

Providence College

DigitalCommons@Providence

Playbill and Promotions

Charley's Aunt (2008)

Fall 10-24-2008

Charley's Aunt Playbill

Providence College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/charleys_aunt_pubs



Part of the [Acting Commons](#)



ANGELL
Blackfriars Theatre

Providence College Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film Presents

Charley's Aunt

a comedy by Brandon Thomas

Directed by

BRENDAN BYRNES

Scenic Design

PATRICK LYNCH

Costume Design

DAVID

COSTA-CABRAL

Lighting Design

ELISSA PENZA CERROS

Sound Design

PAUL PERRY

Angell Blackfriars Theatre

October 24-26 & October 31-November 2

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc
45 W 25th Street, New York, NY 10010

Cast

Jack Chesney; Undergraduate at Oxford.	MARC FRANCIS
Brassett; A College Manservant.	ALEX CURRAN
Charley Wykeham; Undergraduate at Oxford.	STEPHEN ORLANDO
Lord Fancourt Babberley; Undergraduate at Oxford.	ALEXANDER MACINTYRE
Kitty Verdun; Spettigue's Ward.	SUZANNE KEYES
Amy Spettigue; Spettigue's Niece.	COLLEEN BURNS
Col. Sir Francis Chesney; Late Indian Service.	PETER CUNIS
Stephen Spettigue; Solicitor, Oxford.	MATT HASSAN
Donna Lucia D'Alvadorez; From Brazil.	SAMANTHA BRILHANTE
Ela Delahey; An Orphan.	CHRISTINE CESTARO

Setting

Commemoration Week, Oxford, 1892

Synopsis of Scenes:

Act I

Jack Chesney's Room in College (Morning)
"When pious frauds - are dispensations." - *Hudibras*

Act II

Garden outside Jack Chesney's Rooms (Afternoon)
"While there's tea there's hope." - *Pinero*

Act III

Drawing Room at Spettigue's House (Evening)
"Dinner lubricates business." - *Boswell*

There will be TWO ten-minute intermissions.

Special Thanks

Stephen Cabral
Helen Lynch Byrnes and Robert Finley Byrnes
Anne Marie Bottoms
Mary Ellen Kopp
The tdf Costume Collection
Michael Micucci, Walnut Hill School
Felippa Garrity

Production Staff

Production Manager JOHN GARRITY
Technical Director GEORGE MARKS
Costume Shop Supervisor MAXINE WHELOCK
Publicity Coordinator KATIE HUGHES
Assistant Technical Director SPENCER CROCKETT

Production Crew

STAGE MANAGER
Craig Schutz

ASST. STAGE MANAGERS
Sarah Randles
Jenna Tyrrell

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR
Danielle Demisay

SOUND BOARD OPERATOR
Ken Carberry

PROPS RUNNING CREW
Rachel Ball
Kelly Smith

FLY LINE OPERATORS
Joel Filp
Colleen Reilly
Liz Curtis

FOLLOW SPOT OPERATORS
Liz Curtis
Kelly Smith

WARDROBE RUNNING CREW
Julia Tully
Caroline Thibadeau

HAIR & WIGS RUNNING CREW
Liz Curtis
Elsa Bermudez

VOCAL COACH
David Harper

DIALECT WORKSHOP
Mary Ellen Kopp

SCENIC ARTISTS
Katyne Hecht
Patrick Lynch

PRESS/ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPHY
Mary Pelletier

HOUSE MANAGERS
Katie Guzik
Alex Fiedler

BOX OFFICE MANAGER
Cassandra Perl

BOX OFFICE AND PUBLICITY
LeeAnn Byrne
Caroline Cruise
Alex Fiedler
Katie Guzik
Stephanie Kanniard
Cassandra Perl

SCENE SHOP CREW
Hannah Hughes
Maggie Hughes
Peter Hurvitz
Lindsay Kennedy
Stephen Lai
Dana Mario
Sarah Randles
Craig Schutz
Chris Tompkins

COSTUME SHOP CREW
Suzanne Keyes
Brittany Kolodziej
Kaitlyn MacDonough
Jamie Doherty

COSTUME CONSTRUCTION CLASS
TDF 480

DEPARTMENT WEBSITE
Alex Fiedler

POSTER
Coyote Hill

USHERS
The Friars Club

Resident and Visiting Artists

BRENDAN BYRNES (Director)

A resident of New York City, Brendan returns to Providence College as a guest director after directing the Blackfriars productions of *Meet Me in St. Louis* in 1994, *A Flea in Her Ear* in 2001, and *Brigadoon* in 2005, the inaugural production at the Angell Blackfriars Theatre in the new Smith Center for the Arts. Other directing credits include *Baby*, the PC lab production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and *Lizzie Borden's Tempest*, a new play he both wrote and directed as a part of the New York International Fringe Festival.

As an actor, Brendan was featured in the pre-Broadway/Regional premiere of the new Burt Bacharach musical *What the World Needs Now* with Sutton Foster at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, directed by Gillian Lynne and co-produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company. New York credits include the critically acclaimed production of *The Screams of Kitty Genovese* at the New York Musical Theatre Festival, *Lucky Stiff*, *Pyramid of the Sun*, and *The Baker's Wife*. Regional acting credits include the first post-Broadway production of Elton John's *Aida*, *The Lion in Winter* with Ed Asner, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* with Joe Morton and Cotter Smith, *True West*, Harold Pinter's *The Collection* (Luna Stage), *Cabaret*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Chicago*, *Amadeus*, *Big River*, *The Drawer Boy*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Sordid Lives* (Arrow Rock Lyceum), *Falsettos* (Gorilla Theatre), *Pal Joey* (Washington Jewish Theatre), *The Boyfriend* (Burt Reynolds Theatre), *Singin' in the Rain* (North Carolina Theatre), and the tours of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* with Loni Anderson and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* with Barbara Eden.

Brendan most recently played "Munkustrap" in *Cats*, "Bill Ray" in *On Golden Pond*, and "John Pakidokodis" in the cable television pilot "Say Uncle!" written by David Simpatico of "High School Musical" fame. Other television and film credits include "Oz", "Sex and the City", "New Amsterdam", *The Good Shepherd*, *Enchanted*, and the upcoming *Cadillac Records*. Brendan graduated magna cum laude from the Arts Honors Program at Providence College in 1992, winning the Alembic Award for excellence in creative writing. He is proud member of both Actors' Equity and the Screen Actors Guild.

DAVID CABRAL (Costume Design)

In September of 2008 David was promoted to the Rank of Full Professor after 24 years of service to Providence College at various ranks and positions (Department Chairperson and Managing Director of the Blackfriars Theatre). David is the Resident Costume Designer in the Department of Theatre, Dance and Film as well as a full-time professor. David received his BA from Rhode Island College and his MFA in Theatrical Design from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. His designs for the stage have included works for the Publick Theatre, The New York International Fringe Festival, The Boston Conservatory, The Green Mountain Guild,

The Walnut Hill School, The Boston Lyric Stage and many others. Among his recent designs here at Providence College were *Funny Girl*, *Agnes of God*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Amadeus*. Among his most recent designs for the stage were *Follies* at The Boston Conservatory, *Brigadoon* and *Our Country's Good* at the Walnut Hill School and the highly acclaimed *Macbeth* for La Salle Academy and The Edinburgh Fringe Festival. In the 2008-2009 Academic Season David is designing productions of *The Quick Change Room*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *42nd Street*, *Urinetown*, *Grey Gardens*, and *Showboat!*

PATRICK LYNCH (Scenic Design)

Patrick Lynch is a scenic designer based in Providence, Rhode Island. Recent designs include *Tryst* (Westport Country Playhouse, CT), *Twelfth Night* (Summer Theatre of New Canaan, CT), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Theatre by the Sea, RI), *In The Blood* (Hostos Rep., NYC), and *Homemade Fusion* (The Zipper Theatre, NYC). As resident scenic designer for the Brown/Trinity Rep Consortium, he has designed *The Learned Ladies*, *Figaro*, *The Cure At Troy*, and *Elektra*. With Eugene Lee, Patrick has worked on the Broadway productions of *Wicked*, *The Homecoming*, *The Pirate Queen*, Stephen Sondheim's *Bounce*, and many productions at Trinity Rep and other regional theatres. This summer, he had the pleasure of co-designing *The Pillowman* with Mr. Lee at the Wellfleet Harbor Actors' Theatre on Cape Cod. Patrick holds an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University and a BFA from the University of Rhode Island. Upcoming productions include *Oklahoma!* (URI) and *Exits & Entrances* (New Rep). www.patricklynch-design.com

ELISSA PENZA CERROS (Lighting Design)

Ms. Pensa Cerros is pleased to be part of the design team for this exciting production of *Charley's Aunt*. Elissa is the Director of Arts Alive! at LaSalle Academy in Providence where she also functions as the Technical Coordinator for the Theater Dept. and teaches Film Studies, Video Production and Theater Production. Elissa has designed lights and coordinated sets for over 32 productions at LaSalle Academy including, *A Few Good Men*, *Con Amore* (an original musical by Michael Scanlan), *Antigone*, *The Bacchae* and *Macbeth*, which they brought to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Ms. Pensa Cerros has a B.A. and an M.A. from NYU where she performed with and designed lights for the Program in Educational Theater. Elissa lives in Providence with her husband Walter and dog, Jibbs.

PAUL PERRY (Sound Design)

Paul Perry is a junior theatre major with a concentration in production and design, as well as a Spanish minor. Design credits at Providence College include, the mainstage production of *Agnes of God*, the independent student productions of *Boy Gets Girl*, and the upcoming shows *Breaking the Cycle*, and *Baby With The Bathwater*. Paul returns to PC this semester after completing a technical internship at the Winnepesaukee Playhouse this summer.

ACTORS AND SINGERS AUDITIONS

Providence College Department of Theatre, Dance & Film announces **OPEN AUDITIONS**

Monday, November 3

6pm Angell Blackfriars Theatre

WAITING FOR LEFTY

By Clifford Odets

Production Dates: February 6-8 & 13-15



This production of *Waiting for Lefty* will provide opportunities for actors who sing, actors who do not sing and singers who may not wish to act in a named role. While the play as scripted is a straight non-musical drama, in this production it will be supported by songs of the period (1930s) which will be a concert that both precedes and is interspersed throughout the presentation of the play itself.

Actors only: Prepare a 2 minute monologue from a play of your choice.

Singers only: Prepare a verse of a ballad or folk song from any period.

Actor/singers: Prepare a 2 minute monologue and a verse of a ballad or folk song from any period.

Please note: At the audition, all singing will be acapella.



In addition, casting for an **INDEPENDENT STUDENT PRODUCTION** will occur at the **WAITING FOR LEFTY** audition. If you are interested in being considered for **BABY WITH THE BATHWATER**, by Christopher Durang, directed by Brandon Ferretti '09, come to the **WAITING FOR LEFTY** audition. Production Dates for **BABY WITH THE BATHWATER**: February 20-22.

CASTING POLICY:

Providence College Department of Theatre, Dance & Film auditions are **OPEN TO ALL PC STUDENTS**. Furthermore, the department supports, diverse, nontraditional casting as a regular part of all its theatre productions.

PLEASE NOTE:

No previous experience is necessary to be considered for a role. Auditions are conducted individually. If you have never auditioned and need help selecting audition material, or if you are just unsure about the audition process and would like to ask some questions, contact John Garrity at 401.865.2219 or jpgarrity@providence.edu.

The Beginnings of Charley's Aunt

Written in just 21 days, *Charley's Aunt* has become one of the most profitable and popular literary works of all time. Since its first performance in 1892, it has appeared in the repertory of nearly every amateur and provincial theatre; to quote Spettigue: "What should we have done without your dear aunt, Charley?" At one point, it was being played simultaneously in 48 theatres around the world, and in no fewer than 22 languages, including Afrikaans, Chinese, Gaelic, Russian, Esperanto and Zulu. Indeed it is fascinating to speculate on the impression of 'England' that this classic and indestructible farce has pollinated around the world.

Its author, Walter Brandon Thomas, was born in Liverpool on Christmas Day 1856, the son of a wealthy Lancashire shoemaker, who educated his son privately. Thomas' mother originated from Scotland, "where," as 'Charley's Aunt' would later say, "the whiskey comes from." After hearing him recite at a Liverpool "Saturday Evening for the People" in 1879, the leading London theatre managers of the day, the Kendals, invited him to join their company at the Court Theatre in London. Thomas left the Kendals in 1885, and later appeared in Music Hall, singing variety songs which he wrote himself. He was also a serious actor; Bernard Shaw mentions him favorably several times in *Theatre in the Nineties*. He died on the 19th of June 1914.

Despite writing a dozen plays, from *Comrades* (1882) to *A Judge's Memory* (1906), Thomas is remembered today solely for *Charley's Aunt*. 'The Aunt' was actually based on the faded, sepia photograph of an elderly relation, and the part especially written for the actor-manager William Sydney Penley (1852-1912). In 1890, impressed by *Highland Legacy* (1888), and eager to move into management, Penley asked Thomas to write a play for him. The result was *Charley's Aunt*, which Thomas dictated to his wife in just three weeks. The farce was curiously topical: in 1889, Brazil had been declared a republic, after the deposition of the ruling Dom Pedro (the name Thomas gave to Donna Lucia's late husband).

The play was sent to various prominent managements, all of whom rejected it. Thomas therefore decided to try it out at a provincial theatre, where

London critics would be unlikely to follow. *Charley's Aunt* premiered on the 29th of February, 1892 (a leap year) at the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, under the direction of Thomas, who also played Sir Francis. The original cast included Nina Boucicault, later to be the first Peter Pan. The theatre was packed to capacity, but the following night, at the first public performance, the audience comprised a mere 30 people, who were called forward into the front stalls to encourage the cast. The reception however was exuberant; Penley immediately wired Thomas (who, performing at London's Royal Court, was unable to attend the first night): "Your fortune is made." Midway through the provincial tour, when Penley and Thomas were beginning to despair of a London opening, Soho's Royalty Theatre fell vacant, and Thomas, after a wild search, borrowed £1000 to rent it. A Miss Sheridan, a descendant of the famous dramatist, introduced Penley to a financier, who promised him the necessary money.

Charley's Aunt opened on 21st December to a full house and was an instant hit. The Duke of Cambridge's equerry laughed so much, his seat collapsed; and the fireman fell against the bell, bringing the curtain down in the middle of the performance. In one week, advance bookings worth £12,000 were taken, and ticket-hunters caused such a traffic jam outside the theatre that Penley was sued for 'causing a nuisance'. A month later the play moved to the Globe, where the original production, costing only £60 to stage, continued to run for 1,466 performances. So popular was the show that long before the London run ended, there were nine companies touring in the US, seven in Germany, and four in Britain.

Charley's Aunt has remained a steady audience-pleaser and money-spinner ever since. There have been over twenty film and television adaptations, most notably starring Sydney Chaplin (1925), Charles Ruggles (1931), Jack Benny (1942), Art Carney (1957), and Charles Grodin (1983); six Broadway productions, including the 1940 hit starring José Ferrer; and the popular Frank Loesser musical, *Where's Charley?*, originally starring Ray Bolger (1948), and later revived on Broadway in 1974 with Raul Julia.

One of the few people ever to dislike the play was Edward VII, who thought 'Aunt' was a caricature of his mother, Queen Victoria. George V however saw it three times, and, during the Great War, Kaiser Wilhelm II proclaimed that it was the only British play of which he approved: "The author died before the war started, and I have no quarrel with him."

- Daniel Wain, from the program of the Official Centenary Production of *Charley's Aunt*



W. S. Penley 1892

FAMOUS AUNTS



Stanley Cooke 1893



Guido Thielscher 1893



FAMOUS AUNTS

Syd Chaplin 1925
Arthur Askey 1940
Jack Benny 1942

Charles Ruggles 1931
José Ferrer 1940
Ray Bolger 1948

2008-2009 SEASON

MAINSTAGE



CHARLEY'S SAUNT
by Brandon Thomas

Oct. 24-26 & Oct. 31-Nov. 2

BLACKFRIARS DANCE CONCERT
choreographed by both resident and guest choreographers

Nov. 21-22

WAITING FOR LEFTY
by Clifford Odets

Feb. 6-8 & Feb 13-15

URINETOWN
Music & Lyrics by Mark Hollman
Book and Lyrics by Greg Kotis

April 3-5 & April 17-19

STUDENT PRODUCTIONS



BREAKING THE CYCLE
an adaptation of *Iphigenia at Aulis* by Euripides,
Agamemnon by Aeschylus, and *Electra* by Sophocles

Nov. 14-16

BABY WITH THE BATHWATER
by Christopher Durang

Feb. 20-22

SPRING DANCE CONCERT
Student Choreography Showcase

April 25-26

STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL

April 28

Providence College
Dept. of Theatre, Dance and Film
401.865.2218
www.providence.edu/theatre

