

# TARRAGON THEATRE

33<sup>rd</sup> SEASON 2003-2004

“Is there a better evening of theatre to be had anywhere?”

**David Macfarlane, *Globe & Mail*, 2003**

“An unrivalled purveyor of Canadian drama”

**Vit Wagner, *Toronto Star*, 1999**

“Tarragon [has] the key position at the centre of Canada’s theatrical stew.”

**Mira Friedlander, *Globe & Mail*, 1997**

## About Tarragon Theatre

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Tarragon is primarily a playwright’s theatre. Its mandate is to develop, encourage and produce new work; to attract or train new artists and technicians to interpret new work; and to inform and develop an audience for new work. The goal of the OutReach programs is to develop quality theatre education initiatives for students, educators, community members, and theatre patrons. The mandate of OutReach is “to use all its resources, programs, and facilities to promote, wherever possible, inclusion. Particularly through our OutReach initiatives we aim to support and foster relationships with community members, educators and students as together we develop the theatre practitioners and audiences of today and tomorrow”.

## Tarragon Achievements

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- Over 175 Canadian premieres by such celebrated and award-winning playwrights as David French, James Reaney, George F. Walker, Judith Thompson, John Murrell, Joan MacLeod, Maja Ardal, Morris Panych, Jason Sherman, Guillermo Verdecchia, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Daniel Brooks, Diane Flacks, Richard Greenblatt, Ted Dykstra, Ken Garnhum, Michael Healey, Morwyn Brebner, Mavis Gallant, Kristen Thomson and a host of others.
- Tarragon is the foremost producer, in English Canada, of translated plays from Québec, most notably the work of Carole Fréchette and Michel Tremblay.
- Plays developed and produced at Tarragon have on many occasions, toured nationally and internationally; they have also been widely published, broadcast and filmed.
- Tarragon has received more than 200 Dora Award nominations, many nominations (and winners) for the Chalmers Canadian Play Award and many nominations for the Governor General’s Award for Drama (winners include Judith Thompson, Joan MacLeod, Guillermo Verdecchia, John Krizanc, Jason Sherman and Morris Panych, all for Tarragon plays). Tarragon has received the Lieutenant Governor’s Award 5 times in the past 7 years.
- Since the 1995/96 season, Tarragon subscriptions have risen 136% to a record 4,255 subscribers in the 2003-2004 season. Tarragon is deficit-free.

- In 2003, our neighborhood association unanimously voted to adopt the official name Tarragon Village Community Association, making this the first neighborhood in Toronto to take its name from that of a theatre. Tarragon Village encompasses Dartnell Avenue to Bathurst Street and Bridgman Avenue to Davenport Road. An inaugural ribbon cutting ceremony took place on May 31, 2003.
- The Urjo Kareda Playwrights Endowment Fund, named to honour Urjo's commitment to Canadian theatre, stands at \$1.2 million. Income from the fund is used to assist playwrights while they are writing their plays.

### **Tarragon Programs**

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- 7 or 8 major productions in two theatres each season. In the 2003-2004 season, there are eight productions with a total projected attendance of nearly 50,000.
- Playwrights Unit (since 1982). As many as 7 playwrights, with works-in-progress, work individually and collectively with the artistic director and the associate artistic director over the course of a year. These plays are given a public reading during Play Reading Week, held in mid-December.
- 4 playwrights-in-residence.
- Tarragon Theatre/George Brown College New Play Development Project – a Tarragon playwright will write a play to be workshopped by second year acting students at George Brown College in order to give the students a sense of the development process and their role as actors within it.
- Spring Arts Fair: an extraordinary free celebration of the performing arts, presented in spaces throughout the interior and exterior of Tarragon Theatre; now celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Outreach programs aimed at youth including Spring Training Project, Young Playwrights Unit, *Under 20 for Under 20's* playwriting contest, high school and post-secondary co-op placements; Outreach programs aimed at educators including Teacher Nights and educator workshops.
- Apprentice programs in arts administration and stage management.

### **Tarragon Special Services**

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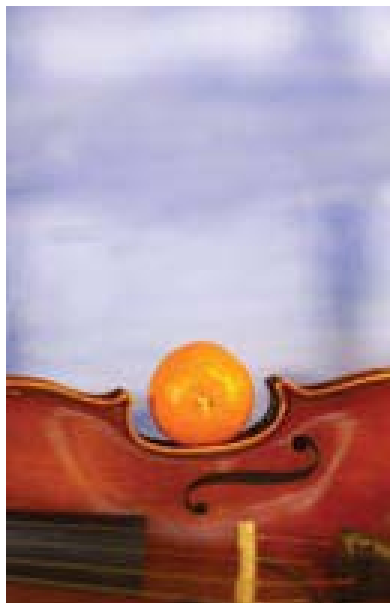
- Over 500 scripts professionally read and assessed annually without charge.
- Student and senior matinees; wheelchair accessibility throughout facility.
- Teachers provided with a complimentary study guide.
- Costume and prop rentals for professional and community companies.
- Pay-What-You-Can performances every Sunday afternoon.
- Tickets donated to community and social service groups for fundraising events.

# TARRAGON THEATRE

study guide

## **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)**

by Mieko Ouchi



**Starring: Mieko Ouchi and Ashley Wright**

**Directed by Ron Jenkins**

**Set designed by David Boechler**

**Costumes designed by Jen Darbellay**

**Lighting designed by Michael Kruse**

**Sound designed by Dave Clarke**

**Stage Manager: Randa Douche**

***March 23 – May 2, 2004***

About the **Red Priest** study guide:

This study guide has been created so that your theatre experience at Tarragon is a fulfilling and engaging one. We hope that it will help create discussions, generate ideas and prompt many questions.

The **Red Priest** study guide was coordinated by Laura Bonfigli and compiled by:

**Laura Bonfigli** (BA Honours, M.A.) has been with the Tarragon Theatre since 1996 when she began as a co-op student. Currently, she is the Toronto Fringe's Development Associate and is Tarragon Theatre's OutReach Associate.

**Christine Estima** is in her fourth year at York University, double majoring in Theatre and Creative Writing. She has been with Tarragon Theatre since April 2003 as an Arts & Education intern and worked as the outdoor venue coordinator for the 2003 Spring Arts Fair.

**Joanna Falck** (BA Honours, M.A.) is in the final year of her PhD at the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama. She is the Literary Coordinator for the Tarragon Theatre.

**Avery A. Swartz** (BFA Honours) is a graduate of Ryerson University's Technical Theatre Production program. She spent 4 years as a producer with Festival of Classics in Oakville. She is Tarragon's Administrative Assistant and Group Sales Coordinator.

**Kristen Van Alphen** (BA Honours) is a professional stage manager, who in 1999 made a career change to education program administration and theatre outreach. She is Tarragon's OutReach Director.

**Mary B. Wood** (BA Honours, B.Ed.) first came to Tarragon in 2000 as a Tarragon Theatre/OISE intern. She teaches dramatic arts full time and continues to work with Tarragon Theatre as our OutReach Consultant developing lesson plans grounded in Ministry Curriculum.

Special thanks and acknowledgements to Ron Jenkins, Mieko Ouchi, Randa Doche, David Boechler, Michael Kruse, Charissa Aldcroft, Henry Bertrand, Alex Gilbert, Catherine Matzig and Kirk Thomson.

The **Red Priest** study guide is divided into several sections.

1. **About the Tarragon Theatre**
2. **About the Play**
3. **Additional Resources**
4. **Lesson Plans**

We encourage you to make use of this study guide as effectively as possible and as such we want to highlight the fact that some elements of the guide are most useful prior to viewing the production and some are most useful post viewing. For example, while the structure, character breakdown and themes set up a context for viewing, the design elements are best understood after viewing. There are also lesson plans included for pre and post show activities.

**Feel free to contact us should you have any questions or comments at  
416.536.5018 x242.**

Educator Programs are generously supported by:



## **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)**

*“So here I stand. Death in poverty or a life in prostitution...”*

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### **About The Play**

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1. Synopsis
  2. Structural Elements
  3. Thematic Elements
  4. Canadian Content
  5. Design Elements
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### **Synopsis**

In the opulent court of Louis XIV, an aristocrat makes a bet with the King that his young wife can learn to play the violin in six weeks. Famed composer and virtuoso Antonio Vivaldi is assigned the task of teaching her. What follows is a sensuous and bittersweet story of unconsummated love set in counterpoint to the music of Italy's baroque master.

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### **Structural Elements**

Elements of confinement and/or restriction are addressed in the structural, thematic, and design aspects of **The Red Priest**. Structurally, the piece is written in a series of 5 movements, each comprised of 5 parts. The playwright included the following table of contents (of sorts) at the beginning of her script.

#### **Movement One:**

*Part One: Presto*  
*Part Two: The Walking Party*  
*Part Three: Taming the Horses*  
*Part Four: Eight Ways to say Goodbye-A Minuet*  
*Part Five: Homage*

#### **Movement Two:**

*Part One: Eight Ways to say Goodbye-A Breeze and Nothing More*  
*Part Two: Eight Ways to say Goodbye-The Letter*  
*Part Three: The Concert*  
*Part Four: The First Lesson*  
*Part Five: The Sadness*

#### **Movement Three:**

*Part One: The Opera*  
*Part Two: A Dream*  
*Part Three: Another Lesson...The Orange*  
*Part Four: A Lesson and Nothing More*  
*Part Five: A Prayer*

## **Movement Four:**

*Part One: Antea*  
*Part Two: A Spell*  
*Part Three: Practicing*  
*Part Four: A Dream*  
*Part Five: A Leaf*

## **Movement Five:**

*Part One: A Gift*  
*Part Two: Goodbye*  
*Part Three: Eight Ways to say Goodbye*  
*Part Four: The Precipice*  
*Part Five: The Final Movement*

### **Point of Interest**

A movement in music is defined as a complete, self-contained part within a larger musical work.

*The “Eight Ways to Say Goodbye” scenes work like movements within the larger play. Discuss.*

The writing is organized so that lines of text are perfectly matched with the specific pieces of music that underscore them. Keep this fact in mind as you track the evolution of the sound throughout the piece (beginning with violins warming up and ending with a live performance). Please see the design elements section of the study guide for more information on sound design.

**The Red Priest** is a one-act period piece that uses a combination of dialogue, monologue and direct address. What provides a sense of structure is the use of music, and conversely, the use of silence. In conversations with the playwright, Mieko Ouchi, she expressed a desire to draw parallels between the ensemble pieces of an orchestra and the solo pieces of an orchestra with the notion of the desires of the society verses the individual. This is reflected in the structure of the piece by the use of dialogue and monologue. Ouchi’s aim was to keep the play as structurally varied as a concerto.

*Why do you suppose the playwright included a table of contents as part of her text when the audience would not be made aware of this?*

*Is the playwright successful in creating structural variance within the piece?*

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## **Setting**

**The Red Priest** is set in Paris, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the court of Louis XIV. The action happens in the garden, the classroom or the court.

*Does the location of each scene have a direct impact on how Vivaldi and the woman treat each other? Explain.*

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## Characters

**Woman** Unnamed woman of the French court; lost and lonely within the confines of the aristocracy but finds some solace in her garden and, eventually, the violin.

*What is the effect of leaving the woman unnamed?*

**Vivaldi** Composer, musician, under the patronage of the woman's husband. He is to teach her violin in 6 weeks. His nickname is *the Red Priest*.

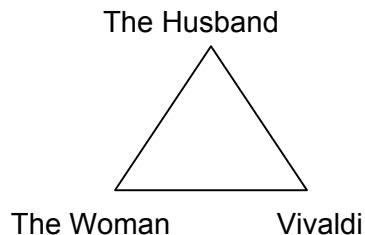
### Point of Interest

Vivaldi's nickname refers to his flaming red hair and the fact that he was a priest.

*What other images/feelings are evoked by the colour red, and by extension Vivaldi's nickname?*

Almost as important in this piece are the offstage characters of King Louis XIV, the Woman's husband and the nobility. They are included in this section because their absence from onstage action is more relevant than if they actually appeared in the play proper. The looming presence of these offstage characters is responsible for much of the animosity Vivaldi and the woman have toward the court.

The following diagram is meant to exemplify the relationship the characters have to each other. Although it is a simple triangle, it is important to note that both Vivaldi and the woman survive based only on how they interact within the hierarchy set out by the King and enacted by his court (including her husband).



*Although it will be discussed in the thematic elements of the guide, have your class brainstorm the kinds of relationships this diagram conveys.*

*Including relevant off stage characters is a technique employed frequently by playwrights (2 noteworthy examples are Tennessee Williams' **The Glass Menagerie** and Samuel Beckett's **Waiting for Godot**). What makes these characters so important?*

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## Thematic Elements

Although this piece braids together a myriad of themes, there are four specific themes that are interconnected and useful to discuss in advance of the performance. These are: power, artifice, constraint and love. The first three form a triangle: the power of the court allows it to dictate the social norms of the times, which includes many elements of artifice, and this in turn creates constraints in the comportment of the noblesse. In direct juxtaposition to this is the theme of

love: as The Woman and Vivaldi break through the confines of power, artifice and constraint they discover an intimate kinship that deeply affects them both. A strength of **The Red Priest** is its exploration of these themes, which are universal and timeless.

## Power

In this play, power reveals itself through dominance and control; ownership becomes a very important assertion of power. Possible pre-show discussions include the role of women at the time, the way artists made their money and/or the power the country of France exerted over art and culture.

There is control of relationships:

- The way in which The Woman responds to the bell – clearly her husband is dominant, as she stops whatever she is doing to report to him when the bell rings
- The sycophantic nature of how Vivaldi chooses to express himself through his letter and in person to the The Woman's husband – as a patron the husband controls Vivaldi's economic well-being
- The knowledge that both The Woman and Vivaldi rely on the husband, as articulated in this quote: *"What are you so afraid of? That your commission will be cut off if you offend me? I don't pay it. My husband does. Just as he buys me these clothes and keeps me in this beautiful house."*
- The delicate 'dance of power' played between Vivaldi and The Woman – he needs her to achieve his commission, she needs him to teach her the violin – because they are both powerful and powerless they keep each other in check.

The balance of power between the two protagonists is what lays the groundwork for their eventual affectionate relationship – they realize that they are personal, although not public, equals.

*What other power relationships can be identified?*

There is control of nature and art:

- The formal structure of the gardens
- The attempt to conquer the art of playing the violin in six weeks
- The cultivation of oranges in an unsatisfactory climate
- The use of concertos to honour important people
- The popular judgement of the time that composers were touched by God (they use formal structure in their work) while virtuosos were touched by the Devil (they played passionately, chaotically, and without formality)

The explanation of the orange blends control over nature with control of relationships by using it as a metaphor for how The Woman views her place, and the place of women, in the court.

## Artifice

Like power, artifice is still prevalent – we are familiar with the idea of having a public and private personality. However, the 18<sup>th</sup> century court is a great setting to explore notions of artifice as it revelled in pretences: what you appeared to be was far more important than what you were.

The bet is an excellent example of a deceptive manoeuvre: by setting his wife up to fail, the husband is creating a publicly acceptable opportunity to rid himself of her. Divorce is not an option but contriving a public situation where she causes embarrassment will allow her husband the latitude to take on a mistress.

A look at the text also reveals the difference in language used in public vs. private scenes. The public scenes rely on a forced politeness and flattery, sometime verging on the ridiculous, where many words are spoken but little is said. It is an interest in countering the artificial conversation that pushes the relationship between Vivaldi and his pupil forward:

*Woman: If you would allow me to be so bold, may I suggest that we be frank with one another for a moment. For all the flattery you've spoken for me and my husband, you must admit, you've really come down in the world to spend your days with me.*

The play also derives much of its humour from the send-up of these affectations, the greatest example being incessant deep bowing on the part of Vivaldi as he attempts to ingratiate himself into the court.

Other examples of artifice include:

- The switching of blue and yellow flowers to white to impress a walking party
- The existence of orange trees where they cannot naturally grow
- The garb of 18<sup>th</sup> century courtly women
- The use of masks at a court event
- The juxtaposition of what Vivaldi says out loud with what he writes in his letter

*What are some examples of artifice in the news today?*

## **Constraint**

Constraint, in the world of this play, is a manifestation of the social norms prevalent in 18<sup>th</sup> century France. There are also strong elements of judgement and the concept that there is a price to be paid for upsetting the 'way things are done.' As the world of the play suggests, the proper way to carry one's self was to adhere to a restrictive formal relationship that, in many cases, denied the public acknowledgement of basic human emotions. Good manners were superior to truth and showing emotion was not deemed to be in good taste. Similar to the way the gardens were a triumph of human over nature, the public comportment of the noblesse was a display of human over emotion.

Constraints are apparent for both protagonists:

- The Woman struggles to be content with her station, including her duty to obey her husband and perform the role of noblewoman, while desiring an abandon from courtly limitations
- Vivaldi searches for a liberty that would allow him to create music without being reliant on someone else's purse.

Both feel hampered by the limitations of their lives and find a kindred spirit in each other in which to confide.

Again, the bet plays out of this theme. The goal for the husband seems to be the public humiliation of his wife – setting her up to display poor manners (by playing poorly). In the rules of the court, this would allow him to banish the Woman and/or take a mistress. She is aware of the nature of the arrangement but cannot publicly denounce him for the plan, as that too would be a public humiliation achieving similar results. Hence, one purpose of constraint is to serve the powerful and allow room for judgement.

It is difficult to discuss the notion of constraint without acknowledging its counterpart – independence. In this play, while the characters pay a price for living within constraints, they also know the risks they would undertake in the pursuit of independence. The concept of ‘suicide by court’ would allow The Woman to be released from the prison-like world of her marriage but for what would she leave? She knows that there is really no alternative. Vivaldi uses the money he makes to fund his art of choice – opera, but that leads him back to a place where he must rely on others’ patronage to survive.

For both the choice is, as articulated by Vivaldi: “*Death in poverty or a life in prostitution...*”

*Discuss this quote with your class.*

*How does the story of the orange depict the nature of dependence?*

*How do notions of constraint affect The Woman’s decision at the end of the play?*

## **Love**

Love in this story is not confined to physical attraction – it is also platonic and intellectual. As a theme, love is the key to transcending the dominating forces facing Vivaldi and The Woman. The desire by both protagonists to achieve a freedom or respite from the power, artifice and constraint of 18<sup>th</sup> century courtly life is the impetus that allows them to grow closer, eventually falling in love.

Both do things that show their love:

- The Woman plays an aria from Vivaldi’s first opera in court as a goodbye present.
- Vivaldi gives The Woman a concerto that he has been writing for her to play at court.

*After viewing the play, see if your students can track their relationship (were their signifiers that indicated they were falling in love)?*

*Their ‘kindred spirit’ is attributed to them both being ‘believers’. What belief is it that they share?*

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## **Canadian Content**

The Canadian content section of our study guide is a recent addition and it is meant to underscore the fact that while the plays we produce are set in locations around the world, in varying periods of history and may or may not include Canadian characters, there is something inherently Canadian about every piece that we choose to produce at the Tarragon.

There are multiple definitions about what makes a piece Canadian. Some people feel that it is only a Canadian play if the playwright is Canadian while others feel that if it is produced by a Canadian company or includes an all-Canadian cast, that it is also Canadian.

While we are still developing a sense of how we define “Canadian-ness”, we chose to include this section on how this piece is relevant in a modern Canadian context.

The connection that Ouchi draws between the need for patronage in order to have the “luxury” of time to create art is a theory that we are familiar with as Canadian artists. The system of procuring funding from a combination of public and private sources is necessary but, at times, dangerous. Sometimes people are called upon to make sacrifices in order to realize their artistic goals. An example drawn directly from the text is the fact that Vivaldi became a priest so that he could be a musician but one could also draw a contemporary example in the relationship between funders and an artist or artists.

In terms of the production history, this play has developed through a series of successful workshops and productions (please see Production Antecedent for a full list). The Canadian theatre model encourages development in the early stages of process and Ouchi was fortunate to have her work supported along the way. The stages of play development are also dependent on funding, which brings the cyclical nature of funding and development to the forefront of Canadian content discussions.

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## Elements of Design

The following section is intended to increase the awareness of production elements utilized in theatre. It combines general information about areas of design (including information from Tarragon production staff, design websites and the textbook: *Theatrical Design and Production* by J. Michael Gillette) with specific examples of how design elements have been employed in the production you are attending. A brief glossary is also included to assist with technical terms used in this section of the guide.

### Design Overview

A script can be performed numerous times without ever being interpreted the same way. Although text stays the same from production to production, the way the piece is conceptualized changes. For instance, after you set the production design for this show imagine that it has recently opened in Regina with an entirely white design (costume, set, etc.).

The designers (set, costumes, lighting, sound, etc.) and director thoroughly discuss the play to ensure all parties share a similar vision of the play and explore how this vision will be represented through design. Design elements should create an environment for the play that supports the production concept: the creative interpretation of the script.

There are some artistic and practical considerations that apply to all areas of design. These include:

- mood and spirit of the production
- historical period of the production
- locale of each scene
- season of the year and time of day for each scene
- time, labour and material budgets
- health and safety
- needs of other designers

*How do these elements affect the choices for each area of design?*

Designers in each discipline submit their ideas to the production department for costing. This is the first introduction of the designers to the production manager and technical director. When the costing is complete the director, design team and production team review the feasibility of the design and make any necessary adjustments necessary.

The design concept for **The Red Priest** is luxury and precision, thus the set consists of strict right angles and rich tones; the lighting clearly distinguishes interior from exterior and public from private; the costumes include all the trappings of 18<sup>th</sup> century courtly garb; and the sound includes precise indicators of the invisible characters and music that is perfectly timed to the text.

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## Set Design

The set designer's job is to create a physical world, which helps the audience understand and enjoy a play by providing a visual representation of the production concept. Before rehearsals begin, the set designer meets multiple times with the director. From these meetings design drawings and a maquette (a scale model of what will be onstage) are developed. The model and drawings are used by the actors, stage managers and production staff to better understand the design goals; to imagine and replicate the space the production will be set in; and to build and decorate the set pieces.

Specific practical elements considered by the set designer are:

- the socio-economic level of the characters
- number and position of entrances and exits needed
- number and position of entrances and exits already in the space
- the seating formation of the theatre – is it malleable?
- the type of stage that comes with the theatre (i.e. proscenium, thrust, arena, catwalk etc.)
- is this a flyhouse?
- the duration of the run
- will the set tour after the first production

In addition to the scenery, the set designer is frequently responsible for designing the stage properties.

It will be interesting to take notice of the following:

- Where on the stage certain scenes take place
- How the mood and spirit of the production is relayed through the design
- How many different locales are represented on the stage
- What areas are used as exits and entrances
- What information the set gives about the characters

For this production of **The Red Priest**, set designer David Boechler wanted to pay homage to the architecture and design aesthetic of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to create a confined playing space (to underscore the restriction of the central characters), to incorporate natural elements, to use the

intimate space to its best advantage and to acknowledge the importance of sound in all of his choices.

The set is a long alley running east-west with another alley running north-south along the west wall, forming a T shape. While scenes takes place both inside and out the set is one arm of a garden walkway stemming from a centre crossroads. The playwright alludes to this in her second speech saying, "In this most desirable composition, a simple rectangular garden is focused on a central fountain, located at the crossroads of four gravelled walks."

Cork has been used to represent gravel. This choice was made for a number of practical and aesthetic reasons. The cork is a richer colour that contains a number of hues, which can be picked up under light. It is also much less noisy than gravel and much easier for the two actors to walk on. Lastly, it will not damage the masonite floor underneath. Beneath the cork is a tan paint treatment, which masks the bare spots that can occur during the 85 minutes of the show.

To compliment the rich, warm tone of the cork, heavy burgundy curtains have been hung around the periphery of the space. The curtains give a luxurious feel to the Extra Space; they also remove the hollow quality of sound that exists in a bare theatre and they reinforce the intimacy of the production by surrounding and embracing the audience.

The tile platform was originally envisioned as a square of grass. However, the synthetic grass sounded to the designer as if "the actors were walking on brushes." The tile allows for both an interior and exterior quality as it can represent a palace floor, patio or walkway. The sound of shoes on it neatly juxtaposes the sound of the cork underfoot.

The trees at the west end of the set have developed based on stage directions and the abilities of the space. In the script the stage directions indicate:

*She climbs off the fountain and with passion begins to walk among the trees in the forest pushing them angrily and with speed and momentum as she goes...*

After another passage of text the directions continue:

*She stops at the edge of the forest and calmly crosses back through the wildly swaying trees untouched to the centre of the forest.*

and:

*She turns slowly and exits to the house through the forest. The trees sway gently as if nothing more than a breeze had passed through. Blackout*

The trees are too physically heavy to be supported by the Extra Space grid alone and to swing in such a rough way. To have trees meant securing them at both ends. However, the trees do not have tops or bottoms and as such seem to float in the air. Placing the trees at a symmetrical distance from one another mimics the appearance of prison bars, underscoring the restrictions felt by Vivaldi and The Woman.

In order to keep the audience from walking on the set, stanchions have been placed around the playing area – these are made from the same lush red fabric as the curtains with gold braid and gold finials. Although they do not remain during the performance they set the stage for the rich, courtly environment that the characters inhabit.

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## Sound design

Sound design has grown incredibly in the past few years. This is partly due to increased expectations created by film and television, the advancement of sound technology, and the prevalence of high quality personal sound equipment. Sound is now increasingly being used in the theatre to focus the audience's attention and reinforce (or counteract) the dominant emotional theme of the onstage material.

Sound design consists of music, effects and reinforcement (such as microphones).

The sound designer obtains a lot of information directly from the script i.e. "a phone rings", "it begins to rain", or "a sad song is heard through the window". S/he must think about the transitions between scenes and what sound elements will shift the audience from the mood of one scene to the next. Sound design also extends to the elements the audience hears when they first enter the theatre, during the intermission, and even the curtain call and post-show music.

Some practical elements the sound designer considers are:

- speaker and microphone placement
- live or recorded sound, or both
- volume of each piece
- length of scene changes
- equipment available
- existing ambient noise in the theatre

As well as establishing and reinforcing mood and atmosphere, sound elements also provide information to the audience:

- When you enter a theatre take a minute to listen to the pre-show music or soundscape – does it offer any clues about the nature of the show?
- What sound cues did you hear that helped establish time and place?
- Were any special effects used? Were they useful in moving the story forward? Why or why not?

For **The Red Priest** two different people worked on the sound.

The music was entirely chosen by the playwright, Meiko Ouchi, as she was developing the piece. Passages were realized while Ouchi listened to music and eventually were timed to specific musical pieces. Thus, in the script each section details the name of the musical piece that accompanies it. It was an organic process that sometimes started with an emotion in the text that was matched by music and sometimes began with musical emotion that was matched by Ouchi's words. Most of the pieces are by Vivaldi, although Ouchi has included a minuet from Bach. This is Ouchi's nod to the fact that the rediscovery of Vivaldi happened by scholars studying Bach; Vivaldi's concertos heavily influenced Bach's work.

In addition to choosing pieces of music, Ouchi also chose when to work with silence. Silence is most often apparent as Vivaldi and The Woman strip away the courtly artifice and share their

private thoughts, either with each other or with the audience. One example of this is the passage where The Woman prays in her garden for “some sign that something is out of order with this world, something is imperfect, and has been allowed to exist and not eradicated immediately.”

*What other scenes in the story take place without underscoring? What is the effect on the audience?*

Sound designer David Clarke constructed cues to accompany the music and create the atmosphere and invisible characters. For example:

- The first musical passage is that of violins warming up – it is the prologue to the story and ends with a conductor’s baton beating a music stand to get everyone’s attention. Likewise, a similar warm-up is played as The Woman prepares to perform for the court. When the baton hits the stand the resulting silence is extremely powerful.
  - A ringing bell that must be obeyed personifies the character of The Woman’s husband. In order to achieve perfect timing – an interaction between The Woman and the bell – a real bell is used. It is rung into a microphone by the stage manager so that it can be played through a speaker offstage. By doing this the bell can respond nightly to the nuances of each scene.
  - The existence of the noblesse can be heard in the crowd murmurings and the applause that is present during the court scenes.
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## Lighting Design:

Effective stage lighting not only lets the spectators see the action of the play but also ties together all the visual elements of the production and helps create an appropriate mood and atmosphere to heighten the audience’s understanding and enjoyment of the play.

The lighting designer wants to give information such as time and place, mood, and where the focus of a scene is. Lighting design is often not noticeable because it has been created in such a way as to enhance the mood of the play as unobtrusively as possible. However, many directors will employ unnatural lighting or hyper-realized lighting to add another layer to the production.

Lighting includes the use of coloured gels to create different effects; intensity to determine how dark or bright a scene is; direction to establish the angle at which the light hits the stage; and movement to decide the duration and components of cues.

Lighting and sound often work together to create an effect (i.e. a fade to black that is timed to a piece of music).

Lighting also works closely with set pieces when ‘practicals’ are used. These are light sources that are manipulated by the actors (i.e. a desk lamp). In this case the set designer will determine the look of the lamp and the lighting designer will decide how it functions.

Some practical considerations for a lighting designer are:

- the number of locations in a set
- the number of lighting instruments available

- the type of performance (i.e. drama, dance, opera, etc.)
- whether the lighting board is manual or computerized
- alternate light sources (i.e. video or slide projection)
- set materials requiring special lighting (i.e. a scrim or cyclorama)

Some lighting elements to notice are:

- when and how lighting indicates a change in time or location
- lighting changing the focus from one character to another
- how lighting interacts with sound elements
- how lighting is employed to reinforce a mood
- how colour is used in the lighting instruments

Designer Michael Kruse has used lighting elements to enhance the emotion of the piece. The light boxes are a focal point of the set and are softly lit throughout, as if they contain life. When the scenes take place in an interior setting the boxes are brighter and, because of the way that they are gelled, cast a glow similar to that of candlelight or the lanterns that would have been used indoors at the time. Also, the light boxes shine at times as a visual underscoring to the music. This is particularly apparent when Vivaldi's love, the opera, is played.

Another lighting element is the letter gobo, which is used during the scenes while Vivaldi is in Italy and The Woman in France. The gobo is a representation of the sycophancy involved in Vivaldi's relationship with his patron. It also highlights the importance of the letter as the vehicle that brings Vivaldi into The Woman's life. Lastly, the letter gobo serves to reinforce the geographical distance.

The curtains are lit for the entire show. This gives the audience sitting on the sides a sense of the richness found upstage with the white trees against the red backdrop. By using light at an oblique angle, Kruse is able to make the folds of the curtains resemble the curtain/tree pattern. There are a few specific times when the curtain lights are not used – this is when the story draws inward for a particularly private moment and all focus must be on the deck. An example of this is the monologue whereby The Woman remembers being dressed on her wedding day.

*Where else do the curtain lights disappear?*

The play is broken down into five movements. Kruse has given a lighting colour and temperature to each of the movements:

- Movement 1 – amber (we are getting to know the characters)
- Movement 2 – red (the letter and the possibility it contains)
- Movement 3 – purple (the parties and the public face)
- Movement 4 – blue (pensive and private)
- Movement 5 – white (all colour is removed, there is nowhere to hide)

The white light at the end of the play is especially evocative and suggests the glaring eyes of the court as they judge The Woman. It is also a powerful precursor to the swift blackout at the finale.

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## Costume Design

Costume design includes all clothing, underclothing, hairdressing, makeup and accessories such as hats, scarves, fans, umbrellas and jewellery, worn or carried by each character in a production.

A costume design suggests specific personal information about each character.

Through discussion with the director, the costume designer will decide whether or not to make the costumes 'period accurate'. The designer researches clothes of a period in many ways including: looking through store catalogues of the era (i.e. Sears or Eaton's); going to a reference library, art gallery and/or museum; perusing picture archives; or even looking at old family photographs. Similarly, if the costumes are contemporary, designers look to current fashion magazines, tv and film, and stores for research.

The designer also works from indications within the play's script and looks for hints into the characters' personality. S/he then makes artistic choices for the colour of the costumes, their shape, and the fabrics to be used.

Finally, the designer works with the costume team and the actors in fittings to make certain that the costumes are comfortable and as easy as possible to manipulate.

Some practical considerations in costume design include:

- The background and personality of the characters
- The limitations created by the set or staging (i.e. a raked stage makes spiked shoes impractical)
- The actors can move about on the stage as required (i.e. run up a set of stairs or engage in stage combat)
- The costumes remain effective under stage lighting
- Costumes that need to be changed quickly are built accordingly
- Costumes can last for an entire run and be laundered

Costume designer Jen Darbellay has created a wardrobe that is completely reminiscent of 18<sup>th</sup> century France.

The confining corset and widened hips of The Woman's dress reinforce the idea that all of the elements of her environment serve to imprison her and mask her true self.

The mole on her face is an addition in keeping with the style of the times. Moles were placed on the face initially to hide scars derived from syphilis and lead poisoning – lead poisoning was inflicted by the face powder that had been popular during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, scars were covered with patches, often in shapes of crescent moons or stars. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the patches had evolved into moles.

The Woman's opulent jewelry purchased, as the rest of her outfit, by her husband, shows her as a kept woman and a possession of the rich man. Her deportment is a reflection of his wealth and status. Vivaldi's accessories are limited to a cross, which defines him as a priest. It is not garish or large because his interest in the priesthood is minimal.

The wigs worn by both Vivaldi and The Woman are in the style of the period. Wigs came into fashion when King Louis XIV went prematurely bald and set a new fashion, using a wig to cover

his lack of hair. Wigs came to be equated with power, since they cost the same as an entire outfit and required a hairdresser to constantly keep them in proper shape.

The wig is used as another example of artifice in the play and is most obvious in the character of Vivaldi who begins without a wig, dons a wig when he reaches the court and removes the wig as he leaves at the end.

Shoes are a major concern in this show because they need to have a period look but also must be stable enough to allow the actors to tread on the cork floor without injury.

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## **Stage Management**

One aspect of technical production that is too often overlooked is the area of stage management. The stage management team provides support, organization, information and leadership to all areas of a production including administration, technical production, front of house and the company of actors.

With regard to design, the stage manager plays a key role by providing a variety of information including: scene timings; costume requirements; and properties additions. The stage manager also 'calls the show', which means s/he coordinates when each design element will be used and tells the technical team, on a cue-by-cue basis when to "go". As a show naturally progresses throughout a run the stage manager must be the human element that determines when cues should happen in order to relate to the action on stage. S/he also works with the actors to remain aware of the choices that were made when the cues were set.

## Scene Breakdown

M/P	Pg	Movement/Part	Woman	Vivaldi	Music Notes/Composer = Vivaldi unless otherwise noted
<b>MOVEMENT ONE</b>					
1-1	1	Part One: Presto	•	•	Four Seasons Concerto in G Minor, Summer Presto
1-2	2	Part Two: The Walking Party	•		Concerto for 2 Mandolins in G Major, Andante
1-3	3	Part Three: Taming the Horses		•	Concerto for 2 Violincellos in G Minor, RV 531
1-4	4	Part Four: Eight Ways to Say Goodbye- A Minuet	•		Minuet: Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B Minor/J. S. Bach
<b>MOVEMENT TWO</b>					
2-1	6	Part One: Eight Ways to Say Goodbye- A Breeze and Nothing More	•		Concerto for Cello in B flat, Largo
2-2	7	Part Two: Eight Ways to Say Goodbye- The Letter		•	Violin Concerto in D Major p 153/op 8 no. 11
2-3	8	Part Three: The Concert	•	•	La Stravaganza; Concerto #12 for Orchestra in G Major, RV 298, Largo
2-4	11	Part Four: The First Lesson	•	•	Concerto for Lute and 2 Violins in D Major, RV 93, opening Allegro; <i>W plays</i>
2-5	14	Part Five: The Sadness		•	Concerto in D Major for Cello, Adagio (Affectuoso) RV 404
<b>MOVEMENT THREE</b>					
3-1	14	Part One: The Opera	•	•	The Four Seasons, Opening strains of the Summer section
3-2	18	Part Two: A Dream	•		The Four Seasons, Summer Second movement, Largo
3-3	19	Part Three: Another Lesson... The Orange	•	•	Concert for the Prince of Poland, Andante 5:07
3-4	25	Part Four: A Lesson and Nothing More	•	•	(La Notte Concerto #2 in G minor RV104, Largo); <i>Woman plays simple scale</i>
3-5	26	Part Five: A Prayer		•	Violin Concerto #4 in A minor RV357, Grave –from La Stravaganza Concerto #5 in F Major for Flute, Largo
<b>MOVEMENT FOUR</b>					
4-1	27	Part One: Antea	•	•	
4-2	31	Part Two: A Spell	(•)	•	Sonata for Cello and Harpsichord #5 in E minor, Largo
4-3	31	Part Three: Practicing	•	•	<i>Woman plays beginning of Violin Concerto in A minor, 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement, Presto</i>
4-4	35	Part Four: A Dream	(statue)	•	The Four Seasons, Winter, Largo
4-5	36	Part Five: A Leaf	•		--
<b>MOVEMENT FIVE</b>					
5-1	36	Part One: A Gift	•	•	opening strains of <i>Ottone in Villa</i> , (Vivaldi's first opera)
5-2	38	Part Two: Goodbye	•	•	--
5-3	39	Part Three: Eight Ways to Say Goodbye		•	--
5-4	39	Part Four: The Precipice	•		--
5-5	39	Part Five: The Final Movement	•		<i>Woman plays: Violin Concerto in A minor, Third Movement, Presto</i>

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## Glossary of Useful Technical Terms

<b><i>Acoustics</i></b>	The sound transmission characteristics of a room, space or material
<b><i>Cue</i></b>	A directive for action (i.e. a change in the lighting, sound, or an actor's entrance)
<b><i>Cyclorama</i></b>	A large piece of scenic material used to surround the stage on to which colour can be projected
<b><i>Gel</i></b>	Generic name for the film used in lighting instruments to change colour. It can also be used as a verb (i.e. to 'gel' the lights)
<b><i>Gobo</i></b>	A thin metal template inserted into a lighting instrument in order to cut a pattern into the light that is projected onstage
<b><i>Flyhouse</i></b>	A theatre space with the ability to "fly" set pieces and/or backdrops from a fly gallery located high above the stage using ropes and cables
<b><i>Maquette</i></b>	A scale model 3-D representation of the set design
<b><i>Plot</i></b>	A scale drawing showing the placement of various elements (i.e. lighting instruments) relative to the stage configuration and theatre
<b><i>Prompt book</i></b>	A copy of the script with each actor's blocking, all the technical cues, and details/lists of all technical elements involved in the production
<b><i>Raked stage</i></b>	A stage that is higher at the back than at the front
<b><i>Scrim</i></b>	A scenic panel made from translucent gauze-like material
<b>Stage Configurations</b>	
<b><i>Arena Stage</i></b>	A stage configuration where the audience completely surrounds the playing space
<b><i>Catwalk Stage</i></b>	A stage configuration where the audience surrounds the playing space on 2 sides – also known as an Alley stage
<b><i>Proscenium</i></b>	A stage configuration where the audience watches the action through a rectangular opening that resembles a picture frame (proscenium arch)
<b><i>Thrust Stage</i></b>	A stage configuration where the audience surrounds the playing space on 3 sides

## Additional Resources

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1. About Mieko Ouchi
2. Historical Antecedent
  - a. Antonio Vivaldi
  - b. Vivaldi's Published Works
  - c. Louis XIV
  - d. France 1700 - 1800
3. Production Antecedent

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### About Mieko Ouchi

**The Red Priest** is Mieko Ouchi's first full-length play. She works as a writer, actor and director in theatre, film and television. A graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting program, she has been working professionally across Canada since 1992. Over the past year, she performed in **The Red Priest** in its world premiere at Calgary's Alberta Theatre Projects and Edmonton's Workshop West Theatre. Her award-winning films *Shepherd's Pie and Sushi*, *By this Parting* and *Samurai Swing* have played at over 30 film festivals across North America and aired on the CBC, W Network and Bravo! Mieko also wrote and directed a television program with the National Film Board for CBC's Nature of Things entitled *Minor Keys*, which focused on child music prodigies and aired on CBC in January 2003. Currently, Mieko is writing a commissioned play for the National Arts Centre-English Theatre about Leni Riefenstahl. Ms. Ouchi is the recipient of a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2003 for her contributions to the arts and the community of Edmonton.

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### Historical Antecedent

In **The Red Priest**, history is both a tool and an influence. This, however, is not a representation of a real relationship between Vivaldi and a noblewoman of the French court. In fact, if you look at the time periods of the individual historical characters, 1678 – 1741 for Vivaldi and 1638 – 1715 for Louis XIV, there is barely a period of overlap. The playwright has placed Vivaldi in the height of excess and culture in the French court to underscore the thematic nature of her play.

#### Antonio Vivaldi

Very little is known about Antonio Lucio Vivaldi's personal life. He was born on March 4th, 1678. His father, Giovanni Battista Vivaldi was a barber who played the violin and performed at the basilica of St. Mark (San Marco) in 1685. Vivaldi had four brothers and four sisters, but he was the lone musician.

At the age of 25, Vivaldi became the music teacher at an all-girls orphanage called the *Ospedale delle Pieta*. His job was to teach the young girls how to play music. He also wrote two concerti a month for them to perform. This accounts for the variety of instruments Vivaldi wrote for, since he had to showcase each of the young girls' talents. Vivaldi stayed at the *Ospedale* off and on for thirty-five years, although his interests in opera and travel constantly drew him away.

Vivaldi was known as the "Red Priest" because of his red hair. He became a priest before he became a composer, but it is obvious that he was more devoted to music than religion. At the time, if you wanted to compose or play music, it helped to become part of the religious institution. As a priest, Vivaldi was free to devote his time to writing and playing. Judging by the fact that he took the position at the Ospedale in 1703 (the same year he was ordained), one might infer that he was using the church to attain the position. Because the priesthood was more of a religious education than a way of life, this practice was not uncommon. Many priests had alternate vocations.

As a progressive musician, Vivaldi established the concerto form as an instrumental standard; played with the idea that the soloist was at war with the larger orchestra; used the contrast between the soloist and the orchestra for dramatic effect (using both volume and speed as tools); and pushed the envelope on violin technique. Over 500 Vivaldi concerti exist today, as well as 40 cantatas, 22 operas, and more than 60 sacred works. Vivaldi was one of the rare Italian composers interested in woodwind instruments. He composed several concerti for the bassoon, oboe, recorder and flute, as well as the rarer chalumeaux and clarinet.

While Vivaldi spent much of his time teaching at the Ospedale, he began to travel as his fame (and wealth) grew. He left Venice for three years to live in Mantua and work in service of the governor Prince Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt. When he returned to Venice, he took up part-time employment with the Ospedale, which gave him the time and opportunity to travel to Rome, Bohemia, Amsterdam, and Dresden. Vivaldi was not poor by any means (at one time worth 50,000 ducats a year), but as he got older he invested most of this money into the opera business and lost it. To further aggravate matters, the people of Venice had become accustomed to his music and his popularity was starting to wane.

Antonio Vivaldi died in Vienna in 1741. Like Mozart, he was buried in a pauper's grave (the young composer Joseph Haydn was a choir boy at the funeral). Having remained popular across Europe his entire life, Vivaldi fell out of favour during his last ten years. As the musical world inched its way towards the classical period, Vivaldi's music was soon forgotten. His name was barely mentioned for almost two hundred years.

The search for Vivaldi's original concertos was the beginning of one of music history's greatest comebacks. Widely regarded as an insignificant composer whose existing works were rare, we now have hundreds of works proving Vivaldi's involvement during the baroque period. The first major discovery was in a music cabinet in Dresden. Vivaldi had composed a large quantity of music specifically for the Dresden orchestra, and once it had fallen out of fashion (in the 1760's) it had been placed in storage where it collected dust for a century. In 1926, a monastery in Piedmont was looking to sell part of its archives for some needed cash. Upon finding 97 volumes of music, they called on Italian musicologist, Alberto Gentili, to go through the enormous stash and sort it out. He found 14 volumes of Vivaldi's music, including over a hundred concertos, 12 operas, 29 cantatas, and a complete oratorio. This music had sat idle for nearly 200 years and now resides in the Turin National Library.

## Vivaldi's Published Works

### Point of Interest:

An **opus** was a collection of six or twelve concertos, usually similar in style or solo instrument. The concertos usually weren't written as part of a collection, rather the collection was made from already existing parts.

Year	Title	Description
1705	Opus 1	A collection of sonatas - four movement pieces written for three instruments (2 violins and harpsichord).
1709	Opus 2	This is another set of sonatas for two instruments (violin and harpsichord).
1711	Opus 3	<i>L'Estro Armonico (The Musical Inspiration)</i> - rocketed Vivaldi to European fame, especially in Germany, and propelled the sale of several collections that followed. The typical Venetian concerto at the time was written with two violin parts, a lead and a secondary. <i>L'Estro Armonico</i> contains 4 violin parts, two sets of lead and secondary.
1714	Opus 4	<i>La Stravaganza</i> - Vivaldi was researching the varying sounds the violin could make, and the varying techniques used to make them. Vivaldi was finally settling on this as his favorite form, and he developed the slow movements considerably, drawing them out and complicating them to contrast with the faster outer movements.
1716	Opus 5	A collection of six sonatas that seems to be written for the tastes of northern Europe. They are more restrained and noble, less fun.
1717	Opus 6	Six violin concerti
1721	Opus 7	12 violin concerti.
1725	Opus 8	<i>The Four Seasons</i> were published in Amsterdam in 1725. There are four violin concerti each named after a season of the year. Each includes a sonnet, written by Vivaldi, which describes the intent of the music, which makes them unique among Vivaldi's canon. The four concerti are part of a larger collection of twelve called <i>Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'invention</i> , or <i>The Contest of Harmony and Invention</i> , Opus 8.
1727	Opus 9	<i>La Cetra</i> - This collection of twelve violin concerti emphasizes what Vivaldi had learned in the opera business. The concerti are full of lyricism and melody unlike his earlier work. It is also the first time Vivaldi solidified his concerti by making each of the three movements in the same key.
1728	Opus 10	<i>Il gardellino</i> - This is the only collection written for an instrument other than the violin. This was also the first collection of flute concerti ever published, six concerti in all, and was commissioned of Vivaldi by his Amsterdam publisher to quell the burning rage for this new instrument in the 1720's.
1729	Opus 11	Six more violin concerti, with an oboe in the mix, characteristic

of Vivaldi's familiar style.  
**1729** Opus 12 Vivaldi's final collection is a set of six violin concerti.

## **Louis XIV**

Louis XIV, known as the Sun King, had the longest reign in European history (1643-1715). During this time in France, he brought absolute monarchy to its height, established a glittering court at Versailles and fought most of the other European countries in four wars. The early part of his reign (1643-61), while Louis was young, was dominated by the chief minister Cardinal Mazarin. In the middle period (1661-85), Louis reigned personally and innovatively, but the last years of his personal rule (1685-1715) were beset by problems.

Born on Sept. 5, 1638, at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Louis was born to Louis XIII and his wife, Anne of Austria. He succeeded his father on the throne at the age of four. During Louis' early years, the royal family was twice driven out of Paris, and at one point Louis XIV and Anne were held under virtual arrest in the royal palace in Paris. This civil war forced him to experience poverty, misfortune, fear, humiliation, cold and hunger. This shaped his character and he would never forgive either Paris, the nobles, or the common people.

Louis XIV's marriage to Marie Therese, the daughter of Philip IV of Spain, helped solidify political relationships between the two countries. Upon Cardinal Mazarin's death in 1661, Louis astounded his court by becoming his own chief minister, thereby ending the long reign of the cardinal-ministers. The king thereafter controlled his own government until his death, acting through his high state council and a few select ministers, whom he called or dismissed at will.

The early personal reign of Louis was highly successful in both internal and foreign affairs. He was determined to glorify the monarchy through the arts. He was a discriminating patron of the great literary and artistic figures of France's classical age, including Jean Baptiste Molière, Jules Mansart and Jean Baptiste Lully. In rapid succession, his state established or developed academies for painting and sculpture, inscriptions, science, architecture and music. The literary *Academie Française* also came under formal royal control in 1671. When the king moved permanently to Versailles in 1682, elaborate court etiquette was established that had the aristocracy vying to participate in Louis' rising and retiring.

The turning point in Louis's reign between the earlier grandeur and the later disasters came after internal affairs minister, Jean Baptiste Colbert's death (1683). In addition, Louis's display of religious intolerance helped unite the Protestant powers of Europe against the Sun King.

After a series of celebrated liaisons with mistresses, notably Louise de la Valliere and Madame de Montespan, Louis settled down to a more sedate life with Madame de Maintenon, whom he secretly married about 1683, after the death of his wife. She shared with Louis the grief of lost battles and the successive deaths of all but two of his direct descendants. The two who survived him were his grandson Philip V of Spain and a great-grandson who became Louis XV when the Sun King died on Sept. 1, 1715.

## France 1700 – 1800

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, France was made self-sufficient by the encouragement of manufacturing. Louis built a navy and merchant marine, a modern police force, roads, ports, and canals. Louis XIV, and his advisor Colbert, were advocates of mercantilism.  
Point of Interest

Mercantilism was...

Louis XIV's reign was characterized by French global cultural dominance. French was the language of culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the way that English is today the global language of business. During this period, France fought four major wars (the War of Devolution, the Dutch War, the War of the Grand Alliance and the War of the Spanish Succession) resulting in large national debt. At the time of Louis' death, France's territory had increased and it was arguably the most influential and powerful state in Europe. On the other hand, the country was in debt and the living conditions of the poor were growing steadily worse.

Louis XIV was a very extravagant spender and the treasury was essentially bankrupt in 1661. He used huge sums of money to finance his wars and his court. Some estimates conclude that by the end of Louis' reign half of France's annual revenue was spent on maintaining Versailles.

Louis would appoint Colbert as his "minister of finance"; by fighting corruption and reorganizing the bureaucracy, Colbert's policies began to generate revenue, although this was not enough to begin to reverse France's growing national debt.

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### Production Antecedent

**The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** began its life as a 6 minute performance in a project called '12' at the Catalyst Theatre in Edmonton. This undertaking involved various artists presenting work based on a number, between 1 and 12, that they had been assigned.

Playwright Meiko Ouchi was number 8.

All of the pieces were to be performed on the same set designed by Bretta Gerecke. When Ouchi saw the set it reminded her of a formal 18<sup>th</sup> century French garden (she had been reading a number of gardening books doing research for her new home) and chose to make her piece, which also featured Vivaldi's music, about "an 18<sup>th</sup> century woman finding words to say good-bye to a lover."

That may have been the end of the piece, however, number 9 was being performed by actor/director Ron Jenkins. When he saw number 8, he felt the story could be fleshed out and when he became Artistic Director of Workshop West in Edmonton he encouraged Ouchi to expand her piece into a play.

In 2001 an early version was performed at Workshop West's *Kaboom Festival*. Next, the play was presented in a workshop at Alberta Theatre Projects' PanCanadian playRites '02 and then had a full production the following year at ATP in the National playRites Festival. After that it returned to Edmonton to run at Workshop West

Recently the show opened in Regina with a new cast, while Ouchi and actor Ashley Wright rehearsed for the Tarragon show in Toronto.

The Tarragon Theatre opening on March 30, 2004 coincided with the launch of the published play by Playwrights Canada Press. There is also interest in translating the play and producing it in Japan.

## Pre Show Lesson Plan 1

### Movement and Music

#### Expectations:

TH2.02: describe how movement and non-verbal communication can be used to portray character, to define relationships among characters, and to communicate dramatic tension;  
CRV.01: use various ways to sustain a role within a drama;  
ANV.02: use the vocabulary of dramatic arts to discuss, critique, and review drama presentations in the school and the community;  
CRV.02: create and present an original or adapted dramatic work;  
CR1.04: apply appropriate voice and movement techniques in rehearsal and performance;  
**Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum**

#### Warm up:

##### Sound Effects

- Divide students into pairs.
- Distribute to each student a **Sound Effects** sheet (see page 29).
- Instruct the students to sit back to back and take turns using their voice to vocalize a specific sound effect (as drawn on the paper).
- Students guess which vocal sound effect their partner is creating.
- As an extension students can draw their own sound effects on a separate sheet of paper.
- The class can also be divided into two and have a sound effect “competition” where a member of one group has to correctly guess the sound effect their group is making.

#### Main Activity:

##### Movement piece to Vivaldi’s Four Seasons

- Perform a physical warm-up with your students.
- Go over the following movement basics in the table below.
- Students should find a private spot in the room and explore the different shapes they can create grounded in the steps you take them through.

##### Shape

Remember to include your whole body (head, arms, shoulders, hands, elbows, fingers, back, legs, toes etc).

For each of the following levels (high, middle, low) and sizes (big and small) create a shape that is:

- Bent
- Twisted
- stretched

Perform the following actions in a previously created shape:

- turn
- jump
- travel (around the room)
- contract
- expand

- Now that the students have experimented with different shapes ask the students to brainstorm which themes and/or images come to mind with the title “The Four Seasons”.
- Write the brainstorming results on the board.
- Working individually, students pick 3 of the themes and/or images and create a shape for each one (they will have 3 shapes).
- Remind students to have a variety of shapes, levels and sizes.
- Students practice their shapes and the transitions to go from one shape to the next. They have now created a phrase.
- Divide the students into groups of 4.
- Students teach their phrase to each group member and remember to teach each detail of that phrase.
- Each group will now have combined 4 phrases and developed smooth transitions resulting in a well structured choreographed dance piece.
- Students keep practicing their piece until they have perfectly memorized their dance.
- Each group performs their dance in front of the class to the music of Vivaldi’s Four Seasons.

#### **Closure:**

Questions for the class to consider after the dances have been performed:

- 1) Did anything surprise you about this activity? Why? Be specific.
- 2) How are the transitions in the dance piece similar to those in a play? Why? Be specific?

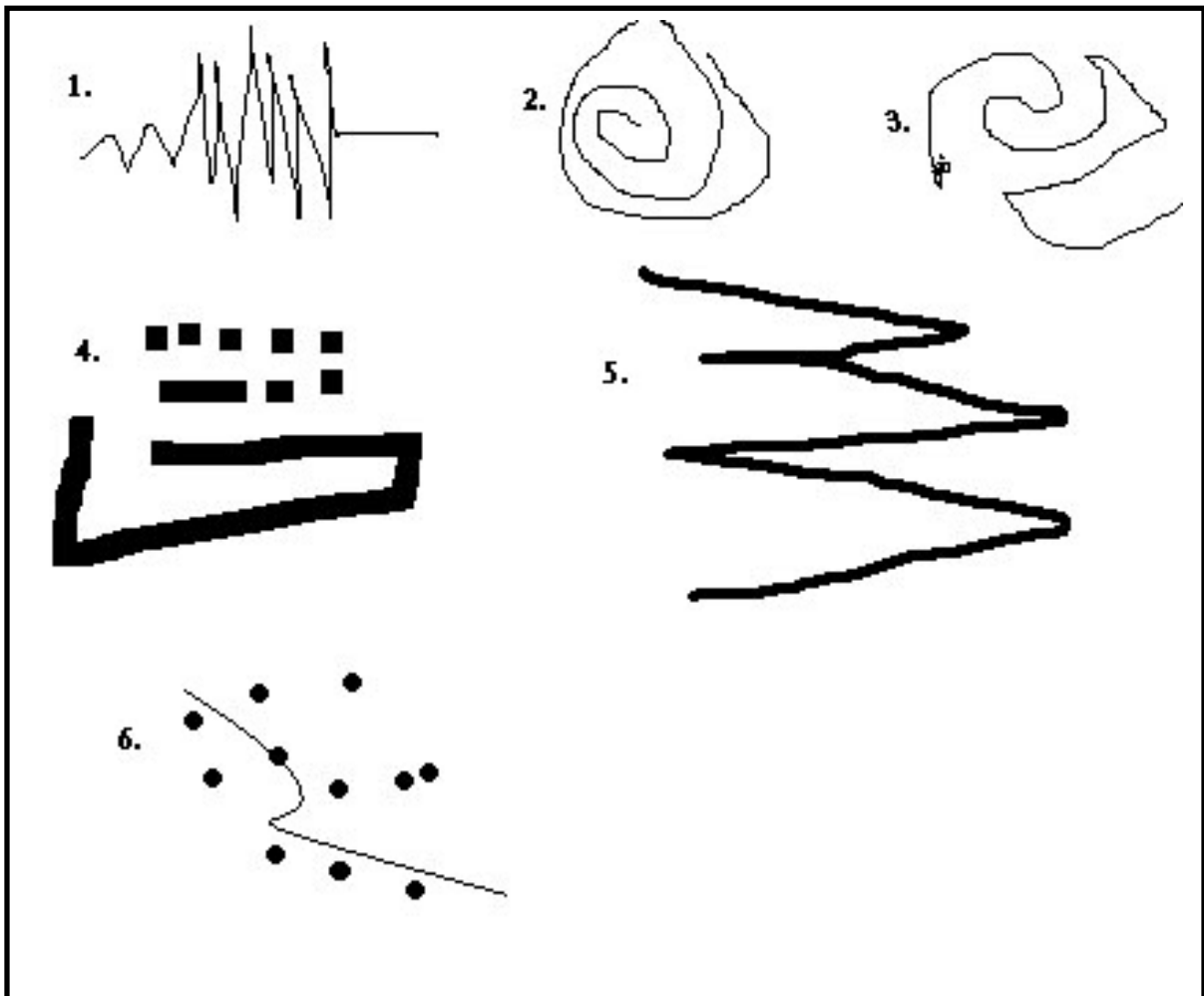
#### **Journal:**

- 1) What similarities are there between a dance piece and a play? Please explain in detail (based on class experience).

#### **Extension Possibilities:**

- Have one group perform their dance while only one member of another group performs. This creates a main character vs. chorus effect.
- Experiment and play other songs that share a similar theme to the dance piece(s).

Sound Exercise Source Material



## Pre Show Lesson Plan 2

### Setting the Stage

#### Expectations:

TH2.04: describe how the elements of a dramatic setting are affected by the type of drama, the identified theme, and the available performance space;

TH3.04: describe the social and historical contexts of the plays studied.

#### Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum

#### Warm-up:

- Lead group physical warm up, stretching body etc. and guided imagery relaxation.

#### Materials:

magazines

white paper (construction paper if available)

glue sticks

markers

#### Main Activity:

##### Set Design and the Court of Louis XIV

Louis XIV, also known as the Sun King, was one of the most respected French Kings. Everyone in Europe looked to him and France for what was said to be fashionable, elegant and worthy of artistic admiration.

The arts were highly esteemed in his court where aristocrats gathered to discuss them while socializing with painters, playwrights and musicians. Louis XIV's court was definitely the place to be including a "guest list" that would have today's Hollywood stars most envious.

To establish **The Red Priest's (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** setting go over the environment of the Palace of Versailles and the Louis XIV period.

The links below will take you to the official Versailles web site:

#### A day in the life of the Sun King:

[http://www.chateauversailles.fr/en/311\\_A\\_Day\\_with\\_the\\_Sun\\_King.php](http://www.chateauversailles.fr/en/311_A_Day_with_the_Sun_King.php)

#### Explanations and photographs of the gardens of Versailles:

[http://www.chateauversailles.fr/en/131\\_Gardens\\_and\\_groves.php](http://www.chateauversailles.fr/en/131_Gardens_and_groves.php)

- After the students have been briefed on the setting, distribute the following play synopsis on a piece of paper:

In the opulent court of Louis XIV, an aristocrat makes a bet with the King that his young wife can learn to play the violin in six weeks. Famed composer and virtuoso Antonio Vivaldi is assigned the task of teaching her. What follows is a sensuous and bittersweet story of unconsummated love set in counterpoint to the music of Italy's baroque master.

- Give the students 20 minutes to cut images out of magazines, draw etc. and create a set design and colour concept for **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)**.
- Each student presents their piece to the class articulating their artistic choices.

**Closure:**

1. Lead a discussion comparing and contrasting the design elements that are similar or dissimilar among the student presentations.

**Journal:**

1. What did you learn about the creation of mood and atmosphere through creating a set design concept? Be specific. Give examples.

**Extension Possibilities:**

Ask the students to create a contemporary Louis XIV court. The students think of where this “court” would be today, how would it look and who would be there. This allows for the students to feel a connection and ability to relate to the 18<sup>th</sup> century court life.

After attending **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** students discuss similarities between their choices and set designer David Boechler’s choices.

## Post Show Lesson Plan 1

### Script Analysis through Role Play

#### Expectations:

THV.01: demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of role playing and structuring dramatic works etc.

TH1.01: demonstrate an understanding of the theory of “willing suspension of disbelief” both as performer and as audience;

ANV.02: evaluate dramatic performances presented in the school and the community;

ANV.03: explain how dramatic arts represent, influence, and contribute to culture and society;

AN1.06: identify the artistic choices made by the actors, director, designer, and technicians in a dramatic production, and assess the effectiveness of these choices;

#### Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum

#### Warm-up:

Review with students the important elements of creating a whole group role-play:

- Maintaining focus throughout the role-play.
- Maintaining the physicality of your character throughout the role-play.
- Sustaining the vocal quality of your character throughout the role-play.
- Ability to take on, and commit to, your characters’ attitudes and beliefs.

#### Main Activity:

##### Interpreting the Script through Role Play

- Imagine that you (teacher and students) are part of the French aristocracy and are members of the Louis XIV court. You have just attended a performance of **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** and you are discussing the event at a “salon”.
- Going around the circle, each student (and teacher) introduces themselves and gives their name and a title. For example, “*I am Countess Joséphine de la Croix* (often the French nobility had surnames beginning with a “de la”).”
- The salon discusses the following topics as suggested. It is important that participants stay in role at all times:

**The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** is considered a period piece and is performed in one act. How does this structure affect the telling of the story versus a two or three act play?

**The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** is structured like a piece of music. There are five parts (scenes) within a movement and five movements in total. Why do you believe the playwright chose this specific structure? How else is the similarity to musical structure reinforced in the script and/or performance?

Both the Woman and Vivaldi characters speak to the Woman’s husband yet he remains unseen to the audience. Why do you think the choice to not have an actor play that character on stage was made?

The characters directly address the audience as members of the Louis XIV court. What mood does this inclusion of the audience create?

Comment on the following that Vivaldi says in the play, “*The ability to live in loneliness, in our own thoughts as tortured as they may be, is what allows us to practice for as long as it takes to achieve the skills that we strive for.*” How is this theme explored in **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)**?

Describe the acting style of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and how it was or was not reflected in **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** production you attended?

How was movement and non-verbal communication used to portray character, to define relationships among characters, and to communicate dramatic tension in **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)**?

How would primary and secondary sources of information serve to help the development of this original play?

Describe and discuss the conventions of 18<sup>th</sup> century theatre and how they have remained true or not true for the Tarragon production of **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)**.

**Journal:**

1. How did discussing the play in role affect your analysis of the Tarragon production? Be specific and give examples.

## Post-Show Lesson Plan 2

### Writing Exercise

#### Expectations:

TH1.01– demonstrate an understanding of the theory of “willing suspension of disbelief ” both as performer and as audience;

TH2.01– demonstrate an understanding of the control of volume, tone, pace, and intention in an expressive speech;

TH3.02– explain how dramatic forms may effectively communicate more than one perspective;

CRV.01– use various ways to sustain a role within a drama;

CR1.02– demonstrate an understanding of the element of risk in playing a role (i.e. adapting to challenges to personal and social beliefs);

#### Ontario Dramatic Arts curriculum

#### Warm-up:

#### Main activities:

##### Monologue writing

- Consider the following monologue from **The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)**. The Woman is describing the humanity within the symmetrical garden:

Woman: Consider...an orange. Delicate, fragile, juicy...exotic. What a lot of fuss has occurred that this orange thrived long enough to be picked so luxuriously by me this night. How many people’s lives have centered around the survival of this sole orange.

Seeds carried in carriages over miles and borders, wrapped in burlap, packed in trunks. Grown over years in a tightly regulated hothouse. Keeping the bloodline pure. Breeding one sturdy tree to another. Finally, the youngest and best seed, given to a trusted friend, passed from one man’s hand to another. Kept under glass. Moved to the sunbeam it craves so much after a rainy week. Moved inside. Moved outside. Somebody else carefully watering the plant. Wiping its leaves. Bringing it out for show when the important people come. Putting it away when the winds blow. Doing everything in their power to ensure it has no strength or hardiness of its own. Doing everything in their power to ensure that should it be neglected it will die. Indeed, if abandoned how will it live? What will it be? Can you get more human than that Maestro?

It is an absurdity. An anachronism. An orange...alone in the middle of France.

- Give a copy of the monologue to each student.
- In pairs, students discuss the monologue.
- Students are encouraged to consider the subtext of this monologue? Could the orange be a symbol for the Woman? Has she been bred and protected in the same manner as the orange? Like the lone orange does she represent a contrast within the geometric garden?
- Ask the students to write a monologue about someone prestigious, part of a modern “court” using a similar metaphor and write it in the first person.

- The teacher may also wish to assign a specific person to write about in order to create a framework for the students.
- Students workshop the monologue with their partner.

**Extension Possibilities:**

Students present their monologues in front of the class.