

**The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Department of Theatre & Dance**

Presents

THE SPIRITUALIST

by Robert Ford

Director

Jared Hanlin*

Stage Manager

Jamie Fota

Dramaturg

Sophie McIntosh

House Manager

Noelle Watson

*Faculty/Staff

Welcome to the Department of Theatre & Dance 2019-2020 Season!

The UWSP Department of Theatre & Dance is fully accredited by the
National Association of Schools of Theatre and the
National Association of Schools of Dance.

Theatre & Dance Department productions are
partially funded by the Student Government Association.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Staged readings are a special kind of creature in the theatre. An audience gathers to experience a play in its most essential form – the words of the script. There is no designed set, no designed costumes, and only basic lighting. Actors read from their scripts on music stands, when the truth of the matter is that they've now read their lines enough that they're mostly memorized. You, the audience, have come to hear the story told in the characters' voices, because that's where the heart of the drama is: in the way characters communicate with one another. While it offers you a chance to imagine the world of the play for yourself, there is something rather magical about really listening to the play in its purest form – and in this case, with the movement and music we feel is really essential to a play like *The Spiritualist*.

In addition to the unique experience this format offers, staged readings serve a vitally important function in the theatre industry: new play development. It gives a playwright the opportunity to hear their script aloud, and then in conversations with the actors and audiences determine what works and what doesn't. While *The Spiritualist* is not technically "brand new" or "in development," I was there when it was – which is why I have a special affinity for this play in this format. *The Spiritualist* underwent at least two staged reading workshops as part of the Arkansas New Play Festivals in 2010 and 2012 before finally enjoying its world premiere at TheatreSquared in Fayetteville, Arkansas in 2013. I was an actor for the 2012 workshop and enjoyed every minute of it. The format forced me to make acting choices quickly and adapt to new changes. It was so much fun to get to the heart of the play in just a week, and share that with a few audiences. This is the kind of work our students may well find themselves doing early in their careers, and we want them to know how to approach the format with confidence and proficiency.

Robert Ford, the playwright of tonight's work, is the author of a number of plays including *My Father's War*, *The Fall of the House*, *Look Away* and *'Twas the Night*. He is a founding member and the Artistic Director of TheatreSquared. Amy Herzberg – the actor who originated the role of Rosemary Dunn – is the co-founder and Associate Artistic Director of TheatreSquared, as well as Professor and Head of the MFA Acting Program at the University of Arkansas. Bob and Amy are married, and we were told that the genesis for this play came when they were dating and Amy wanted Bob to write her a one-woman show based on Rosemary Brown. While it certainly expanded beyond that initial idea, this play continues to be filled with the generous spirits of both of these brilliant artists. Working on it again reminds me how tremendously grateful I am to both of them for their mentorship, artistry and support, both while I was in graduate school and since. This reading is, in part, my way of saying thanks.

DRAMATURG'S NOTES

Rosemary Brown (1916-2001), née Rosemary Dickeson, was the inspiration for *The Spiritualist's* Rosemary Dunn. Brown was raised by an impoverished family in London and claimed to have been visited by spirits since childhood. A devoted Spiritualist, she began transcribing the music of deceased composers in 1964, and her story soon became the object of media attention. While most musical experts doubted her claims, maintaining that her compositions were simply rehashed versions of works by the original composers, a few prominent musicians defended Brown and chose to perform her works in concert.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) began his musical training at the age of seven and quickly became a sensation not only in his native Hungary but across all of Europe. On his tours, Liszt sparked a phenomenon known as "Lisztomania": his audiences, especially the female members, reacted to his concerts with hysterical ecstasy, tearing off pieces of clothing and attempting to steal piano strings as mementos. Often remembered as a Casanova, Liszt is believed to have had affairs with at least twenty-six women over his lifetime. Liszt redefined the standard of piano concerts with his showmanship and emphasis on impressive displays of technical skill and was also a prolific composer, though his musical innovations were looked down upon by conservatives such as Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann.

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827) was raised by an alcoholic music teacher intent on molding his son into a musical genius. After moving from the Electorate of Cologne (modern-day Germany) to Vienna, Austria, Beethoven went on to become one of classical music's most influential composers. Though his blunt demeanor often created turbulent relationships with his contemporaries, and he was beset by a progressive case of hearing loss that rendered him completely deaf by the age of forty-four, Beethoven nevertheless maintained a celebrated composing career through the end of his life.

Clara Schumann (1819-1896) was born Clara Josephine Wieck in Leipzig, Germany. The daughter of a piano teacher, Clara was performing in widely praised concert tours and publishing music by age eleven. As an adult, she shared a deeply passionate relationship with her husband, composer Robert Schumann. However, the demands of motherhood and caring for her often-depressed spouse put an end to Clara's own aspirations as a composer. After Robert's death in 1856, Clara took charge of his estate and compositions. Now free to tour again, Clara resumed her concerts and continued performing well into her seventies.

Spiritualism holds that the dead reside on a higher plane and are capable of making contact with the living, and it is through this lens that the lives and afterlives of these individuals are revisited in Robert Ford's *The Spiritualist*. Though these characters are fictionalized depictions of their historical counterparts, the fiery personalities and storied backgrounds of the composers are brought vividly to life in this extraordinary play.

THE SPIRITUALIST

Cast

Rosemary Dunn.....	Elena Cramer
Franz Liszt.....	Nicholas Baum
Roy Elgin.....	Taye Martin
Clara Schumann.....	Katie Kallaus
Peter Clifton.....	Ted Santi
Beethoven.....	Spencer Blohm
Buddy Holly.....	Kaden Rhodes
Margaret Clifton.....	Sydney Faris
Sean Michael Roberts.....	Brett Fredrickson
Jane Martin Haines.....	Karley Scheidegger
Stage Directions.....	Katie Laird

Time:

Prologue: 1970
1971

Setting:

Rosemary Dunn's living room,
a TV talk show studio, a pub, a tea shop, a park bench
all in London.

There will be one ten-minute intermission.

Please note: the audience is asked to silence cell phones and refrain from using electronic devices in any way during the performance. The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.

Production Staff

Scenic/Paint/Props Mentor	Sarah E. Ross*
Costume/Hair/Makeup Mentor	Kristina Sneshknoff*
Master Electrician	Ann Warren*
Lighting/Sound/Stage Management Mentor	Gary G. Olsen*
Costume Shop Manager	Cecelia Hill*
Scene Shop Manager	Ann Warren*
Prop Shop Manager	Sarah E. Ross*
Costume Shop Assistants	Serena Abel, McKenzie Alosi, Elena Cramer, Carolyn Doerr, Allison Durst, Anne Dwyer, Emmaline Fitzgerald, Katie Kallaus, Hannah Klingbeil, Christine Latourette
Scene Shop Assistants	Elizabeth Ahles, Marc Dulac, Jamie Fota, Graeme Gross, Evan Johnson, Sam Kuhns, Camille Nierengarten, Brenda Smoot, Ashley Westerlund
Prop Shop Assistants	Hannah Clark, Verity Neely, Alexandra Pio
Scene & Costume Shop	Theatre & Dance Practicum Students
Academic Department Associate	Lisa Baxter*

*Denotes UWSP Faculty/Staff

Production Staff

Theatre & Dance Student Office Assistants.....Joseph Krasovich,
Sophie McIntosh, Natalie Schlueter,
Karlee Weiler

Public Relations Assistants.....Theatre & Dance
Practicum Students

*Denotes UWSP Faculty/Staff

Meet the Company

- Baum, Nicholas** (*Franz Liszt*) Junior BFA Acting major from Juda, WI.
Recipient of the Pointer Payback Scholarship.
- Blohm, Spencer** (*Beethoven*) Freshman BFA Acting major from De Pere, WI.
- Cramer, Elena** (*Rosemary Dunn*) Senior BFA Acting major and BA Spanish major from Waukesha, WI. Recipient of the Anne Gilfry Schierl Fine Arts Award in Acting, the Neale Alumni Scholarship, and the Arlen and Florence West Scholarship.
- Faris, Sydney** (*Margaret Clifton*) Junior BFA Acting major from Hartland, WI.
- Fota, Jamie** (*Stage Manager*) Junior BA Drama and BA Media Studies major and Creative Writing minor from Wisconsin Rapids, WI.
- Fredrickson, Brett** (*Sean Michael Roberts*) Freshman BFA Musical Theatre and BA Dance major from Mt. Horeb, WI.
- Kallaus, Katie** (*Clara Schumann*) Junior BFA Musical Theatre major from Crystal Lake, IL. Recipient of the Anne Gilfry Schierl Fine Arts Award for Outstanding Freshman in Musical Theatre and the Vibrant Communities Scholarship.
- Laird, Kathryn** (*Stage Directions*) Freshman BFA Acting major from Glen Ellyn, IL.
- Martin, Tye** (*Roy Elgin*) Junior BFA Musical Theatre major from McFarland, WI.
- McIntosh, Sophie** (*Dramaturg*) Senior BA Drama major and Arts Management minor from Sun Prairie, WI. Recipient of the Sentry Scholarship.
- Rhodes, Kaden** (*Buddy Holly*) Freshman BFA Acting Major from Waukesha, WI. Recipient of the Theatre Arts Scholarship in Acting and the Pointer Payback Scholarship.
- Santi, Ted** (*Peter Clifton*) Sophomore BFA Acting major from Genoa City, WI.
- Scheidegger, Karley** (*Jane Martin Haines*) Senior BFA Acting major from Mount Horeb, WI.

Meet the Company

Watson, Noelle (*House Manager*) Junior BA Drama major and Music: Voice Emphasis and Arts Management minor from Rockford, IL. Recipient of the Anne Gilfry Schierl Fine Arts Award in Drama and the Point Merit Scholarship.

CONTRIBUTE TO BACKSTAGE

The Department of Theatre & Dance welcomes financial support for educational and artistic activities through a variety of programs, including existing scholarships and endowments, special projects support, bequests and planned gifts. For more information about contributing to the Department of Theatre & Dance, please refer to the enclosed Backstage envelope or contact Maggie Marquardt, COFAC Director of Development at mmarquar@uwsp.edu or 715-346-3056. You may also donate online at <https://give.uwsp.edu/give-backstage>.

Special thanks to our 2019-2020 Backstage supporters.

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University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

The mission of the Theatre and Dance Department is to serve

- Its majors and minors through curricular offerings and performance/production activities that heighten intellectual, artistic, cultural, and humane sensitivities.
- The general student population through curricular offerings and stage productions that engender an appreciation and understanding of the performing arts and their contribution to the cultural and aesthetic enrichment of life.
- The university community and general central Wisconsin population through the production of quality stage performances.



The UW-Stevens Point Theatre and Dance Department's off-campus storage space is funded by the Green Fund. Having this storage space allows us to reuse props and materials; thus, we are able to lessen our environmental impact by decreasing the amount of materials sent to landfills.

The Green Fund's mission is to encourage and fund projects that positively affect the sustainability of the UW-Stevens Point campus community. The fund accomplishes this by investing capital in long-term sustainable projects that affect the way our campus uses energy and our shared natural resources. The Green Fund receives money from student segregated fees that are allocated by a student committee.