

## MEDIA INFORMATION

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

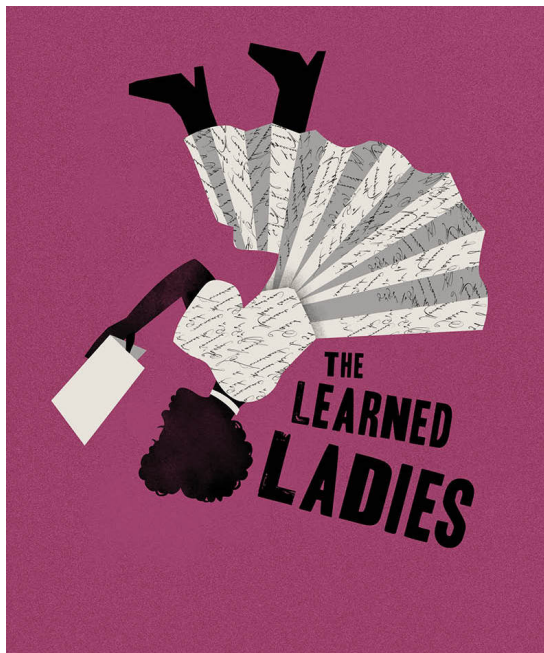


# UW School of Drama presents Molière's *The Learned Ladies*

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The University of Washington School of Drama will present Richard Wilbur's translation of Molière's *les Femmes savantes*, *The Learned Ladies*, May 22<sup>nd</sup> through June 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Glenn Hughes Penthouse Theatre on the UW-Seattle campus. The production is directed by internationally renowned performer and teacher of Clown and physical comedy, Jane Nichols, and features a cast of second- and third-year graduate acting students from the Professional Actor Training Program.

*The Learned Ladies* is a five-act play written in verse. Molière's penultimate play and one of his most popular, it premiered at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal in Paris on March 11, 1672.

In the play, Clitandre seeks the hand of Henriette, a match heartily approved of by her father, Chrysale. However, his wife, Philaminte, has other plans for her younger daughter—namely marriage to Trissotin, an opportunistic sycophant who panders to Philaminte's intellectual pretensions. Further complications are introduced by Armande, Henriette's older sister, who once rejected Clitandre but now resents his attentions to Henriette; by Bélise, Chrysale's sister, who believes (erroneously) that all men are wildly in love with her; and by Vadius, a scholar jealous of Trissotin's hold on Philaminte. Needless to say the course of true love does not run smoothly, as the pseudo-intellectual posturings of Philaminte and her coterie clash with the struggle between Chrysale and Philaminte over who shall ordain the disposition of their daughter's hand. But happily, and thanks to the maneuvering of Chrysale's brother, Ariste, all is set right in the end, with

hypocrisy exposed and true love made triumphant.

Translator Richard Wilbur was the second poet laureate of the United States, and, during his lifetime, received two Pulitzer Prizes and the National Book Award, among numerous other accolades. Writing for the *New York Times* in 1982, Frank Rich said, “Moliere has had no better American friend than the poet Richard Wilbur, whose translations of 'Tartuffe,' 'The Misanthrope' and 'The School for Wives' are beautiful works of art in themselves. Mr. Wilbur's lighter-than-air verse upholds the idiom and letter of Moliere, yet it also satisfies the demands of the stage; the rhymed couplets are always crisp and playable. It's a remarkably selfless exercise, too. Though Mr. Wilbur's own poetic gifts are abundantly apparent in these translations, he scrupulously uses his talent to serve rather than to upstage or update the texts at hand. Mr. Wilbur's latest Moliere, 'The Learned Ladies' ('Les Femmes Savantes'), is every bit as well-written as its predecessors.”

The show is a master’s thesis for costume designer Jordan Fell, whose previous UW Drama mainstage shows include *In the Heart of America* and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*.

### **The Learned Ladies**

By Molière

Translated by Richard Wilbur

Directed by Jane Nichols

### **DATES & LOCATION**

May 22 – June 2, 2019

Wednesday – Saturday at 7:30

Sunday at 2:00

#### **DATES TO NOTE:**

Previews May 18 & 21 at 7:30 PM

Opening night: Wednesday, May 22 at 7:30 PM

Pay-What-You-Can Wednesday May 29 at 7:30 PM (day-of-show only, \$1 minimum)

[Glenn Hughes Penthouse Theatre](#)

University of Washington, north campus, adjacent to N5 parking lot

Use NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street entrance to UW

### **ARTISTS**

#### **Playwright: Molière**

Molière was baptized Jean-Baptiste Poquelin on January 15, 1622 in Paris, France. He was a French actor and playwright, and is considered by some the greatest of all writers of French comedy. His extant works include comedies, farces, tragicomedies, comédie-ballets and more. His plays, which



include *Tartuffe ou L'Imposteur* (*Tartuffe, or the Imposter*), *Le Misanthrope ou L'Atrabilaire amoureux* (*The Misanthrope, or the Cantankerous Lover*), *La Critique de l'École des femmes* (*Critique of the School for Wives*), and *Le Malade imaginaire* (*The Imaginary Invalid*), have been translated into most major living languages and are performed at the Comédie-Française more often than those of any other playwright.

Despite the adulation of the court and Parisians, Molière's satires attracted criticism from church. For *Tartuffe's* impiety, the Catholic Church denounced this study of religious hypocrisy, prompting a parliamentary ban, while *Don Juan* was withdrawn and never restaged by Molière. In 1673, during a production of his final play, *The Imaginary Invalid*, Molière, who suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis, was seized by a coughing fit and a hemorrhage while playing the hypochondriac Argan. He finished the performance but collapsed again and died a few hours later.



**Translator: Richard Wilbur**

Richard Wilbur was born on March 1, 1921 in New York City. One of the most lauded and honored poets of 20th century American verse, Wilbur was the second poet laureate of the United States, succeeding Robert Penn Warren. Daniel Boorstin, the Librarian of Congress, announced Wilbur as “a poet for all of us, whose elegant words brim with wit and paradox.” During his lifetime, Richard Wilbur won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for his collection *Things of This World: Poems* in 1957 and a second Pulitzer for *New and Collected Poems* (1988). He was the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Wallace

Stevens Award, the Frost Medal, the Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry, two Bollingen Prizes, the T.S. Eliot Award, the Edna St. Vincent Millay Memorial Award, the Prix de Rome Fellowship and many more honors, fellowships and awards for his poetry. His translations of French verse, especially Voltaire's *Candide* and the plays of Molière and Racine, are also highly regarded by critics; his translation of Molière's *Tartuffe* won the 1971 Bollingen Prize. He died in 2017 in Belmont, Massachusetts.

**Director: Jane Nichols**

Jane Nichols is a teacher, director, and actor who has been teaching clown for over 25 years. Her work brings together skills and techniques of improvisation, mask, le jeu, physical comedy, clown, and fool. She has studied with world-renowned Clown Master Philippe Gaulier, Avner Eisenberg (Avner the Eccentric), Clive Mendes (Theatre Complicité), Ronlin Foreman (DellArte School of Physical Theatre), Michael Kennard (co-founder of Canada's acclaimed Mump & Smoot, and Master teacher of the Richard Pochinko native American mask/clown technique), Bolek Polivka, Antonio Fava, Davis Robinson, Keith Johnstone, and Merry Conway. She has taught at Brown University, Yale School of Drama, Juilliard, Harvard University/Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at American Repertory



Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Stella Adler Conservatory, University of Washington, University of Utah, Emerson College, Simon's Rock College of Bard, Actor's Center in NYC, and Shakespeare & Co in Lenox, Massachusetts, and Lesley College Graduate School.

She is the founder and artistic director of the Crosswalk Theater in Boston. Her acting credits include roles at En Garde Arts, New Georges and SoHo Rep, Dallas Theater Center, Portland Stage Company, Gloucester Stage, Shakespeare & Co., the Lyric Stage, Nora Theater, and Berkshire Public. Jane has performed for film and television in *School Ties*, *Heights*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Ed*, *America's Most Wanted*, and *Rachel's Dinner* with Olympia Dukakis.

#### CREATIVE TEAM:

**Costume Designer:** Jordan Fell (3<sup>rd</sup> year MFA designer, master's thesis design)

**Lighting Designer:** Trevor Cushman (2<sup>nd</sup> year MFA designer)

**Set Designer:** Adair MacCormack (2<sup>nd</sup> year MFA designer)

**Sound Designer:** Garth Ball

**Stage Manager:** Elliott Schumacher

CAST: (All cast members are members of the Professional Actor Training Program)

**Chrysale:** Brandon Pascal

**Ariste:** Andres Rodriguez

**Philaminte:** Alyssa Franks

**Armande:** Erika Vetter

**Henriette:** Jessica Thorne

**Belise:** Hailey Henderson

**Clitandre:** Jon Díaz

**Trissotin:** Semaj Miller

**Vadius:** Jason Treviño

**Martine:** Erica Matthews

**Notary/Valet:** Asialani Holman

#### TICKET PRICES

**Access for students** continues to be a top priority. Student ticket prices, which were lowered last year, will remain \$10 for regular performances and \$8 for previews. We will host a community **Pay-What-You-Can** the second Wednesday of each run.

**Ticket prices for all UW Drama mainstage shows:**

\$20 – Regular

\$14 – UWAA, UW Employee or Retiree, Senior

\$10 – Student  
\$5 – TeenTix  
Previews: \$10 – Regular / \$8 – Student

Tickets can be purchased at [drama.uw.edu](http://drama.uw.edu) or through the ArtsUW Ticket Office: 206-543-4880, [ticket@uw.edu](mailto:ticket@uw.edu).

### **UPCOMING PROGRAMMING**

Check [drama.uw.edu](http://drama.uw.edu) for full details

#### **Body Awareness**

By Annie Baker  
Directed by Andrew Coopman and Kristie Post-Wallace  
June 5 – 9, 2019  
Preview June 4  
Floyd and Delores Jones Playhouse

### **ABOUT THE UW SCHOOL OF DRAMA**

Led by Interim Executive Director Lynn Thomas and Associate Director Geoff Korf, the UW School of Drama is consistently ranked among the top theatre training programs in the country. Emerging actors, directors, and designers come from all over the world to study with our world-class faculty and prominent guest artists, such as Erik Ehn, Anne Washburn, Daniel Alexander Jones, and Meiyin Wang. Our audiences are adventurous theatre-goers who want the opportunity to see engaging, provocative, and beautiful work.

As an educational institution, UW Drama is able to produce the types of plays that are harder and harder to find on professional stages: large-cast shows with highly diverse casting, period pieces with opulent, detailed designs, and boundary-pushing plays that test form and style. We produce in three intimate, comfortable spaces on the UW Seattle campus: The Hughes Penthouse Theatre (the first purpose-built theatre-in-the-round in the U.S.), the Floyd and Delores Jones Playhouse, and the Meany Studio Theater.

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