

Lex-Ham Community Theater

presents



7:30 p.m., July 8, 9, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23

2:00 p.m., Sunday, July 17

Wilder Child Development Center

911 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul

Sylvia

by A. R. Gurney

Cast and Crew

GregNigel Linden
SylviaJoy Donaldson
KateKarla Nweje
TomJohn Marino
PhyllisKelsey Ann Olson
LeslieMichael Maddox

DirectorJohn Townsend
Stage Manager/Script CoachTara Nielson
Set DesignerMarie Campbell
Costume DesignersJudy Larson
.....Edmund Quirin
PropsKathy Super
Tech CrewZak Forde
.....Jacob Harstad
Set PaintersMadeleine Corbett
.....Joyce Weeks
MusicJack Rose
PublicityJack Rose
Graphic DesignerBarb Keith
PhotographerLila Taft
ProducerUrban Landreman

Setting: New York, the 1990s

There will be a 10 minute intermission
between Act 1 and Act 2

Please
remember to
turn off
all cell phones
or pagers
during the
performance.



A. R. Gurney

A.R. Gurney is one of the most prolific and produced playwrights in America. His work focuses primarily on the issues and realities of middle-class American life and has been produced on international theatre stages for more than 30 years.

After receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree from Williams College in 1952, Gurney joined the United States Navy during the Korean War, writing shows to entertain the military personnel. Following his discharge in 1955, he enrolled in the Yale School of Drama where he received his Master's degree in playwriting. Later he joined the faculty at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge where he taught until 1987.

His breakthrough success came in 1982 with *The Dining Room*. Other award-winning plays include *The Middle Ages*, *What I Did Last Summer*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *Love Letters*, *Sylvia*, *Labor Day*, and *Ancestral Voices*.

In the fall of 1999, Gurney wrote the libretto for "Strawberry Fields" with music by Michael Torke, as part of the Central Park Opera trilogy presented by the New York City Opera.

Gurney is the recipient of many awards, notably a Drama Desk Award in 1971, a Rockefeller Award in 1977 and two Lucille Lortel Awards in 1989 and 1994.

Source: http://www.ingefestival.org/Festival2003/inge2003/ar_Gurney.htm

Director's Notes

Directing *Sylvia* has been an unexpected journey of delight and discovery. This open-minded and intelligent cast has explored the play in such a way that I came to realize A. R. Gurney's cute little comedy runs alot deeper than it may appear.

Of course, it's written to be played at a brisk pace with lots of funny lines but there's much beneath the surface about mid-life crisis, marital control issues, and the rather pitiable way we sometimes share feelings with our pets but not share them with those humans closest to us.

Gurney also questions the rigidity that society expects of men as opposed to sensuality and the capacity for warmth. As well as the way women who want to make a positive difference in society are confounded with rigid social networks that thwart their vision. Hence, ironically losing touch with the compassion that steered them toward such idealism.

And through all this, basically good people (and nonhuman animals) tragically miscommunicate what are actually honorable intentions. Greg's disgust with corporate unreality, Kate's desire to uplift the minds of poor children, and Sylvia's need for a roof over her head so she can be a channel of unconditional love are all legitimate. Happily, Gurney's comic brilliance turns the tragic miscommunications into comedic lessons about finding happiness itself.

Moreover, Tom's blunt frankness about animal functions, Phyllis' fixation on class hierarchy, and Leslie's misapplied inquiry into gender norms pepper the play with wonderful bits of wit, wisdom, and irresistible charm.

Thanks to the cast and behind-the-scenes folks for all the love you've put into *Sylvia*.

John Townsend

Suggested Reading

THE CALL OF THE WILD by Jack London

YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND: WOMEN AND MEN IN CONVERSATION by Deborah Tannen

ECSTASY: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF JOY by Robert A. Johnson

IRON JOHN by Robert Bly

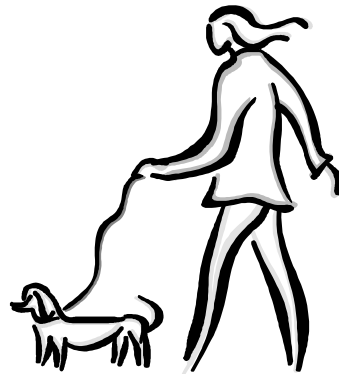
VAMPS AND TRAMPS by Camille Paglia

BORN FREE by Joy Adamson, but bear in mind to always be cautious around animals you don't know. Most especially wild ones!

and

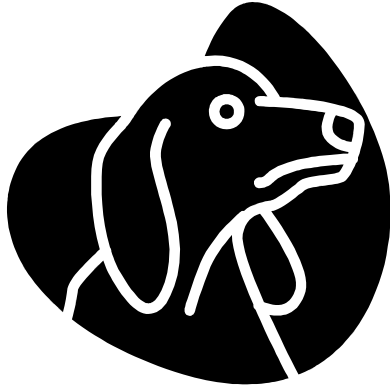
www.dogPsychologyCenter.com

John Townsend



Literary References

The play, *Sylvia*, is filled with many references to authors and works of fiction. Here are a few of them.



The Odyssey

In Book 17 of *The Odyssey*, Ulysses has finally returned to his old home disguised as a begger. Eumaeus, a swineherd, shows the begger the estate that belongs to Ulysses. At the estate they see Argos, the dog that Ulysses had trained as a pup. Argos is lying neglected on the heaps of mule and cow dung that lay in front of the stable doors.

As soon as Argos saw Ulysses standing there, Argos dropped his ears and wagged his tail, but he could not get close up to his master. When Ulysses saw the dog on the other side of the yard, he dashed a tear from his eyes without Eumaeus seeing it

Eumaeus says “there was not a wild beast in the forest that could get away from him when he was once on its tracks. But now he has fallen on evil times, for his master is dead and gone, and the women take no care of him”

Ulysses and Eumaeus enter the house, whereupon Argos dies.

Source:
www.online-literature.com/homer/odyssey/17/

Ethan Frome

Ethan Frome is a novel by Edith Wharton published in 1911. Much of Ms. Wharton’s writing, including *Ethan Frome*, concerns illicit love - possibly due in part to her long, but unhappy, arranged marriage with Edward Wharton, who was much older than she was.

The novel tells the story of Ethan Frome, a New England farmer, who lives with his sickly and shrewish wife, Zeena, but has a passion for his wife’s younger cousin, Mattie Silver, who lives with and serves as a helper around the house for Ethan and Zeena.

Their mutual love is expressed to each other at the same time as Zeena informs Ethan that she plans to replace Mattie. In an impulsive move, Mattie convinces Ethan to commit suicide while embracing when they sled down a hill into a tree.

The suicide attempt fails, but Mattie is crippled. Ethan spends the rest of his life with both Zeena and the permanently injured Mattie.

Albert Payson Terhune

Albert Payson Terhune (1872-1942), an American writer, was best known for his stories about dogs, particularly collies. His dog stories include *Lad: A Dog* (1919), *Bruce* (1920), and *Lad of Sunnybank* (1928). He also wrote two autobiographical books, *Now that I’m Fifty* (1924) and *To the Best of My Memory* (1930). He collaborated with his mother in writing *Dr. Dale - A Story with a Moral* (1900).

Terhune was born in Newark, New Jersey. As a boy, he learned woodlore and how to handle and understand dogs. He learned to love writing from his mother, a popular novelist. He was graduated from Columbia University, and then traveled through Syria and Egypt. He worked on the *New York Evening World* staff until he was able to give his entire time to writing.

Source:
Jean Thomson, *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1962

Cast and Crew Members

Joy Donaldson (Sylvia): Joy is yipping with excitement over joining this talented group. She has been seen in such roles as Olive in *The Odd Couple*, Philia in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Sheila in *The Boys Next Door* and Rapunzel in *Into the Woods* among others. Special thanks to Nigel who made it so easy to play, Brad because he is Brad, John Townsend for seeing her inner Labradoodle, and Player and Roxy for all the character study. "Of course what do I know? I'm only a dog."

Zak Forde (Tech Crew) Zak is in his ninth Lex-Ham show. He made his theater debut as Charlie in 2000's *Bullets and Beauties*, played Peter in 2001's *Under the Gaslight*, and has been on the stage crew and acted in many others. In 2003, he starred in the Lex-Ham production of *James and the Giant Peach* along with Karla Nweje. Zak is going to be a sophomore at Como Park Senior High School this fall and has loved to make the Lex-Ham Theater, once again, part of his beloved summer.

Nigel Linden (Greg) Nigel is looking forward to being an "empty nester" himself in just a few years, with his beautiful wife, Sue and lovable dog Andy; their two wonderful children will be off to college. Nigel's most recent performances include King Henry The Eighth in Theatre in the Round's production of *A Man For All Seasons*, Jack in Applause Community Theatre's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and Otto in Chameleon's production of *Love's Shadow on Snow*. Nigel is currently serving as President of Chameleon Theatre.

Michael Maddox (Leslie) Michael started in theater in his home town of Madison WI, as a lighting board operator. He moved to the Twin Cities in 2001, started acting in 2002 beginning with Lex-Ham Community Theater playing Mike Connor in their summer show, *The Philadelphia Story*. He has since worked on three other shows with the most recent playing Felix in *The Odd Couple* with Chameleon Theater.

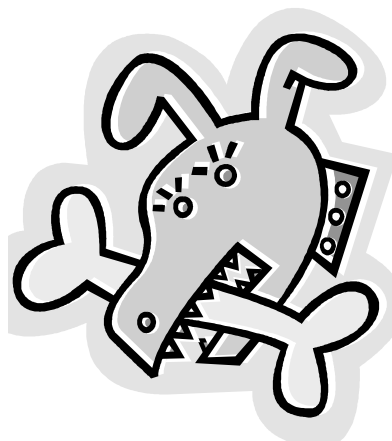
John Marino (Tom) John Marino is making his Twin Cities debut as "Tom." He earned a bachelor's degree in Journalism with a minor in Communications from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, where he appeared as Dad in *Dandelion Wine*. John recently completed two acting classes through St. Paul's Community Education program. John, his wife Kim, and his stepdaughter Miranda have a lovable Yellow Lab named Maggie.

Karla Nweje (Kate) Karla holds a BFA in Dance Performance from Brooklyn College-CUNY. Prior to moving to the Twin Cities, she danced and acted in NYC and Atlanta for many years, choreographed for stage productions, and served as rehearsal director for full-length ballets. She is also a published author who regularly performs her original work for Black Synergy/Moonlight Poetry, a monthly networking and spoken word event. Since connecting with Lex-Ham Community Theater, Karla has appeared as the narrator in *James and the Giant Peach* and as Amelia Shotgraven in *The Solid Gold Cadillac*. Karla is the proud mother of an incredible teenage daughter.

Kelsey Ann Olson (Phyllis) Kelsey graduated in May from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities with a B.A. in Theatre Arts. While attending the University, she was seen in such shows as *Black Comedy*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, and *Macbeth*. As she pursues her acting career in the Twin Cities, she works as an accounting clerk for CB Richard Ellis in Bloomington.

Tara Nielson (Stage Manager/Script Coach) Tara has always has always loved the theatre, but just recently decided to make it a part of her life. She took two acting classes offered by St. Paul Community Education instructed by John Townsend. Brought on board as assistant stage manager, she has continued to learn and be amazed by all that theatre offers.

Kathy Super (Props) My real identity: Prop Mistress/Thrift Store Annie/Antique Dweller/Halftime Crafter/Garbage Digger and the Friendly Brower. If you need me.. look for the car or house stuffed with the most unique crap. Call me at my home phone number (GET-THE-PROP).



John Townsend (Director) John directed Lex Ham's production of *The Trojan Women* in 2003 and has acted in Lex Ham productions of *Through A Glass, Darkly*, *Sonny De Ree's Life Passes Before His Eyes*, and *The Solid Gold Cadillac*. He is a past President of Minnesota Association of Community Theaters and can be seen later this year in *The Andersonville Trial* at Ft. Snelling and Dakota City. John teaches beginning acting for the Lex Ham-St. Paul Community Education partnership.



**Lex-Ham Community Arts
Board of Directors**

Urban Landreman, Chair
Michele Cromer-Poire,
Vice Chair
Joy Lindsay, Treasurer
Stuart Alger
Karla Nweje
Jack Rose
John Townsend

There are numerous animal rescue and adoption organizations in the Twin Cities area. Some include the following:

Human Society for Companion Animals - (651) 645-7387

Animal Humane Society - (763) 489-2201

Homeward Bound - HomewardBoundDogRescue@yahoo.com

Many more can be found at www.PetFinder.com

Special thanks go to

Wilder Child Development Center
Concordia University - St Paul
Chameleon Theatre Circle
Maranatha Christian Academy

Please consider giving a financial donation to the Lex-Ham Community Theater. Because we try to keep ticket prices low, income from ticket sales do not cover the total cost of putting on a show.

In this era when government support for the Arts is being reduced, donations of any amount are most welcome.

You can send a tax-deductible donation to:
Lex-Ham Community Arts
1184 Portland Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104

Lex-Ham Community Theater

Shakespeare Reading Series

Join neighbors and friends for an informal reading of:

Much Ado About Nothing

Friday, September 9, 2005
1184 Portland Avenue, Saint Paul

6:30 p.m. – potluck supper
7:00 p.m. – sit down and read the play

Parts are reassigned at the start of each scene, so everyone gets lots of opportunities to read.

(Please bring your own copy of the play)

Special thanks goes to our 2005 donors

Angels - \$101 and more

Dr. Richard & Mary Davis
Karl & MaryLou Grahek
Roy Martin
Shane & Mary Perry
Jack Rose

Patrons - \$51 - \$100

Michele & Jerry Cromer-Poiré
Michele & Mark Forde
William Helfmann

Backers - \$26 - \$50

Holly Lindsay & Michael Levine
Mary Vanderwert

Friends - \$1 - \$25

Rebecca Brenner & Steve VanAllen
Linda Fei
Ken & Barbara Ford
Lisa Lee
Holly Windle



Wilder Child Development Center

Child Care for children ages 16 months until Kindergarten.
Open 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Developmentally appropriate curriculum, nutritious meals, highly skilled nurturing staff, field trips and MORE.

911 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104 651-642-4090

Chameleon's Community Theatre's 8th Season:

Join Chameleon for our exciting 8th Season!

8th Annual Variety Show: November 12, 2005 in Burnsville
Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat: March, 2006
in Lakeville

Comedy of Errors: May/June, 2006

Visit our website for more details
chameleontheatre.org



Lex-Ham Community Theater

Since its start in 1995, the Lex-Ham Community Theater has striven to achieve its mission of producing quality theatrical experiences by and for the residents of the Lexington-Hamline and surrounding neighborhoods in St. Paul. The company has enhanced the local theatrical scene by

- Selecting lesser-known works by noted playwrights, such as *Soul Gone Home* by Langston Hughes and *The Vegetable* by F. Scott Fitzgerald;
- Giving the regional and world premieres of works by local authors, such as *Bullets and Beauties* by Urban Landreman; and
- Reviving wonderful classics such as *The Philadelphia Story* by Philip Barry and *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly.

All of its shows have provided people with little previous experience an opportunity to be on-stage or work off-stage side by side with those who have more experience.

Finally, the company strives to help build community by involving people across generations and walks of life with each of its productions.

The theater is further involved with the community by offering acting classes through St. Paul Community Education and holding free informal Shakespeare Reading Series events. Call (651) 644-3366 to get involved.

Check out the theater's Web site at:

www.LexHamArts.org/theater

Upcoming Events

2005

August 14
O'Flaherty V.C. by George Bernard Shaw
Directed by Kevin T. Houle
at the Irish Fest on Harriet Island

September 23-24
24-Hour Play Festival
Teams have 24 hours to write, cast, design, block, memorize, and perform a play. The audience votes for the People's Choice Award.
Concordia University-St. Paul

November 4-19
All My Sons-Arthur Miller

See www.LexHamArts.org/theater for more info

Acting Classes

The Lex-Ham Community Theater offers acting classes for both children and adults in conjunction with both St. Paul Community Education and St. Paul Parks and Rec. Classes have included:

Beginning Acting
Advanced Beginning Acting
Shakespeare for Beginners
Acting for History Buffs
Acting Comedy
Improvisation
Audition Skills

The next sessions will start in July, August, and September 2005.

To register for children's classes, call 651-325-2672

To register for adult classes, call 651-293-8811 or see www.commed.spps.org.