Butler Theatre Presents

Shel Silverstein’s

LAFCADIO

The Lion Who Shot Back

October 8-10, 2020 at 7:00 pm
Shelton Auditorium at Butler South Campus
For details and plans stream information visit ButlerArtsEvent.org

ADAPTED + DIRECTED BY ELAINA ARTEMIEV

For accessibility verification or to request disability-related accommodations, please visit http://www.bu.edu/audience-accommodations
Welcome to Butler Theatre!

Whether you are one of the few audience members with us in person—socially distanced and masked—or you are viewing our production of *LAFADIO: The Lion Who Shot Back* from the comfort of your home, we are glad you are with us!

We are so grateful to be creating theatre during this difficult time. In fact, you may be wondering how we are able to produce live theatre during COVID when most other theatres in our country remain closed. Two factors have allowed us to move forward. One, is that throughout the entire rehearsal and production process, all of our actors, stage managers, and behind the scenes crews are utilizing social distancing and masks. Most professional theatres are waiting for the moment when it is safe for actors to not wear masks and to execute blocking that does not involve maintaining a 6-foot distance. The second factor is that we are not economically bound to having a large audience. While we love the thrill of playing to full houses, we are content with offering limited seating to keep our audiences and our production team safe. Professional theatres need to sell tickets in order to produce, and most theatres do not have a large enough seating capacity to make the economics of socially-distanced seating work for their production budgets. Luckily for us, our “bottom line” is the artistic and educational development of our students. And so for us, the show can go on!

When director Elaina Artemiev brought us the idea of producing *Lafcadio*, we were all intrigued. We knew and loved Shel Silverstein’s work, but most of us did not recognize the title. (You can read all about Shel Silverstein and his work in Butler Theatre Major Alana Hernley’s essay in this program.) As soon as I read *Lafcadio*, I knew that Elaina had made a wise selection. Lafcadio’s search for who he truly is resonated immediately. Not only is college certainly a time when one grapples with one’s identity, but throughout our lives, we continue to examine who we are, what we value, and how we fit into the world. Lafcadio’s story, full of humor and wit, is a bittersweet tale about searching for identity that can apply to young and old alike.

We hope you enjoy our lively production which is infused with the lovely line drawings from Silverstein’s book. We hope our Lafcadio inspires you to read the full-length book with the young people in your life—or just for you! And we hope our performance brings some of the joy of live theatre into your life here in the Fall of 2020. Thank you for joining us!

*Diane Timmerman*, Chair, Butler Theatre
The Butler University Department of Theatre

presents

Shel Silverstein’s

LAFCADIO

THE LION WHO SHOT BACK

Adapted & Directed by Elaina Artemiev

Director
Elaina Artemiev

Set Designer
Glen Thoreson

Costume Designer
Wendy Meaden

Lighting Designer
Kevin Shannon

Sound Engineer
Deborah Jo Knopick-Barrett

Choreographer
Sergey Sergiev

Stage Manager
Kelly Schwantes

Shelton Auditorium
Thursday, October 8, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
Friday, October 9, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 10, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

The use of recording devices whether photographic, video, or audio is strictly prohibited.
Please silence all electronic devices.
CAST

Matt Wittress
Northbend, WA
Lafcadio

Riley Iaria
Indianapolis, IN
Old Lion

Abby Glaws
Deerfield, IL
Hunter

Cody Estep
Brighton, CO
Taxi Driver

Maddie Davies
Parker, CO
Circus Man

Nole Beran
Auburn, IN
Uncle Shelby
CREW

Assistant Stage Manager
Sarah Causey
Kieran Shay

Light Board Operator
Shannon Mitchel

Sound Board Operator
Ellery Denmon

Study Guide
Alana Hernley

Wardrobe Crew
Taylor Davis
Mary Hensel

Video Board Operator
Jessica Knutson

Deck Hands
Katie Briner
Amelia Engle

Sketch for the Lions by Wendy Meaden
DIRECTOR’S NOTES

Shel Silverstein is a great American writer, illustrator, composer, and cartoonist among his other talents. He wrote many children's books and poems.

My most favorite Uncle Shelby (as he called himself) story is “Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back”. It is a very dynamic, uplifting book full of wonderful humor and bright characters. At the same time Silverstein, without lecturing or judging, asks his readers important life questions.

Every one of us, like Lafcadio, may face difficult life situations when we have to decide on our identity, our roots, and our kinship. What makes us who we are? What is our calling? Great books do not give direct answers but rather make us think and come to our own understanding.

I wanted to share this novel about the lion named Lafcadio with you as it strongly affected me.

To bring this book to you I chose a storytelling method as a powerful way to connect with the audience on a deeper level. I adapted the book for six actor-narrators who, as the story develops, become various characters.

This production uses very little scenery and props; instead of full costumes we use only smaller details and accents. As the story unfolds, light, music, and Silverstein’s drawings help us to create the atmosphere of a jungle, a circus, or a big city. We want the audience to become participants and an integral part of the play.

During this difficult time and in spite of all of the pandemic trouble, we believe in the healing power of art, and we are happy to bring this production to you.

ELAINA ARTEMIEV
COSTUME DESIGNER NOTES

As a child, and later as a parent, I loved Shel Silverstein’s poetry. It is thoughtful, optimistic, and silly. I was delighted by how I (and my kids) were provoked into thinking by reading his poems and stories, and how our imaginations were limned by the simple pen and ink sketches. If I had dared to deface a book (gasp!) I’d have taken to coloring his artworks. Now, I am delighted to help bring his story characters to life onstage. In reference to his illustrative style, I have chosen to keep a light neutral palette for the ensemble who narrate the story. As we meet each character, there is an opportunity to play with some simple, brightly colored costume pieces. Some are specific representations, others leave room for the imagination to fill in the details. I hope we all enjoy bringing our bits and pieces together to share in acting out this tale of Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back.

WENDY MEADEN

LIGHTING DESIGNER NOTES

Imagination. This word was the basis for my lighting design concept. When reading the script for Lafcadio, I immediately jumped on the idea of a storybook being brought to life. Lafcadio is a play that calls on our imagination. It takes us back to when we were younger and books were being read to us by our family, friends, and teachers. With the lighting design, I wanted to take the story and embellish it using light – bringing mood, location, and other elements to life. Much of my research developed from cartoon images and the feelings the locations and action of the story portray. Silverstein uses black and white line drawings in his works and therefore, I made it my goal to add the color to the show. The shifts in the lights will allow the audience to “jump” deeper into the story and feel as though they are in the jungle, in the city, or at the circus.

KEVIN SHANNON
When you hear the name Shel Silverstein, you probably think to yourself “Oh, he’s the children’s poet with cool drawings.” He is. However, there is much more to his story that goes unsaid. Shel Silverstein was and arguably still is one of the most popular children’s poets, but not many people know he was also a playwright, cartoonist, performer, recording artist, and Grammy-winning songwriter.

Growing up, he gravitated towards athletics, but he was never able to make any of the teams. Then, he found his niche in drawing. He kept these drawings to himself because of their abstract style which was different from any other cartoonist; however, he began to write for his school paper at Roosevelt University. In 1950, he ended up enlisting in the U.S. Army and served in Japan and Korea, but that was not the end of his affinity for drawing. During his time with the Army, he became a cartoonist for Stars & Stripes. After his time serving, he began to write for more adult based audiences. His character of Lafcadio actually began in his cartoons for some of these articles.

Throughout his time with other publishers, Silverstein started exploring other areas of art, particularly music. He even recorded his own album Hairy Jazz in 1959. He would later go on to write songs for Johnny Cash, Dr. Hook, and motion picture soundtracks. You may be asking where all his works for children started. In 1963, book editor, Ursula Nordstorm, convinced Silverstein to write a book for children. Thus, Uncle Shelby’s Story of Lafcadio: The Lion Who Shot Back was born. Soon after he released his first book, he wrote The Giving Tree, Where the Sidewalk Ends, A light in the Attic, Falling Up, and so many more. While his stories can be viewed as merely children’s stories, he includes important anecdotes and concepts that brighten the minds of young and old alike.

In looking back through Silverstein’s life, one can see that circumstances led him from one place to another. I believe this quote from Lafcadio rings true not only to Silverstein’s life, but to our worldly situation today: “And he didn’t really know where he was going, but he did know he was going somewhere, because you really have to go somewhere, don’t you?” Silverstein’s words, not only from Lafcadio but also from all of his other works, create fanciful, silly stories with important life lessons for us all.

It is even more significant that we are doing this show now, because Silverstein would have celebrated his 90th birthday on the 25th of September. Happy belated birthday, Uncle Shelby!

ALANA HERNLEY
COMING UP NEXT AT BUTLER THEATRE!

Antigone
by Sophocles

Adapted & Directed by Madeline Sayet, Christel DeHaan Visiting International Theatre Artist (VITA)

Sophocles' classic play in a brand-new, contemporary adaptation by Madeline Sayet, Butler Theatre's Christel DeHaan Visiting International Theatre Artist.

This production carries the timeless tragedy into the present, to ask the question: What would it take to live in a just world?

Schrott Center for the Arts
November 5-7, 2020
We will livestream each performance and offer limited in-person tickets as well.

JORDAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS – 125 YEARS YOUNG!

2020 marks the 125th anniversary of the Jordan College of the Arts at Butler University! The College includes the departments of art, arts administration, dance, and theatre, as well as the School of Music.

The College began as the Metropolitan School of Music, founded in 1895. Originally located just north of Monument Circle, the Metropolitan School was one of the first ten schools devoted to higher music education in the United States. A rival school, the College of Musical Arts, was begun in 1907 by a former MSM faculty member, and this second music college later became the Indiana College of Music and Fine Arts. These two institutions were purchased by philanthropist Arthur Jordan in 1928 and merged as the Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music.

In 1949, the name was changed to the Jordan College of Music, and the conservatory became a part of Butler University in 1951. The name was changed to the Jordan College of Fine Arts in 1978, and to the Jordan College of the Arts in 2012.

With over 400 students, a faculty comprised of 47 full-time and 45+ part-time members, and a dedicated staff of 18, JCA enriches both the university and greater Indianapolis community by presenting nearly 150 performances and exhibitions annually.
BUTLER UNIVERSITY
JORDAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
DR. LISA BROOKS, DEAN

BUTLER THEATRE FACULTY AND STAFF
Diane Timmerman, Department Chair, Professor
Wendy Meaden, JCA Associate Dean, Professor
William Fisher, Professor
Rob Koharchik, Professor
Elaina Artemiev, Associate Professor
Courtney Mohler, Assistant Professor
Glen Thoreson, Technical Director
Cathy Sipe, JCA Technical Director
Megan Wiegand, Costume Shop Manager
Deborah Jo Knopick-Barrett, JCA Production/Stage Manager
LaKisha Cooper, Administrative Specialist

BUTLER THEATRE MISSION STATEMENT
We prepare students to develop their individual voice and to integrate their comprehensive theatre training into purposeful lives. We value an inclusive and welcoming environment with a diverse range of artists, traditions, ideas, and audiences.

JCA LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT
We acknowledge that we gather here at Butler University on the traditional land of indigenous peoples including the Potawatomi, Miami, Delaware, and Shawnee. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the indigenous peoples past and present who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit, while also acknowledging that some were brought to this land not by choice.