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Theatre Productions

Communication & Theatre Arts

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## The Miser

Jean Baptiste Moliere

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John Carroll University  
Department of Communications  
Presents:

# THE MISER



IN MOLIERE WE TRUST

Written by: Jean Baptiste Moliere      Prologue by: Robert Noll

Directed by:  
Dr. Martin Friedman

## Kulas Auditorium

Friday and Saturday April 4 & 5 at 8pm  
Friday and Saturday April 11 & 12 at 8pm  
Sunday April 13 at 2pm

Plot Synopsis of  
THE MISER:

In an old mansion, the story of Harpagon – a crotchety old miser – and his family unfolds. Harpagon's daughter, Elise, is in love with Valere, a young man of noble parentage separated from his family and working as a servant in her father's house. Harpagon's son Cleante, also is in love and has given his heart to Marianne, a poor but virtuous girl from the country.

Cleante and Marianne decide to tell Harpagon of their engagement, but as they are on the verge of their disclosures, Harpagon reveals he has a couple of his own announcements. First, Harpagon has decided to remarry. His betrothed is a girl from the country named Marianne. Second, Harpagon has accepted a suitor for Elise's hand – a wealthy but elderly gentleman named Anselme. The children are flabbergasted by Harpagon's revelations and confusion reigns until fate intervenes to reunite family and lovers.

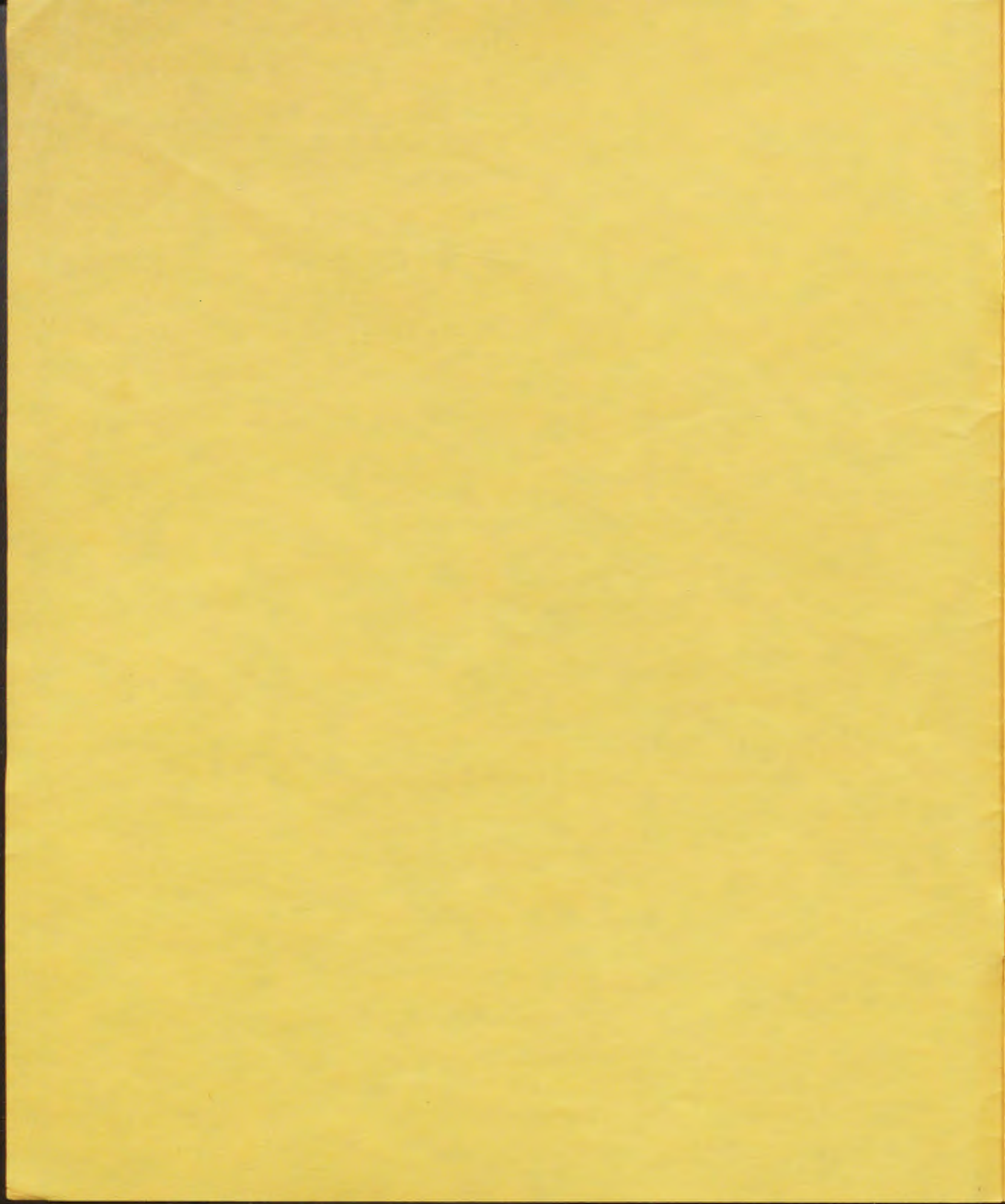
JEAN BAPTISTE MOLIERE (1622-1673)  
"Money, so they say is the root of all evil today." –*Money* by Pink Floyd

These may be contemporary lyrics, but the song parallels this play in an uncanny fashion. Greed has stood the test of time, and it is no wonder that Moliere used it to show the comedic side to that part of life. He was a great observer of human behavior, and loved to use it in his plays. Whereas previous French plays made use of the ridiculous situation for comedy, Moliere used a more serious approach to the humor in aspects of human nature. Greed is one such example.

Moliere was born in Paris and raised to follow his father's footsteps and become an upholsterer for the king. He had a different idea in mind and, after finishing law school, formed his own acting company, "L'illustre Theatre." He was the young age of twenty-one. His company of actors had a fifteen year run of touring (after a brief set back of going bankrupt and finding funding from Duke of Épernon) and was highly influenced by the Italian Theater.

He became a favorite of King Louis XIV once his company returned to Paris. His fans loved him on the stage; it has been said that he could contort his face in any way to convey anything. He excelled at portraying the characters he himself created. However, he developed just as many enemies as he had friends. His personality rubbed many the wrong way, so to speak. He wedded in 1663 to Madeleine Béjart, and by all accounts it was an unhappy marriage. Thankfully this came out more in his writing than his acting, and he was able to continue on the stage till his dying day. He had suffered great illness during the later part of his career, but seemed to bounce back. When he took the lead in his play *The Imaginary Invalid*, he ironically became seriously ill. Only a few performances into the run he collapsed on stage and later that night died. Thanks to his wife and King Louis XIV, he was properly buried at Pere Lachaise.

Today, his work is valued and enjoyed though it differs greatly from contemporary theater. It has withstood centuries of change in theater and society due to his timeless quality of finding the funny side of human nature; timeless only because his passion lives on through actors and audiences even today.



# THE MISER CAST

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Elise .....                 | Erin Kaminski        |
| Valere.....                 | Ryan Neumeister      |
| Cleante.....                | Patrick Bittel       |
| La Fleche.....              | Ashley Bittel        |
| Frosine.....                | Heather Jackson      |
| Harpagon.....               | Justin Blanche       |
| Master Simon / Officer..... | Ed Hassing           |
| Madam Jacqueline.....       | Marissa Madden       |
| Marianne.....               | Calli Ensor          |
| La Merluche.....            | Natalie Wilson       |
| Brindovoine.....            | Caroline Cullen      |
| Anselme.....                | Michael Schneeberger |

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The first performance of *The Miser*, by Moliere, was at the Palais Royal in 1668. Three hundred and thirty seven years almost to the day that we open this production.

I believe truly good comedy makes us think while it makes us laugh. The over thirty plays of Moliere (born Jean Baptiste Poquelin - 1622-1673) primarily used satire to expose the excesses of his world (the mid to late 17<sup>th</sup> Century) including religious hypocrites (*Tartuffe*), misers (*The Miser*), affectations of high society (*The Bourgeoisie Gentlemen*), and hypochondriacs (*The Imaginary Invalid*). While very popular in Paris during the reign of Louis the XIV and The Enlightenment, the true test is the test of time. Do his plays still work?

Well, not only are their several productions of his works in Cleveland over the next several months but *Tartuffe* recently opened on Broadway to excellent reviews. Apparently, Moliere's condemnation of the excesses of his society strikes a note in ours.

When *The Miser* opened, Moliere played Harpagon while his wife, Madeline Bejart, played La Fleche, his son's servant. He wore "slippers, thick stockings, narrow breeches, a red jacket with some braid or lace, and old briad neckerchief carelessly tied and a night cap with a lace crown."

I hope that you enjoy our production of *The Miser*.

## MEET THE CAST

**Ashley Bittel** – Hi! My name is Ashley Bittel and I am playing the role of La Fleche this evening. I have been involved with the theatre since I was seven years-old, and I keep coming back! My most memorable theatrical experiences include Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, in the Ohio Theatre and the Cleveland Opera's La Boheme in the State Theatre. I hope you enjoy watching the show as much as we enjoy putting it on!

**Patrick Bittel** – Hello, I'm Patrick Bittel. I've performed in shows such as Oliver Twist, West Side Story, A Christmas Carol, and Diary of Anne Frank to name a few. I major in Communications and hope to one day become a news anchor. I am currently 21 years of age and enjoying college life. I would like to thank everyone for coming and enjoy the show.

**Justin Blanche** – A freshman from Niles, Ohio, Justin made his debut last fall in the One-Act Play, Sociability. He recently directed his own humorous One-Act Play, Homicide: Life on Sesame Street...or Fowl Play. In high school, he was twice named best thespian and last year had the honor of being named best playwright in the State of Ohio by the International Thespian Society, for his One-Act Play Cirque du Play. Justin wants to dedicate his performance to his late grandfather Jack.

**Caroline Cullen** - Caroline is an international student from Ireland, who is studying here as part of the Business Education Initiative program. She is a junior at JCU, majoring in mathematics and computer science. She is a member of the crew team and is currently learning to play the guitar. This is her first performance in a play, although, she has taken part in several musicals. She dedicates this performance to the people whom she has met over the past year who have helped to make her time her memorable, especially her roommate Nicole and Aki, one of JCU's Japanese exchange students.

**Calli Ensor** – Calli is a sophomore and sociology major, but her heart belongs to the theatre. She has been acting for six years and dancing for thirteen years, and hopes to continue both in the future. She would like to dedicate this performance to her mother Mary Ann and her first director Cookie Pesce, whom she will never forget. Calli would also like to tell the cast and crew how wonderful it has been working with them.

**Ed Hassing** – Ed is a senior, double-major in Communications and English. This is Ed's second appearance on the Kulas stage. Last fall, Ed played the officer in Wait Until Dark. This semester, Ed not only directed Time Flies for the Marinello One-Acts, he also appeared in the two plays for Unheard Voices. In addition to theatre, Ed works as an Arts writer and Assistant Arts Editor for The Carroll News. In his spare time, Ed enjoys seeing movies, front yard wrestling, and eating massive amounts of Wheat Thins. Ed thanks his family and friends for their support.

**Heather Jackson** – Heather is a Junior Chemistry Major at John Carroll, and this is her second time on the main stage at John Carroll. Her last appearance in Kulas, was as Anne Frank in The Diary of Anne Frank. She has also performed in various Marinello One-Act Series such as Love in Pieces and has been an active participant in Unheard Voices in the past few years.

# THE MISER CREW

Director.....Dr. Martin Friedman  
Set Designer.....Keith Nagy  
Costume Designer.....Alison Hernan  
Lighting Designer.....Michael Simmons  
Master Electrician.....David Appel  
Wig and Makeup Designer.....Meredith Rutledge  
Sound Designer.....Bill Amato  
Technical Director..... Elizabeth Wood  
Stage Manager.....LeeAnn Baechle  
Assistant Stage Manager.....Rebecca Gellott  
Assistant Director.....Mindy Sutley  
Public Relations.....Hannah Fritzman  
Program Design.....Mary Kate Lundeen  
Poster Design.....Laura Vitale  
House Manager and Ticket Sales.....Jessica Buehner  
Light Board Operators.....Benjamin Turney  
Brad Holko  
Sound Board Operators.....Pat Archer  
Brad Holko  
Costume Crew and Running Crew.....LeeAnn Baechle  
Rebecca Gellott  
Mindy Sutley  
Set Crew.....CO 275



## MEET THE CREW

**Dr. Martin Friedman (Director)** – Dr. Friedman has been an adjunct instructor of Communications and Theatre at John Carroll University since 1990 and is also Artistic Director of Lakeland Theatre at Lakeland Community College. Dr. Friedman holds a B.S. Degree in Theatre Education from Emerson College (Boston), and a M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and a certificate in non-profit management from Case Western Reserve University's Mandel School for Non-Profit Organizations. He has taught theatre and communications at George Mason University, the University of Akron, Cuyahoga Community College, and Ursuline College. Dr. Friedman's most recent directing and producing credits (only at Lakeland) include: Imaginary Invalid (LT), Black Comedy (LT), A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (JCU), The Diary of Anne Frank (JCU), Long Day's Journey Into Night (LT), Death of a Salesman (LT), Plaza Suite (LT/JCU), I Hate Hamlet (LT), A Little Night Music (LT), Company (LT), Sunday in the Park with George (JCU), She Loves Me (LT), All My Sons (LT), and Crimes of the Heart (JCU). As a communications consultant, Dr. Friedman has worked with law firms and business on how to improve communications between employees and the public. Most recently, Dr. Friedman has worked on diversity training for the Anti-Defamation League, Perry High School, the Cleveland Public Schools, and Ford Motor Company and the United Auto Workers. In July, Dr. Friedman will direct Stephen Sonheim's Into the Woods at Lakeland Theatre with a professional cast.

**Keith Nagy (Set Designer)** – Mr. Nagy is an assistant professor in Communications at John Carroll University and previously served as Director of Production at Cleveland Opera for 16 years. He also was the resident designer for the Cleveland Opera and has designed sets and lights for such favorites as The Turk in Italy, Hansel and Gretel, Così fan Tutte, Rigoletto, La Traviata, and Carmen. Mr. Nagy has designed the sets and lights for a number of John Carroll University Productions including: Twelfth Night, Twilight Los Angeles, Sunday in the Park with George, Merrily we Roll Along, Buried Child, Lend Me a Tenor, Marvin's Room, Crimes of the Heart, and Blithe Spirit. At Lakeland Theatre Mr. Nagy was the set designer for Company, Brighton Beach Memories, and light designer for I Do! I Do! He was both lighting and set designer for Death of a Salesman, Arsenic and Old Lace, I Hate Hamlet, and A Little Night Music. His design work has included opera, ballet, film, live theatre, and industrial shows. His designs have been seen at the Seattle Opera, Opera Carolina, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Michigan Opera Theatre, Connecticut Opera and Opera de Puerto Rico. Mr. Nagy's local work in the theatre has been seen at Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Dobama, The Halle Theatre, Karamu, Porthouse Theatre, and Berea Summer Theatre. Mr. Nagy, who is a member of the United States Scenic Artists local #829, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre from California State Polytechnic University and his Master's degree from Ohio University. Mr. Nagy's most recent credits include light and settings for the Halle Theatre's productions of Rags, and Cabaret and lighting design for Dobama's critically acclaimed production of Wit.

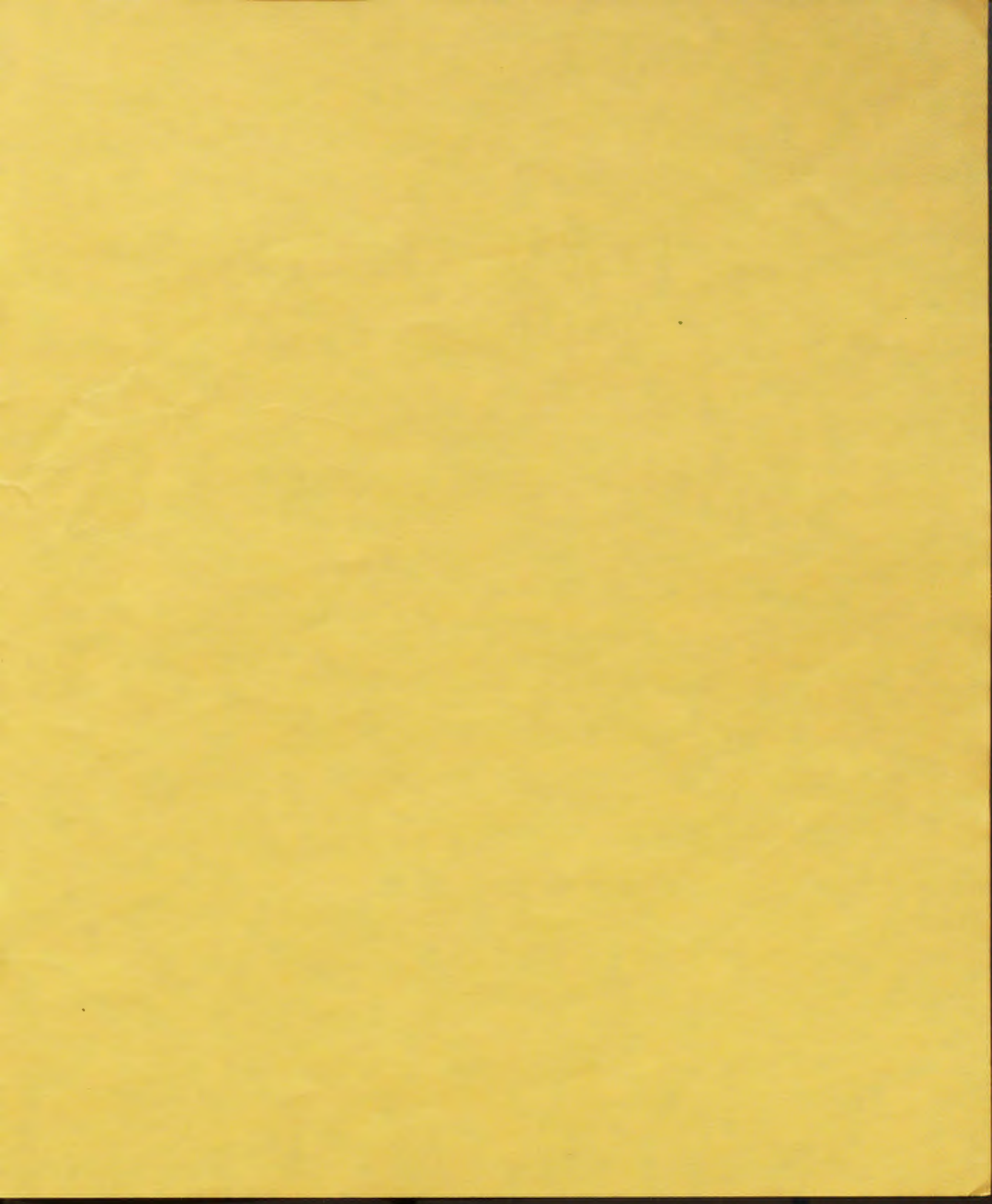
**Erin Kaminski** – Erin is a sophomore communications major at John Carroll. That is E-R-I-N not A-A-R-O-N!!! You may recognize her with antennae and wings as May the mayfly in February's One-Acts. She was also Betty, the old woman in Defying Gravity her freshman year. She looks forward to this challenging role and thanks her friends and family for their unconditional support.

**Marissa Madden** – Marissa is a sophomore Communications Major. She made her theatre debut last semester in the Marinello One-Acts. She has thoroughly enjoyed working with the cast and crew. Marissa would like to thank her sister and brother for being so inspiring in their recent high school productions.

**Ryan Michael Neumeister** – In this time of mixed emotions and changing sentiments throughout our environment, we look within ourselves for the right answers. All we can find is love & support for others, as well as peace within our own hearts. We should never forget the tranquility we hold inside and must pass it on to others. Everyone must be reminded daily of the gratitude we have for life. A friendly attitude and a smile can change humanity. Just do what you can; be nice to one another. Peace starts and spreads from the bottom, up.

**Michael Schneeburger** – Michael Schneeburger is a junior at JCU working on a Major in Communications. Before his appearance as Senior Anselme in JCU's The Miser, Michael appeared as Hero in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, as well as Lt. Schrenk in West Side Story. In as much as Michael has found the majority of his roles in the theatre, he has secured roles in film as well. After JCU, Michael intends to pursue a Master's Degree in Fine Arts.

**Natalie Wilson** – Natalie Wilson is a freshman Communications Major here at JCU. This is her first performance on the Kulas stage, although she has worked as Stage Manager on three One-Act Plays this year. No stranger to the stage, Natalie has appeared in many high school productions including Wizard of Oz, as Dorothy, and Cinderella as The Evil Stepmother at Warren G. Hardy High School. In closing, Natalie would just like to say peace!



**Mindy Sutley (Assistant Director)** – "If you think you can, you can.

And if you think you can't, you're right." - Mary Kay Ash

If you haven't heard of Mindy Sutley in association with Kulas stage, it's because wardrobe crew last semester for Wait Until Dark was the beginning of her experience. Outside of Unheard Voices, she has not appeared on stage at John Carroll University. However, her love for the theater prevailed and she leapt at the opportunity to assistant direct for Dr. Martin Friedman. Her experience as both a friend and bride, and later a psychiatrist in two Unheard Voices plays, and her high school acting experience helped her relate to the actors while learning the art of directing. She is very pleased with this production and proud to have her name connected to it. She would like to thank the entire cast and crew for making the last semester of her senior year an enjoyable and fun one. She would also like to thank Dr. Friedman for seeing an ability in her and offering her this wonderful opportunity, and then making it a worthwhile

**LeeAnn Baechle (Stage Manager)** - LeeAnn is excited to be stage-managing her third performance here at JCU. One day she hopes to return to the stage in which she was first introduced, but for the meantime she's having a blast being in control (it's a joke - please laugh!) She is a sophomore majoring in Communications and minoring in English. She would like to thank her family and friends for being so supportive, and the cast for being so much fun to work with. She hopes that everyone enjoys the show!

**Rebecca Gellott (Assistant Stage Manager)** - This is Rebecca's first production as Assistant Stage Manager, but she is no stranger to the John Carroll stage. In the past three years, she has been involved in several productions as both costume designer and supervisor. Credits include Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Defying Gravity, Sociability, Wait Until Dark and Time Flies. Special thanks go to her parents as always and to LeeAnn for putting up with her! Enjoy the show!

# SPECIAL THANKS

SR. MARY ANN FLANNERY

JILL SBERNA

JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

ROBERT NOLL