
MERCER UNIVERSITY THEATRE

Presents

Rocket Man

by Steven Dietz

Directed by Paul Oppy

Scene Design by Marian Zielinski

Lighting Design by Jason Teague

Costumes Designed by Shelley Kuhen

Sound Design by Jason Teague

CAST

Donny	David Greenebaum
Buck	Emory Whitaker
Trisha	Candace Flatt
Rita	Diana Davidson
Louise	Shelley Kuhen

Time: This present. And another one.

Place: The attic of an American home.

There will be a ten minute intermission between acts.

Please turn off all beepers and watch alarms.

No cameras or recording devices may be used during the performance.

Special Thanks

Terry Bickley, Penni Hartley, Imaging Technology, Denver Pickard
Reference Department - Jack Tarver Library, Dr. John Stege

Who's Who

David Arroyo (Assistant Stage Manager) is a junior double-majoring in English with a concentration in Poetry Writing, and Communication and Theatre Arts. David says he finally knows what he's going to be when he grows up: a graduate student.

Diana Davidson (Rita) is a junior double-majoring in English and Christianity. This is Diana's third year with Mercer University Theatre and her fourth appearance on stage. She last appeared in the role of Ruth in *View from a Chambered Nautilus*. She plans to study in Oxford, England next semester and will miss this program very much. She would like to dedicate this performance to her wonderful and supportive roommate and friend, Ashley Whitten.

Candace M. Flatt (Trisha/props/set crew) is a freshman from Marietta, GA double-majoring in Political Science and a Drama/Theatre Concentration. This is Candace's first appearance on stage at Mercer. She was assistant stage manager for *Defying*

Gravity, and most recently stage managed *A Night of One Acts*. She plans to stay involved with Mercer Theatre and looks forward to her next few years here. Thanks to God for all of her blessings and love to friends and family, to the cast - break a leg!

David Greenebaum (Donny) is a Reference/Electronic Resources Librarian at Mercer. He has lived in Wisconsin, Massachusetts, California, Indiana, Washington, Illinois, and Georgia -not to mention France and Sweden. This is his first appearance on stage since Massachusetts.

Sean Johnson (Technical Director) earned his BA in Theatre Arts from Marian College in Indianapolis, and has been working in technical theatre for the last 16 years. He also works as a free-lance scenic designer. Most recently he has designed the sets for Macon College's Cobb and Mercer Theatre's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Mercer Opera's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

Shelley Kuhen (Louise) last performed in the roles of Sally in *Lips Together Teeth Apart* at Theatre Macon and as Frankie the Blind Girl in *Voice of the Prairie* at Macon State College. This is her fourth year as Costume Director at Mercer. Shelley recently designed costumes for *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for Mercer Opera, *A Night of One Acts* for Mercer Theatre and *The Who's Tommy* for Macon Stage College. This is her first experience being on stage at Mercer. Thank you Paul!

Courtney O'Neill (Master Electrician) This is Courtney's seventh Mercer production. She would like to especially thank Paul Oppy and Marian Zielinski for being such a cool dudes and her senior friends who are leaving this wonderful theatre this year, Ashley, Monica, and Jason - goodbye guys!

Paul Oppy (Director) has been teaching and directing at Mercer for twenty-eight years. *Rocket Man* is the 79th production he has directed for Mercer University Theatre. Erin Sullivan (Assistant Stage Manager) is a freshman at Mercer and has been involved with all the shows this year. She played Elizabeth in *Defying Gravity*, and Nancy in *A Night of One Acts* this fall. Erin is enjoying getting a chance to work backstage. She has enjoyed working with everyone on the show. Thank you all for working so hard.

Monica Stevens (Assistant Stage Manager) is a senior majoring in English and Communication and Theatre Arts. Her most recent roles include Teacher in *Defying Gravity* and Sheila in *An Inspector Calls*.

Jason Teague (Lighting Designer) is majoring in English with a Drama/Theatre Concentration. This is Jason's eighth and final design at Mercer. He would like to thank his professors and colleagues for their continued patience and trust despite many disappointments along the way. Without the mentorship of Marian Zielinski, Paul Oppy, and Sean Johnson among others, the many joys and satisfactions of theatre, art, and life would not have been possible.

Emory Whitaker (Buck) is a Professor of Mathematics and Director of the Great Books Program at Mercer. This is his thirtieth and last year at Mercer and eighth play with Mercer Theatre. He would like to thank Paul for the great experiences and Genny for her patience and support.

Ashley Whitten (Stage Manager) is a senior Drama/Theatre Concentrator and Art major who designed costumes, stage managed, and acted on this very stage. This is Ashley's last show in the Backdoor Theatre as a Mercer student. Thanks go to Marian for her habitual harranguing, Paul for his delicious direction, and Shelley because she stays awake all night and is a remarkable friend.

Marian Zielinski (Set Design) is an Associate Professor of Theatre at Mercer University where she has designed sets, costumes, and/or lighting for over fifty productions. Marian has also designed for the professional stage, including the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, the Shawnee Theatre, and Music Theatre Louisville. She earned her BA in Theatre from the State University of New York at Buffalo and her MFA from Illinois State University.

Production Staff

Director Paul Oppy
Scene Designer Marian Zielinski
Costume Designer Shelley Kuhen
Lighting Designer Jason Teague
Stage Manager Ashley Whitten
Assistant Stage Managers David Arroyo, Monica Stevens, Erin Sullivan
Technical Director Sean Johnson
Set Crew Romedro Bennett, Tiffany Enjart,
Dustin Fuller, Derrick Robinson, Chris Rountree, Marlene Silva
Costume Crew Shelley Kuhen, Marian McHugh, Ashley Whitten
Master Electrician Courtney O'Neill
Lighting Crew Milton Hardy, Bert Hopkins, Jessica Mosely,
Blair Ross, Erin Sullivan
Light Board Operator Ashley Whitten
Sound Board Operator Courtney O'Neill
House Manager Crystal Williams
Box Office David Strickland, Natalie Dallessandro

Playwright's Notes

For if there is a sin against life, it consists perhaps not so much in despairing of life, as in hoping for another life - and in eluding the implacable grandeur of this one.
-Albert Camus, Summer of Algiers

Is there another world? Another life? I ask this not so much in a scientific or spiritual context, but in a personal one. Is there another world - parallel to our own - in which life has dealt us the same hand but we chose to play our cards differently? A world in which the road not taken was followed to its end? Rocket Man is my attempt to imagine such a world.

It's been said that the history of human thought is the history of regrets. We move through life with one eye on the present and one on the future - while all the while our heart is making an inventory of missed chances along the way. Regrets are insidious and unrelenting. They are also, in their own way, rather comforting. For one, they require very little of us. They're usually static, frozen safely in the past (Well, it's too late to do anything about that now.). Secondly, they're easy to maintain. We're not expected to cultivate our regrets like we are our dreams. We can blissfully ignore them for years (at times the unexamined life is a godsend) and then take them out on a rainy day and wallow in them with impunity. Thirdly, they play well in public since we are seldom the only one in the room nursing a regret (or two). They allow us, in fact, the freedom to construct a remarkable past (if only I had done that when I had the chance, everything would be different.), which is infinitely easier than the tangible work of creating a future. Finally, and most crucially, our regrets almost never call our bluff. We are seldom given the second chance that we claim so desperately to want. Thank goodness for that. Imagine a world in which we were forced to go back and get it right this time - and then had to live with the consequences (perhaps of making an even worse choice than we did before. The past is a one-way street with good reason.

Which brings us to the present. The present alone is the home to action that tiny, fleeting window between hope and regret. How then to spend it? What is to be done? In researching this play, I found these words by the remarkable landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted: Let us help each other then to give our thoughts a practical turn. There is great work wants doing in this generation, let us off-jacket and go about it.

The answer, like space, is both obvious and infinite: We must combat our regrets (as best we can) with action. We must not rest on conviction, when conduct is required. And (with apologies to Disney) we must disenchant ourselves with wishing. Though the virtual world can be surfed, the real world must still be wrestled.

Rocket Man is the story of a man determined to transcend the boundaries of his life, determined to be granted that elusive second chance. To do so, he must investigate what Camus called this measureless universe where my adventure takes place. There is no telling what he will find there. For if our regrets are daunting, so too are the consequences of our actions. Knowingly or not, we affect the world with our every breath.. Thanks for being here.
Steven Dietz

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The Backdoor Theatre
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