

BIG LOVE

by

Charles Mee

Artistic Direction	Eric Prince
Scenic Design	Roger Hanna
Choreography	Julianna Williams*
Costume Design	Laura Myers*
Lighting Design	Ray McGovan*
Sound Design	Sawyer Kalmbach*
Projections Design	Price Johnston
Hair/Makeup Design	Gia Pizzichini*
Production Dramaturg	Alana Corrigan*
Production Stage Manager	Megan Ross*
Assistant Stage Manager	Duncan Port*

Please note - there is no intermission

The play runs for 90 minutes

Please silence all devices before the play begins

**CSU Student*

CAST

Lydia	Holly Wedgeworth
Thyona	Kathleen Wright
Olympia	Kaitlin Kennedy
Bella	DeAnza Bañuelos
Giuliano	Ryan Leibold
Piero	Ryan Wilke-Braun
Nikos	Ryan Volkert
Constantine	Jack Tenbarga
Oed	Justice Smith
Eleanor	Kelby Jakober
Leo	Adam Isaacs

Director's Note:

The writer Charles Mee has made postmodern theatrical reworkings of ancient Greek drama into something of a personal specialism. *Big Love* is based upon the plot of one of the oldest plays in existence, *The Suppliants*, written by Aeschylus circa 490 B.C.E, a play which concerns the flight of fifty women, daughters to Danaus, from unwanted forced marriages, from Egypt to Argos in Greece. I had mixed feelings on first reading the play and seriously wondered about stage directions that asked actors to hurl circular saw blades across the stage or to rock back and forth completely naked while wearing moon boots nailed to the floor, and about a soundtrack that relied overmuch on the highbrow music of Bach, Wagner, Mendelssohn, Pachelbel etc., for its effects. On the other hand, I was encouraged by the artistic license that Mee seems to allow directors, noting a comment to his play *The Trojan Women a Love Story*, "I leave it to the director and actors to bring in songs they feel capture the essence of the piece – and so bring their own particular tastes and passions to it." With that in mind and a belated reappraisal of the play's merits and its essential message, that 'of all human qualities, the greatest is sympathy' I felt a good deal better about addressing the challenges of *Big Love*. Our actors have also risen to these challenges and been a joy to work with – I hope their passion, enthusiasm and love of theatre evokes in you our audience the quality of 'sympathy' that means so much to all of us as human beings. The chorus of women in *The Suppliants* cry out:

*Into the hands of tyrant man
God grant that I fall never... ... I'll live from forceful marriage free.*

And the play's final words read:

*Zeus is King: may he decree
I be bounden to no lord
Loathed for lust and cruelty...
...may he this woman's war
Crown with victory.*

*It contents me then, whate'er
The judgment which the gods approve
If there be embodied there
Justice which my prayers could move.*

In 2003, the International Center for Research on Women estimated that over 51 million girls under the age of 18 were forcibly married. Forced and early marriage are most common in impoverished states in Africa, South Asia as well as the former Soviet republics. However, there are still cases of forced and early marriage in more affluent North American and European countries.

In the United States, adults and children are forced to marry through familial deception, cultural tradition, emotional blackmail and threats of abuse or even death. Exceptions allow children under the age of 18 to legally marry. Most states grant children, usually between 16 to 17 years old, a marriage license so long as their parents give parental consent. The other exception involves judicial approval and can allow people under the age of 15 to marry. - endsaverynow.org

Dramaturg's Note:

Working on *Big Love* as the production dramaturg has been a wonderful experience and at the same time a little bit odd. Many people do not understand what a dramaturg actually is or does, and I'm still learning about it myself. A dramaturg is defined as "a literary adviser or editor in a theatre, opera, or film company who researches, selects, adapts, edits, and interprets scripts, libretti, texts, and printed programmes (or helps others with these tasks), consults with authors, and does public relations work." I did most of these things for our production; I provided the actors with a glossary and detailed background information on the play and on Charles Mee, and assisted with the rehearsal process. I taught piano, helped with Italian accents, stood in for actors when needed, ran lines, and coordinated the lobby display. Working with this cast has been a pleasure, and I feel humbled to work with such incredibly talented, funny, and insightful people. When first approached by the director to be dramaturg for this beast of a play, I immediately thought "Oh, wouldn't it be nice if I could contact the playwright?" I was able to locate Charles Mee at the university where he works, and able to have a dialogue with him. While he was insistent that I interpret the play by myself as rehearsals went on, Chuck did offer me this note to share:

"Michael Dixon, who was then the literary manager of Actors Theatre of Louisville, called me in 1999 and said they were planning on having a millennial theme for their Humana Festival in 2000, and would I write a play for that festival? And I said sure. And then I thought: I don't think I'm going to write a science fiction play that explains what the next millennium is going to be, but I could go back and take one of the oldest plays in the western world and see if still speaks to us today. And so I got hold of Aeschylus's *Suppliant Women*. Aeschylus had written a trilogy, and two of the plays of the trilogy have been lost. So I wrote a

play that told the story of those two lost plays—and that’s *Big Love*. And, of course, I think it still speaks to us and our lives and the world today.”

- Alana Corrigan

Company Bios

DeAnza Banuelos (*Bella*) is a Theatre major, and LEAP minor who cannot get enough of CSU Theatre. Five years and several shows later, DeAnza now plays Bella in her final performance for CSU. DeAnza feels so thankful for relationships that have been formed, and looks forward to seeing her fellow students continue to blossom as artists. After graduation, she has big dreams and plans to travel as well as develop her acting and modeling. Follow on Instagram @deanzaofficial to stay tuned. Soli Deo Gloria!

Kelby Jakober (*Eleanor*) is a freshman majoring in General Theatre. This is Kelby’s first production with CSU, and she is more than excited to find herself playing a role in *Big Love*. Kelby wishes to thank her friends and family for their support and hopes you enjoy the show.

Kaitlin Kennedy (*Olympia*) Kaitlin is a sophomore English/Theatre double major here at CSU. This is her second main stage production having been a part of *Urinetown* last spring. She is more than excited to be a part of this production of *BIG LOVE*! She would like to thank her family and friends (love you guys!) as well the amazing members of the cast and crew who made this show possible.

Ryan Leibold (*Giuliano*): Ryan is a sophomore here at Colorado State, and is studying theatre performance. *Big Love* is his debut as a performer for CSU theatre. He will return to the stage in the spring for *One Man, Two Guvnors*. Ryan’s strengths include walking in heels, making lists, and procrastinating.

Eric Prince (*Director*) is the founder of CSU’s innovative *Center for Studies in Beckett and Performance*, and a scholar and specialist in the theatre of Samuel Beckett, as well as a practicing playwright himself. Prince has directed his own highly experimental plays in venues as diverse as London, Edinburgh, Leeds, York, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Berlin, San Diego, and Northern Ireland, as well as directing six original plays for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe including *Kafka’s Last Request* and *Wildsea Wildsea* as British National Student Theatre Company productions. Both plays were awarded the prestigious London Sunday Times Playwriting Award. Prince also worked for many years with the internationally acclaimed playwright and director Sir Alan Ayckbourn. Two plays by Prince *Red Roses* and *Love Is In The Air* were commissioned and produced professionally by Ayckbourn’s own company, the Stephen Joseph Theatre. Prince has directed more than thirty productions for Colorado State University and Bas Bleu Theatre, Fort Collins, including works such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Oh What A Lovely War*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Mother Courage*, *Private Lives*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Birthday Party*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Endgame*, *Noises Off*, *Alice In Wonderland*, and most recently his own original work *Blue Kitchen* for Wendy Ishii, actor and artistic director of Bas Bleu Theatre.

Justice Smith (*Oed*) is a First-year student studying General Theatre. He performed for Footloose Theatre as Ren at Denver East High School and in an original play *Search* as the Tall Man for the theatre company *Pandemic Collective* in Denver. Justice also enjoys Brechtian theatre and its ability to be used as a medium for protest. *Big Love* is his debut first production for CSU.

Ryan Wilke-Braun (*Piero*) is a junior theatre performance major. This is his third production here with Colorado State University. He has previously appeared in *Urinetown* as Mr. McQueen and in *Three Sisters* as Fedotik. Outside of theatre Ryan also performs with the CSU Chamber Choir and Mainstreet acapella. He would like to thank friends and family for their continued support.

Kathleen Wright (*Thyona*) Wrapped in the support of her theater sisters and fellow cast members, theatre performance major Kathleen is embracing her role as the card-carrying-feminist Thyona. Kathleen marks *Big Love* as her 25th amateur performance and is in awe of the dedication that cast and crew have put into this production. She is proud and honored to be a continued part of CSU's theater department while going into her senior and final year. Enjoy *Big Love*!

Ryan Volkert (*Nikos*) is a third year triple major in Data Science, Economics, and Theatre Performance. *Big Love* is his sixth show at CSU, beginning with *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* in the Fall 2017 semester. He recently appeared in CSU's production of *The Laramie Project*, and he will be portraying Carney in the spring production of *A Man of No Importance*. He is excited to work with this incredibly talented cast, and thanks his friends and family for their support through all of his shows.

Holly Wedgeworth (*Lydia*) is a junior majoring in Theatre Performance. She appeared in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Love & Information*, and *God of Carnage* at CSU. She was also in *Elephant's Graveyard* at Bas Bleu Theatre Company. This spring she will also perform in *One Man, Two Guvnors* for CSU. She is thankful for all the love and encouragement from friends, and especially for the dedication and hard work of all participants in *Big Love*.