Erika Adolphus, Phillip Banze, Heidi Clinite, Emma Hughes,
Mandy Morris, James Parker, John Williamson
Lighting Crew Erika Adolphus, Chris Daniels, Shelley Johnson, Arjun
Kulharya, Mandy Morris, Sarah Russell, Kerii Ryskamp,
Sally Skeldon, James Parker, Heidi Clinite, John Wilkerson
Costume Director Shelley Kuhén
Costume Crew Evelyn Funderburk, Marian McHugh,
Holly Turner, Andilynn Williamson
Light Board Operator Mandy Morris
House Manager Holly Turner
Props Mistress Kim Jackson
Poster Design Penni Hartley

Who's Who

Phillip Banze (Sheriff Guidry) is a freshman at Mercer. He is a journalism major and a theatre minor. He has acted since 7th grade and is from Chattanooga, TN. He works in the scene shop and is a writer for *The Cluster*. He attended Notre Dame High School where he acted, directed, and designed and built sets.

Micah Berry (Composer) is a recent graduate of Full Sail College in Orlando, Florida, in the field of Recording Arts. Hailing from Richmond, Virginia, Micah is the lead singer, guitarist, and composer for South Orange Allstars, a popular band in the Orlando area.

Samuel Bazemore (Reverend Ambrose) is a sophomore here at Mercer University. This is his fourth production with Mercer. His other roles include Captain Brice in *Arcadia*, the Mime in *The Arkansas Bear*, and Schuppanzigh in *Black Comedy*. Samuel would like to thank his family and friends for all of their support as he pursues his acting career.

Sydney Chalfa (Guest Director) has been an Assistant Professor of Theatre and Communications at Macon State College since 1990. At Macon State, Sydney has directed over 65 plays, including *Angels in America, Parts 1 and 2, Big River, Once On This Island, Cabaret, and Lonely Planet*. She has also directed for community theatre, including *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and *A Raisin In The Sun* at Macon Little Theatre. Sydney's husband John is an Associate Professor at Mercer in the Department of Communication and Theatre Arts. They have two sons, Matthew, age 23, and David, age 20.

Dede Coleman (Stage Manager) is from Lawrenceville, GA where she attended Berkmar High School. She is majoring in Music Education. This is Dede's first production with Mercer University Theatre.

Shelley Kuhén (Costume Director) designed costumes for Mercer Theatre's recent productions of *The Misanthrope, Proof, The Marriage of Bette and Boo, Childe Byron, How I Learned to Drive, and Into the Woods*. Shelley's designs were also seen in Theatre Macon's recent production of *The Scarlet Pimpernel, Hamlet, and Oliver*, and Macon State College's *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. This is Shelley's ninth year as Costume Director for Mercer Theatre.

Stephen McDaniel (Paul Bonin) is a business major from Lilburn, GA. This is his second production here at Mercer, having played the part of Jellaby in the 2004 production of *Arcadia*. Stephen is an amateur writer, whose greatest accomplishment is the writing of his first novel before graduation from high school. He plans to graduate in three years.

Tony Pearson (Set Designer, Lighting Designer) has designed scenery and lighting for several theatres in Macon. Some of his recent designs are scenery for *Proof* at Mercer and lighting for *Oliver* at Theatre Macon. He enjoys painting scenery, gardening, and watching movies.

Shari Perkins (Vivian Baptiste) is a freshman at Mercer University and is majoring in Journalism. In high school she was a member of the Georgia Thespian Society and actively participated in theatre. Her first major role was in 9th grade when she played Chiffon in *Little Shop of Horrors*. Later, she also played Officer Klein in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. *A Lesson Before Dying* is Shari's first time acting at Mercer. Among her other activities, Shari is a member of the Mercer University choir and writes for the school's newspaper, *The Cluster*. In the future she hopes to become a successful actress, news anchor, or journalist.

Charles Thomas (Grant Wiggins) is excited to be back on Mercer's stage once again. He has previously helped with 11 productions in the Backdoor Theatre. He has also appeared in productions at Theatre Macon and Macon Little Theatre. Charles would like to thank God, his family, his friends for their support, and Sydney for the opportunity to take part in such a pivotal show. Also, thanks to the Mercer Theatre Department for all the lessons he's learned thus far.

James E. Thornton (Jefferson) from Stone Mountain, GA, is the son of Vicki Thornton and youngest of four children (La'Teech, John, and Matthew). He is graduate of Redan High School. This will be his first time acting.

Ashley Wilkerson (Miss Emma) is a freshman at Mercer majoring in Pre-Med. She is from Druid Hills High School in Atlanta, GA.



MERCER UNIVERSITY THEATRE

PROUDLY DEDICATES THE 2005-2006 THEATRE SEASON TO

Paul Francis Oppy

Director of Mercer University Theatre, 1972-2005

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RECENT RETIREMENT FROM MERCER
UNIVERSITY

This theatre season will mark the first time in 33 years that Paul Oppy will not be serving as a theatrical director at Mercer University. Paul's legacy at Mercer is immeasurable and his accomplishments are enormous. Upon his arrival in the Fall of 1972, Paul began building a theatre program that was soon to become one of the finest undergraduate programs in the Southeast. Paul has won numerous accolades as a teacher and director, including the Sears Foundation Teacher of the Year Award (1990) and Mercer's Spencer B. King Award (2001). To honor his talent, dedication, and achievements, Paul was named the Davenport Professor of Communication and Theatre Arts in 1997. In addition to his duties as Director of Theatre, Paul was an active force in Mercer's Youth Audience Initiative and served as the Director of the Georgia International Festival For Young Audiences. We are all proud to be a part of Paul's living legacy. We are delighted to dedicate our work and our hearts to our great friend and mentor for this academic year.