Love Letters

by A. R. Gurney

September 30th and October 1st
From the Interim Producing Artistic Director

This is the first in a series of firsts this season.

- First time the REP has had new leadership
- First time a dance piece has appeared on this stage
- First time we have done a Greek tragedy in our 15-year history
- First time we have done a Christopher Durang play
- First time we have had a student arts festival on this stage
- First time we have collaborated with the Women and Gender Studies Department for a play (happening in February)
- First time the REP has ever had a podcast, check it out!

Whew, that’s a lot of firsts!

But tonight is NOT a first…it’s a second. Kathleen and I did a performance of this very play about 20 years ago in the little Hartshorn Theater. Some of the members in our audience today were probably there. In some ways it is a celebration of longevity, of our theater community here in Delaware, of you, because it really is a love letter and I couldn’t think of a better way to start the year, this new season, than with a thank you filled with love. As you will hear (nearly) in the play, “I don’t know how we would get along without you.”

So thank you,

Steve Tague
Interim Director of The REP
Love Letters
by A.R. Gurney

Directed by Leslie Reidel:

Lighting & Sound Design  Eileen Smitheimer
Costume Consultant  Elizabeth Heflin

Stage Manager  Matthew G. Marholin


• The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.
• Member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, a union and professional association of Designers, Artists and Craftspeople.
* Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.
+ Member of the Resident Ensemble Players.

REP productions are supported, in part, by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events on www.DelawareScene.com.
The Polly Russell Dowling Memorial Fund provides a significant portion of funding for REP resident actors.

CAST in order of appearance

Melissa Gardner
Andrew Makepeace Ladd III

Kathleen Pirkl Tague *+
Steve Tague *+

This performance runs approximately 80 minutes, including one 10-minute intermission.

NOTICE TO AUDIENCE MEMBERS

PHOTOS, VIDEO AND/OR RECORDING OF THIS PERFORMANCE BY ANY MEANS WHATSOEVER IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. WE REQUEST THAT ALL AUDIENCE MEMBERS TURN OFF ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND CELL PHONES THAT MAY CAUSE A DISTURBANCE DURING THE PRODUCTION. AND PLEASE, NO TEXTING DURING THE PERFORMANCE.
I think this is an “AMERICAN DRAMA.” Not a tragedy, melodrama, comedy, farce, tragic-comedy, or Shakespearean romance, but that particularly American genre that shows up mostly in movies. In some ways their conflict is like LOVE STORY - but their class is the same or THE WAY WE WERE - but again their class and religion are the same. The play, in some ways, is like the movies of the late 30’s and ’40’s that were called “Women’s pictures,” or “tear-jerkers” - probably because they were about FEELINGS. It is, of course, bitter-sweet and finally very touching.

In the end we see how Andy has been changed by his relationship with Melissa and Melissa gets what she has always wanted - unqualified, acceptance, and LOVE for who she is.

I hope you enjoy it.

Leslie Reidel
Director of Love Letters
PLAYWRIGHT- A.R Gurney
A.R. ("Pete") Gurney was born in 1930 in Buffalo, New York. He graduated from Williams College in 1952, served as an officer in the Navy, and afterwards attended the Yale School of Drama. For many years, he taught literature at M.I.T., but moved to New York in 1982 to devote more time to writing for the theatre. He has won a number of awards during his career, and is now a member of the Theatre Hall of Fame and of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Gurney was married to his wife Molly for over sixty years. They have four children, and eight grandchildren.

DIRECTOR- Leslie Reidel
Professor of Theatre, has directed for the Walnut Street Theatre, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, New York’s Young Playwright’s Festival, and the Colorado, Utah, Ft. Worth, and Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festivals. He taught acting, text analysis, scene study, and directed in the actor training program at Temple University for ten years prior to participating in the establishment of the PTTP at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he served on the faculty for eleven years before the program was relocated to the University of Delaware. Leslie has served as drama critic for the Philadelphia Review and Philadelphia After Dark and was the resident director for the Great American Children’s Theatre for fourteen years. He is currently the co-artistic director of Philadelphia’s Enchantment Theatre Company, whose productions have been seen across the United States and Canada. Their latest work will be a staging of “Grieg’s music to Ibsen’s Peer Gynt,” which will have its world premiere with the Philadelphia Orchestra in February 2023. His other REP productions include The Homecoming, The Little Foxes, The Weir, and Macbeth. He has received three grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which took him to Stratford, England for work on Shakespeare. Leslie is a graduate of Muhlenberg College, received his M.F.A. from Temple University and is a member of the International Shakespeare Conference.
Kathleen Pirkl Tague (Melissa Gardner)
REP: Founding member, 2008. Roles include Murder on the Orient Express (Helen Hubbard), August: Osage County (Violet), Minor Fantastical Kingdoms (Carol), Lettice and Lovage (Lettice Douffet), Things We Do for Love (Barbara), To Kill a Mockingbird (Jean Louise), Juno and the Paycock (Juno), Wit (Vivian Bearing), The Skin of Our Teeth (Mrs. Antrobus - Barrymore Award Nominee), Death of a Salesman (Linda Loman) She Stoops to Conquer (Mrs. Hardcastle), Hay Fever (Judith Bliss); Idaho Shakespeare Festival Acting Company for 14 seasons including: Titus Andronicus (Tamora) Bartlett Sher, director, Macbeth (Lady Macbeth) Charles Fee, director; Great Lakes Theatre: Richard III (Elizabeth), Misery (Annie Wilkes), Hay Fever (Judith Bliss); Delaware Theatre Company: Stop Kiss (Callie), Macbeth (Lady Macbeth), Taming of the Shrew (Kate), Intiman Theatre, Seattle: Titus Andronicus (Tamora); The Wilma Theater: Waiting for Nirvana (Lou); The Walnut Street Theatre: Before Breakfast; Freedom Repertory Theatre: Dutchman (Lula); Arden Theatre: Translations (Sarah); Café du Grand Boeuf (Mimi); Milwaukee Repertory Theater: War Stories From the 20th Century, San Jose Repertory Theater: Anna Christie (Anna); Madison Repertory Theatre: The Recruiting Officer/Our Country’s Good; American Players Theatre: Merry Wives of Windsor (Mistress Page), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Titania/Hippolyta), Biloxi Blues, Broadway Touring Company (Daisy/Rowena cover), NYC: Edge Theatre, Equity Library Theatre, Westbeth Theatre Center; Training: North Carolina School of the Arts, Helen Hayes Award Recipient (BFA), PTTP University of Delaware (MFA). Dialect and Text Coaching: Delaware REP, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Great Lakes Theater.
Kathleen began a letter-writing courtship with Steve Tague over 30 years ago. Eventually, that led to 28 years of marriage, three children, one grandchild, a rambling house, and two dogs. He never knew what hit him. (But it’s beginning to dawn on him.)
Steve Tague (Andrew Makepeace Ladd III)  
**Interim Producing Artistic Director**

Steve has performed in theaters from Seattle to Philadelphia, including The Seattle Repertory Theater, ACT Theatre, The Walnut Street Theater, The Arden and Baltimore’s Center Stage. He was a company member of a small theater in California in which he played Sir Evelyn in *Anything Goes* and Benny Southstreet in *Guys and Dolls*. He has performed the title roles in *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*, *Tartuffe*, *King Lear*, *Richard the Third*, *Macbeth* and others. He was a member of the acting company at The Resident Ensemble Players here in Newark for five years where he played in *Noises Off*, *Little Foxes* and the world premiere of two Theresa Rebeck plays, *Fever* and *O’ Beautiful*. He has directed *Boeing Boeing* and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* at The Delaware Theater Company. Here at the REP he has directed *Angels in America*, *Mousetrap*, *Anything to Declare*, *The Patsy*, *Lettuce and Lovage*, and *Dial “M” for Murder*. His last coaching job was at People’s Light for a production of *Pride and Prejudice*. Steve has been on the faculty at The University of Delaware since 1992.

**REP RESIDENT ARTISTS**

Sandy Ernst, Associate Producing Artistic Director

Prior to joining the REP, Sandy was Associate Artistic Director, Casting Director, Stackner Cabaret Director and Director of the Artistic Intern Program at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and Resident Director and Production Stage Manager at American Players Theater. She has also directed for Backbone Theatre Ensemble, Nevada Conservatory Theater, Next Act Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks and Beloit College, conducted classes on Shakespeare and Audition Technique at universities throughout the country, served as adjunct faculty with Carthage College for five years, and ventured into film casting for the independent features *Baraboo* and *Waterwalk*. 
Matthew G. Marholin, Stage Manager
REP: Starter Pistol, Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express, August: Osage County, Fences, Inherit the Wind, Minor Fantastical Kingdoms, Woman in Mind, The Seafarer, Twelfth Night, A Flea in Her Ear, Dial M for Murder, From the Author Of, The Mountaintop. This is Matt’s sixth season at the REP, where he serves as Production Stage Manager. Prior to joining the company, he spent eight years as the Production Stage Manager at the Virginia Stage Company in Norfolk. He is a graduate of the University Of South Carolina with a degree in Theatre. Matt worked extensively in New York and on National and International Tours. Among his favorite accomplishments are Blood Brothers with Petula Clark and David Cassidy, A Few Good Men with Michael O’Keefe and Paul Winfield, Sound of Music with Marie Osmond, King and I with Rudolf Nureyev, South Pacific with Robert Goulet, The Wiz with Stephanie Mills and Andre DeShields and international tours of Sophisticated Ladies, Carmen Jones and Porgy and Bess. Additionally, Matt served as the Artistic Director for Cirque du Soleil’s Allegria. To date, Matt’s work has taken him to 31 countries.

Eileen Smitheimer, Light and Sound Designer
College, The Delaware Theatre Company, Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center, The Miniature Theatre of Chester, Hope Summer Repertory, Coastal Carolina University, Music Theatre North, City Theatre, First Stage, Southern Methodist University, Landis & Company’s world-touring magic show A Magical Fantasy, Drill Hall in England, Trump Plaza Theatre, Tropicana Theatre, The Resorts Theatre and The Stars of The Bolshoi American Tour. Ms. Smitheimer is an Associate Professor at The University of Delaware where she is the Resident Lighting and Sound Designer/Supervisor for the Resident Ensemble Players. Eileen is a proud Member of USITT, OISTAT, & TSDCA and received the USITT’s 2019 Distinguished Achievement Award in sound design and technology.

**Actors’ Equity Association (AEA)**, founded in 1913, represents more than 49,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. www.actorsequity.org
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Assoc. Producing Artistic Director ....................... Sandy Ernst

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The following designers, artisans, and assistants contributed to this production of 

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Stitchers ....................................................... Peggy Keil, Nancy Alejandro
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The REP is very grateful to the following patrons who have generously given their support over the past twelve months.

The REP is made possible by a generous gift from the Polly Russell Dowling Memorial Fund.

The REP wishes to acknowledge the generosity of the Singleton Estate for the creation of the Rivers and Patricia S. Singleton Fund, which will provide ongoing program support.

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A.R. McGinty at (302) 831-2202 or amcginty@udel.edu.
Mortimer Brewster discovers his seemingly sweet old aunts have a nasty habit of poisoning lonely old men with a glass of elderberry wine laced with "arsenic, strychnine, and just a pinch of cyanide". Add to the mix Mortimer’s crazy brothers Teddy, who believes he is Theodore Roosevelt, and Jonathan, a homicidal fugitive who looks like Frankenstein’s monster thanks to a botched plastic surgery. The resulting chaos as Mortimer tries to wrangle his outrageous family makes for an uproarious farce, filled with laugh-out-loud hilarity.