



4-17-1996

## Program for the Stage Production Romance Language

ProTheatre Club  
*Ursinus College*

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### Recommended Citation

Club, ProTheatre, "Program for the Stage Production Romance Language" (1996). *Theater Production Programs*. 108.

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Ursinus College proTheatre  
presents:

# Romance Language

A detailed illustration of a quill pen, shown in profile, pointing towards the top right. The quill is positioned diagonally across the page, with its tip resting on a large, dark, horizontal ink blot that has a textured, splattered appearance. The quill itself has fine feather-like details and a central shaft.

*By Peter Parnell*

April 17-20, 1996  
7:30 p.m.  
Ritter Center

# Romance Language

By Peter Parnell

*Directed By Dr. Joyce E. Henry*

## Cast of Characters

In Order of Appearance

Walt Whitman.....	JOHN BARBOUR
Huckleberry Finn .....	BENJAMIN BARBOR
Dan'l.....	JOSEPH CATALFANO
Walt's Mother .....	VICKY WILKINS
Louisa May Alcott.....	JODIE POTH
Kooloo .....	ALAN McCABE
Alcott.....	CHRISTOPHER IACONO
Charlotte Cushman.....	LORI L. ENGLER
Emma Stebbins.....	NICOLE SHINER
Tommy .....	GREGORY E. URBAN
Autie Reed.....	JOHN A. SHOEN
Emily Dickinson.....	CHRISTINE KEYES
Ralph Waldo Emerson.....	BRIAN HAMRICK
Ellen Emerson.....	JOANNA DOYLE
Henry David Thoreau .....	JACK REICK
Tom Sawyer.....	JOSEPH CATALFANO
Mme. Nash.....	GREGORY E. URBAN
Lonesome Charley .....	CHRISTOPHER IACONO
Mitch Bouyer .....	BRIAN HAMRICK
Lt. Varnum.....	JAYSON BLOCKSIDGE
Bloody Knife.....	JEN MINTZER
George Armstrong Custer.....	JACK REICK
Raincloud.....	ALAN McCABE
Townspeople, Saloon Patrons, Indians .....	MATT MILLER
	JOHN SCORSONE
	VICKY WILKINS

# Synopsis of Scenes

## ACT ONE

- SCENE 1.** Walt Has a Dream  
*Bedroom in Brooklyn. Night.*
- SCENE 2.** Louisa May Alcott Disembarks;  
Walt and Huck Dispose of a Body  
*On the Docks. Night.*
- SCENE 3.** Emily Dickinson Meets Hamlet  
*Dressing Room. Gaiety Theatre.*
- SCENE 4.** A Tea Party at Ralph Waldo Emerson's  
*Ralph Waldo's House. Concord, Massachusetts.*
- SCENE 5.** The Other Side of Louisa May  
*Louisa May Alcott's House.*
- SCENE 6.** Emily is Distressed  
*In the Wings. Rialto Theatre.*
- SCENE 7.** Thoreau Speaks  
*Walden. Evening.*
- SCENE 8.** Huck Has a Dream  
*Concord River. Night.*

## ACT TWO

- SCENE 9.** O Romeo, Romeo!  
*Opera House, Montana.*
- SCENE 10.** We Meet Mme. Nash  
*Mme. Nash's Saloon. Big Horn, Montana.*
- SCENE 11.** Custer and Minnie  
*Outside the Saloon. Night.*
- SCENE 12.** Captured!  
*Sioux Camp.*
- SCENE 13.** Autie Reed Confronts Mme. Nash  
*Mme. Nash's Parlor.*
- SCENE 14.** No Solutions  
*Sioux Camp.*
- SCENE 15.** The Battle  
*The Plains, Little Big Horn.*
- SCENE 16.** Lucky to Have Quit the Place  
*Heaven.*

### *The Company*

Benjamin Barbor (*Huck*), from Moorestown, New Jersey, is a senior comm arts major with an English minor. His favorite role was Douglas Schmidt in *Execution of Justice*. After graduation Ben plans to "tackle the wild west."

After graduating from Ursinus last December with a comm arts major, John Barbour (*Walt Whitman*), a native of Sagaponik, New York, returns to play one last role. Previously he has been seen in *Our Country's Good* and *Execution of Justice*.

A politics major from West Hempstead, New York, Jayson Blocksidge (*Lt. Yarnum*) debuts in this play.

Joseph Catalano (*Dan & Tom*), a sophomore transfer student from Blue Bell, is currently an English major with minors in German and Human Behavioral Development--none of which, he says, has prepared him for this debut.

Joanna Doyle (*Ellen*) is a comm arts major from Warminster who plans to pursue a career in journalism.

Recently elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Lori L. Engler (*Charlotte Cushman*) is a senior double major in communication arts and economics/business administration. She has been involved with every proTheatre production since her freshman year, including roles in *The Tempest*, *Execution of Justice*, *Talk Radio*, and *Thornwood*. After graduation, Lori plans to return to Walt Disney World in Florida, to pursue a career in human resources.

Brian Hamrick (*Emerson/Mitch*) is an English major from West Chester, Pa., whose experience includes roles in the ballet *Cinderella*, in a sign-language version of the *Three Musketeers* in Rochester New York, as well as in last semester's *Tempest*.

Christine Keyes (*Emily*) is a junior communication arts major from Bethlehem, PA. Her debut at Ursinus is preceded by performances in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *The Trouble with Angus*.

A senior politics major, Christopher Iacono (*Alcott's Lonesome Charley*) plans to attend law school. His favorite role is Joseph Freitas in *Execution of Justice*.

Alan McCabe (*Koolhaas/RainCloud*) is one of proTheatre's favorite graduates (1994). Now part of a comedy troupe and a rock band, Alan's undergraduate career included authorship of a prize-winning play (*The Robin Thomas Theories*) and roles in *Thornwood*, *Talk Radio*, *The Changeling*, *His Author's Voice*, *The Tempest*.

Matt Miller (*Indian*), a sociology major from Marlton, New Jersey, plans to pursue a career in government.

A junior with a double major in English and comm arts, Jen Mintzer (*Bloody Knife*) plans to attend law school after graduation.

Jodie Poth, a freshman politics major from West Chester, makes a second proTheatre appearance as *Louisa May Alcott*.

From Havertown, senior Jack Reick (*Custer/Thoreau*) has majored in politics and plans a business career after graduation. His favorite role was *Arthur Philip* in *Our Country's Good*.

John Scorsone (*Indian*) is a senior history major from Upper Darby, making his theatrical debut.

John Shoen (*Autie*) is a freshman communication arts major who hales from northern New York state where he appeared in several productions at the Martin Theater. His favorite role was *Moll* in *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Sophomore Nicole Shiner (*Emma*) pursues a double major in English and comm arts. *Emma* is her second role at Ursinus, but her experience includes work at a dinner theatre in Harrisburg.

A psychology major from Illinois, sophomore Yicky Wilkins (*Walt's mother*/*Indian*) was also seen in last fall's *Tempest*.

Gregory Urban (*Madame Nash*), who plans a career in neuropsychology, is a sophomore psychology major from Doylestown. Although this is his proTheatre debut, he has also played Cinderella's Prince in *Into the Woods*.

### Production Staff

Set Design by .....John Rager  
Lighting Design by..... Rebecca Jaroff  
Properties.....Pat & Lori Engler  
Costumes.....Carol Silber  
Stage Manager.....Christina Dappollone  
Assistant Stage Manager.....John Shoen  
Stage Carpenter.....John Scorsone  
Lighting Executed by.Laura Owens....Zeb  
Halani  
Visuals... . . . .Matt Miller, Joanna Doyle  
Sound Executed by.....Michael Bardzik

***Special Thanks***

***York Little Theatre***

***27 S. Belmont Street, York, PA.***

***Loganville Barn***

***Main Street, Loganville, PA***

***Hain's Pipe Shop***

***225 S. George Street, York, PA***

***Smith's Archery***

***RD #4, Glen Rock, PA 17327***

***Kim Sando and Ursinus A-V Department***

***Please! No photographs.***



## A NOTE ON THE PLAY

*Romance Language* is a comedy and, as such, written primarily to entertain. However, there are several things about the world of the play it might be helpful to know. Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, and the Alcotts did know each other. Emerson had been the first to recognize Whitman's talent, and of course supported Thoreau, who lived with the family for a number of years. Louisa May Alcott *did* write sensational novels under a pseudonym (for which she was well paid), detested writing her "sweetness and light" children's books, and harbored a secret, unrequited love for Thoreau. Charlotte Cushman was one of the foremost stage actresses of her time, and did barnstorm around the country (though not with Emily Dickinson in tow). Each of these artists was instrumental in helping create a new culture for a new nation, pushing the literary frontier further at the same time that General Custer and others were pushing the geographical and political ones (Custer did, from all evidence, aspire to the Presidency). But though they were aware of and even influenced by each other's work, they made these journeys essentially alone.

The events of the play—but for Little Big Horn—are of my own making. In this, I am not trying to create what *might* have happened, or even what I would *like* to have happened, but what *could ONLY* have happened given a 19th Century America seen from a 20th Century perspective. Since the sexual frontier is our newest horizon, I have made the characters sexual as well as cultural outlaws. Sex in the play is used as a source of power, not for sentimental purposes. The characters express themselves sexually because they are, in essence, modern characters. In their very real passions, these people are once again unified in their aloneness, and in their search for acceptance and finally that most American of ideals, equality.

*Peter Parnell*