

3-26-2004

## A Piece of My Heart

Shirley Lauro

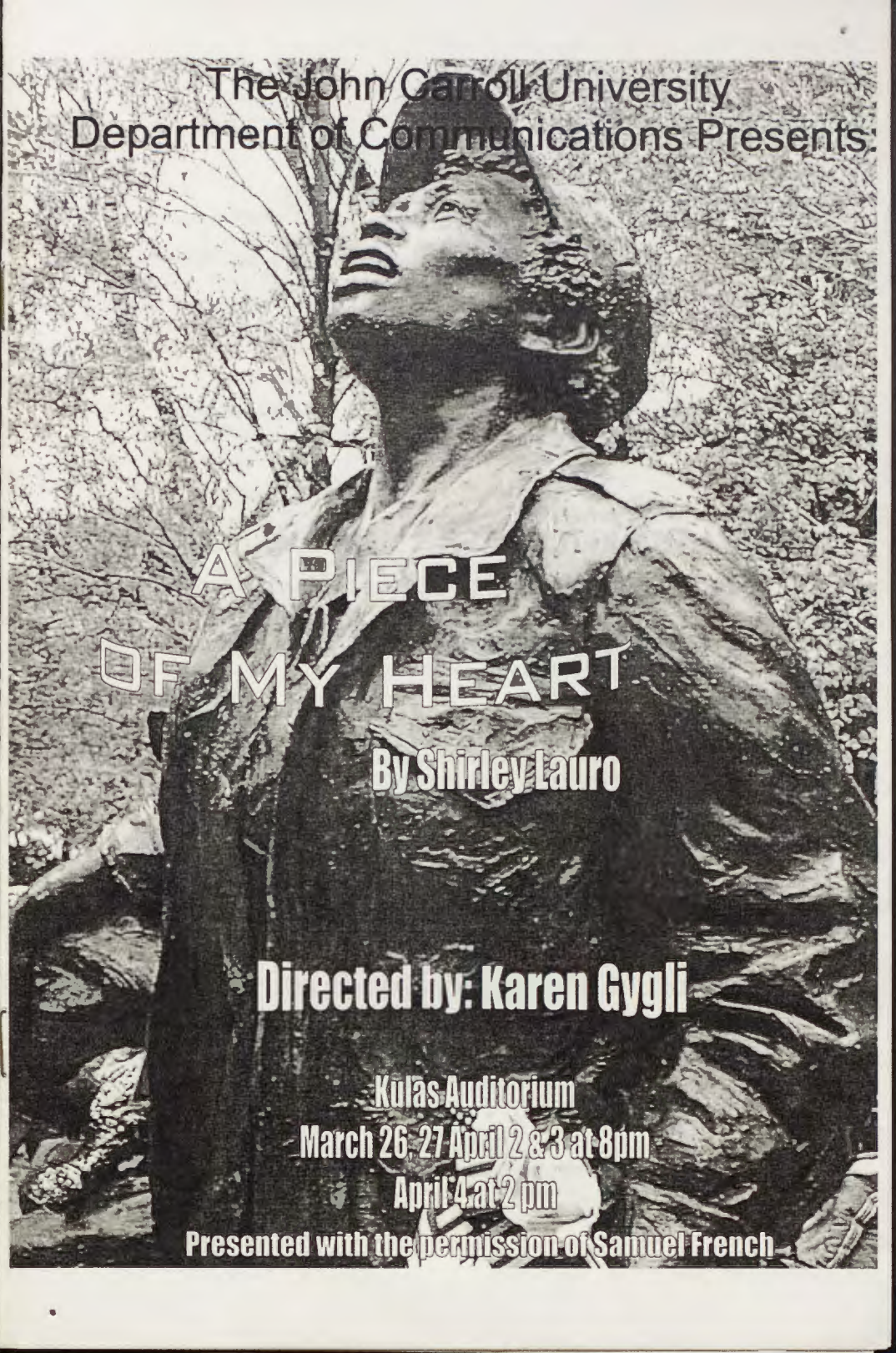
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The John Carroll University  
Department of Communications Presents:

**A PIECE  
OF MY HEART**

**By Shirley Lauro**

**Directed by: Karen Gygli**

**Kulas Auditorium**

**March 26-27 April 2 & 3 at 8pm**

**April 4 at 2pm**

**Presented with the permission of Samuel French**

## A Piece of My Heart

Vietnam Timeline--from *The Plain Dealer*, Tuesday, March 2, 2004.

The conflict in Vietnam was an attempt on the United States' part to stymie the spread of communism. The U.S. got involved following France's unsuccessful attempt to re-colonize Vietnam after World War II. The U.S. first helped, and then replaced, France in fighting communist North Vietnam and the Viet Cong guerillas in order to check China and the Soviet Union and out of fear that communism would spread throughout Southeast Asia.

Today Vietnam is a communist country. The United States and Vietnam normalized relations in 1995 and normalized trade in 2001. The two governments have cooperated on such issues as resolving the status of POWs and locating graves.

Significant dates from the war:

- 1946: Vietnamese nationalists launch first attack against French colonialists.
- 1950: United States agrees to supply arms to anti-communist, French-backed forces. First U.S. military advisers arrive.
- 1954: The Vietminh defeat the French at Dien Bien Phu. Geneva Agreement divides Vietnam into the communist North and the U.S.-backed South.
- 1957: U.S. military personnel suffer first casualties.
- 1961: President Kennedy increases U.S. troops presence in Vietnam to 3,000.
- 1963: South Vietnamese President Diem is overthrown and murdered by his own generals.
- 1965: First protest against the war on a U.S. campus.
- 1966: At least 385,000 U.S. servicemen in Vietnam.
- 1968: Tet Offensive: In January, combined North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces mounted surprise attacks against scores of cities and towns in South Vietnam. Though the attackers were repelled with heavy losses, it was a huge psychological victory for North Vietnam.
- 1968: My Lai massacre: Villagers are tortured and executed by U.S. special forces. Nixon elected president with promise to end war.
- 1970: United States invades Cambodia. On May 4, Ohio National Guard troops open fire on a crowd at Kent State University protesting the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. Four students were killed. Ten days later, troops killed two protesters at Jackson State University.
- 1973: United States, North Vietnam and South Vietnam sign a peace treaty. U.S. military operations end in Vietnam.
- 1975: North Vietnamese troops take Saigon, and the war ends.

Agent Orange: One of several types of defoliants and herbicides sprayed over South Vietnam to eliminate foliage cover and destroy food crops of the enemy. The chemical later was found to cause serious illness in soldiers and Vietnamese exposed to it.

Deaths from the war: North Vietnamese: 666,000, South Vietnamese: 224,000, United States: 58,000. Estimates of civilian dead on both sides of the war are more than 1 million, but an accurate number probably will never be known.



As a courtesy to the  
performers and those  
around you:

**PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING CELL  
PHONES, WATCH ALARMS, PAGERS,  
AND FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY.**

**Please note the emergency Exits marked in Kulas  
Auditorium. Should an emergency occur, please  
WALK in an orderly fashion to the exit nearest you.**

# **A Piece of My Heart**

**By**

**Shirley Lauro**

**Suggested by the book by Keith Walker**

## **Cast in Order of Appearance:**

Martha.....	Molly Webster
MaryJo.....	Katy DeGirolomo
Sissy.....	Marissa Madden
Whitney.....	Heather Jackson
Leeann.....	Melody Balczon
Steele.....	Kassanndra Grace Bass
American Man #1.....	Michael Schneeberger
American Man #2.....	Patrick Bittel

## A Piece of My Heart

Act I .....In Vietnam

Ten-minute intermission

Act II.....Stateside, in  
the years  
afterward

**\*\*\*Warning:** A strobe light and a gun shot effect are being used in this performance. \*\*\*

This play is being produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Originally produced in New York City by the Manhattan Theatre Club.  
Professionally produced in the 1991 Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville.  
Originally produced by the Philadelphia Festival for New Plays.

## Director's Notes:

Even though it is decades after the Vietnam War ended, the Wall in Washington is still so moving because of all the tributes that people leave there, propped against its shiny black surface etched with names. When I was there two years ago, I saw that a child had left a letter saying hi because "Daddy told me that you and he were in the war together." High school buddies leave tributes to dead friends, mothers for sons long gone. The genius of that memorial is that it does not emphasize the fury of battle, with guns drawn and horses rearing, like other war memorials. That is the side of battle that is addictive, as Chris Hedges puts it in his book *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*; the glamour and the intensity of war.

Instead, it acknowledges the reality of war forgotten when that deadly infatuation takes hold: enormous individual loss, whether it is loss of innocence, of happiness, of limbs, of the future, of the only person who ever understood and loved you. War is the pain of empty space at a dinner table, of the bedroom frozen in 1970, of the ever-smiling silent high school picture on the mantel, of a bunch of medals shut in a drawer, of a silent angry stranger sprawled on the couch watching old MASH reruns.

Although history was silent for a while about the women who bravely tried to save lives in the chaos of Vietnam, Washington now also has the Vietnam Women's Memorial facing the Wall. The intensity on the faces of the women it depicts as they look for choppers, take pulses and check clipboards is a long-overdue acknowledgement of the fact that they too gave their hearts as they served their country. It was through telling their stories to each other in the years following Vietnam that these women found some measure of peace. This play celebrates the power of love, community and speaking out, in contrast to the pain, isolation and silence of war and its aftermath. I know the cast joins me in thanking former Army nurse Mary Powell for coming to speak to us about her experiences in Vietnam. God bless all the men and women in Iraq: Coalition troops, support staff, reporters, and Iraqis. Once again, we were told this war was worth the tremendous costs of lives it continues to demand. We can only hope and pray that the history of Vietnam is not repeating itself right now.

## **Production Staff**

Director.....	Karen Gygli
Set Designer.....	Keith Nagy
Assistant Director and Dramaturg.....	Ed Hassing
Stage Manager.....	Natalie Wilson
Technical Director.....	Elizabeth Wood
Lighting & Sound Designer.....	Bill Amato
Costume Designer.....	Craig Tucker
Makeup Designer.....	Meredith Rutledge
Light Board Operator.....	Tiffany Olson
Sound Board Operator.....	Rian Spremulli
PR Manager.....	Celestina Perta
House Manager.....	Stacey Papp
PR Crew.....	Shaniqua Caffee Stacey Papp
Running Crew.....	Mike Hamlin Kristina Markovic Rebecca K. Meil John Polk Katie Saunier



## **A Piece of My Heart- Meet the Cast**

**Michael Schneeberger (Bruce, Jimmy and other male roles)-** Michael is a senior Communications major who has appeared in such shows as *Wait Until Dark*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *West Side Story* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. He also directs and enjoys light and stage design. If nothing else, he knows he'll continue working in theater when school ends.

**Molly Webster (Martha)-**As Betty in *The Golden Fleece*, and Donna in *Defying Gravity*, Molly has enjoyed the "drama" side of theatre here at John Carroll. She is pleased to be joining the cast of this powerful play that explores the lives of 6 women who experienced Vietnam. Whether she is acting or dancing, Molly couldn't live without being on stage and is thrilled to be doing it this semester. J'adore ma famille!

## A Piece of My Heart- Meet the Cast

**Melody Balczon (Leeann)**-This is Melody's JCU debut. After working backstage and building the set for *Cabaret*, she decided to put herself on stage. She has three years of children's theatre experience but this is by far the biggest role she has ever done. She is really excited and loves her character. She would like to thank her family for all of their support.

**Patrick Bittel (Hank and other male roles)**-Patrick is involved with many aspects of the John Carroll community. He is a senior Communications major looking for a job after graduation! Entertaining has been his life and he credits this to his parents Diane and Gary who have always supported him in anything that he has done. Performing is the ultimate high and to be involved with a show focused on the men and women that have fought for our country is truly an honor. Patrick would like thank you for coming and enjoy the show!

**Katy DeGirolomo (MaryJo)**-Katy is a freshman planning to major in Biology. This is her first performance at John Carroll. She has been in various shows at Central Catholic High School such as *Chess*. She would love to thank her friends and family for their support and meow to all my kitties!!

**Kassannadra Grace Bass (Steele)**- Hi! This is my first time performing in a large play production, such as this! Instead of babbling on about myself, I would like to thank: the brother upstairs (God), family, friends, and most of all you (the audience), for supporting this production and myself! Enjoy the show, and when you see me (anywhere), don't be scared to say "hi!"

**Heather Jackson (Whitney)** - This is Heather's third and final performance in Kulas since she will be graduating in May. She has been previously seen in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, playing Anne, and *The Miser*, playing the role of Frosine. Heather has also had various roles in One-Act performances as well as in *Unheard Voices*. She wishes to thank all her past directors, fellow actors, and the tech crews; especially Martin for taking a chance on a shy, freshman, science major, and Karen for allowing her to be a part of a truly remarkable and inspiring play.

**Marissa Madden (Sissy)**-Marissa is a junior Communications major with a minor in English and a concentration in Catholic Studies. She made her John Carroll stage debut as Kayla in *Strange Condition* and last spring, she played Madame Jackie in *The Miser*. She wishes the best of luck to the cast and crew and wants to thank everyone for all of their hard work on a production of which she is truly proud! Marissa would also like to dedicate this performance to her little sister Bernadette and to send much love to the rest of her family and her Kindred Spirit!!!

## **A Piece of My Heart; Special thanks to:**

Mary Powell

The American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter

Gloria Hricko

Beth Wood

Dr. E. James Kitora

Phil Schneeberger

The Beck Center

Mary Ann Flannery

Jill Sberna

Alan Stephenson

Kevin Cosgriff Hernandez

The Department of Communications

## A Piece of My Heart- Production Staff

**Bill Amato (Sound Designer)** –Thank you Keith Nagy, Karen Gygli, and Martin Friedman.

**Karen Gygli (Director)** – Dr. Gygli will be an Associate Professor of Theater in the Department of Communications at John Carroll University as of September of 2004. She teaches introduction to theater, African American theater history, Asian theater, acting and directing. Some of her productions at John Carroll include: *Wait Until Dark*, *Defying Gravity*, *Twilight Los Angeles: 1992*, *Buried Child* and *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. She also has directed *Eight Impressions of a Lunatic*, *The Clue in the Old Birdbath*, and *Body Outlaws* for Red Hen Productions, Cleveland's Feminist Theater. She would like to dedicate this show to all of her funny, hard-working, zany, wonderful cast and crew members (both past and present), who always have given her so much joy—may you all leave JCU to face a more peaceful world.

**Ed Hassing (Assistant Director)**– Ed is a senior majoring in Communications and English. *A Piece of My Heart* is his first play as an assistant director. Ed has directed two one acts, *Time Flies* and *The Golden Fleece*, and has acted in *Cabaret*, *The Miser* and *Wait Until Dark*. Currently, Ed is involved with Arenafest at the Karamu Playhouse, in addition to working on a film for Blue Collar Productions and applying for graduate school. Ed thanks his family, friends and Dr. Gygli for their continued support.

**Keith Nagy (Set Design)** – Mr. Nagy is an assistant professor of Communications at John Carroll University and previously served as Director of Production at Cleveland Opera for 16 years. He was also 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 1992*, *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* and just recently *Into the Woods* and *Talley's Folly*. His design work has included ballet, film, live theatre and industrial show. He has designed for the Seattle Opera, Opera Carolina, Lyric Opera of Kansas, Michigan Opera Theatre, Connecticut Opera and Opera de Puerto Rico. Mr. Nagy's 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 Scenic Artists local #829, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre from California State Polytechnic University (Pomona) and Master of Fine Arts degree in Production Design from Ohio University. Mr. Nagy's most recent credits include lights and settings for the Halle Theatre's production of *Rags* and *Cabaret*, and lightning design for Dobama's critically acclaimed production of *Wit*.

**Natalie Wilson (Stage Manager)**–Natalie is a sophomore Communications major at JCU. This is her first show behind the scenes on the Kulas stage. Other tech work includes stage-managing two years for the Marinello One Acts and also stage-managing for the Great Lakes Festival Ballet Company's production of *The Nutcracker* for three years running. Natalie is very grateful for the opportunity to work with this wonderful cast and crew! Break a leg, guys!!