STEEL MAGNOLIAS  A REFLECTION BY PROF. LORI WOODALL-SCHAUFLER

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”- John 16:33

Interestingly enough, Steel Magnolias, by Robert Harling, is a play written by a devoted brother about a sister whom he admired and lost to tragedy, much like The Glass Menagerie was an ode to Tennessee Williams’ sister and served as a testament to the strength and fragility of his beloved. The story was written months after Harling’s sister passed away from complications of diabetes, and examined his sister and mother’s real-life relationship, and the coterie of women who were also involved in their lives. Harling did not set out to be a playwright- he was studying law and chose acting instead, and set out to Manhattan in 1977 to start his career. Though he was able to obtain some success in regional theatre and in commercials, his big break came after his sister passed when he decided to write her story. He began writing it as a short story, but realized a few pages in that it didn’t feel right, and it was a story that should involve no men and take place in a beauty parlor. Harling has stated, “When I was a kid, the mystique of the beauty parlor was that guys were never allowed. You didn’t know what went on in there, and they all came back different somehow. I realized this hermetically sealed environment would be the best place to have these women express their true feelings (Gun and Garden, 2017).” Most important to Harling was to write a play that preserved the memory of his sister, and the sacrifices she and their mother made.

The play originally opened Off-Broadway at the WPA Theatre in New York City, on March 28th, 1987. From there, the play has landed on Broadway, has had several tours and international runs, and was made into a very successful movie in 1988 featuring an A-List cast of Sally Field, Shirley MacLaine, Julia Roberts, Darryl Hannah, Olympia Dukakis, and Dolly Parton. Additionally, there was a TV pilot in 1990 launched by Harling starring Cindy Williams of Laverne and Shirley fame as M’Lynn, and, in 2012, a television film adaptation starring a stellar African-American cast featuring the talents of Queen Latifah, Alfre Woodard, and Phylicia Rashad.

For our CUW production, we discussed and reflected a great deal on the Scripture written above, as it pertains to the themes of the play and how we each grapple with the trials of life. Each of us, cast and crew, have lost loved ones and were able to relate to the ordeal of losing someone close to us. The play serves as a beautiful reminder of the importance of the relationships God has placed in our lives, and the importance of how we utilize our time. There will be trouble in our lives, but we can be at peace knowing that the pain can be overcome and is not forever. We hope you enjoy this story of friendship, triumphs, trials, and sacrifices of womanhood. As we have been saying in our Southern drawls, “Bless!”

— Prof. Lori Woodall-Schaufler, CUW Theatre
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CAST

Truvy ......................................................................................................................... Karina Seidl
Annelle .................................................................................................................... Talitha Marshall
Clairee ..................................................................................................................... Abigail Leurssen
Shelby ...................................................................................................................... Anna Thomasson
M’Lynn ..................................................................................................................... Angela Penterman
Ouiser ....................................................................................................................... Cassidy Mertzig

Three Solo Stylists Narratives (by Prof. Lori Woodall-Schaufler)
Jolene ....................................................................................................................... Carrie Robinson
Loretta ..................................................................................................................... Avrielle Schneider
Ella Mae ................................................................................................................... Giovanna Greco

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director/Producer ................................................................................................. Prof. Lori Woodall-Schaufler
Stage Manager ....................................................................................................... Katie Pellettiere
Asst. Stage Manager .............................................................................................. McKenzie Bub
Scenic Design Team/Construction ........................................................................... Alan Atwood, Michael Landers, Michael Havey, Dr. Brian Harries

Set Decorating .......................................................................................................... Michael and Sarah Havey
Propmaster .............................................................................................................. Sarah Havey
Lighting Design ....................................................................................................... Mike Van Dreser
Sound Design/Engineering .............................................................. Prof. Lori Woodall-Schaufler, Bradley Dunigan
Costume Design/Hair & Makeup .............................................................................. Prof. Lori Woodall-Schaufler
Costume Design Asst. ............................................................................................. Morgan Powell
Lighting Tech ............................................................................................................ Hannah Arvis, Caleb Wardenburg
Sound Tech .............................................................................................................. Christopher Dhuse
House/Box Manager ............................................................................................... Courtney Richards
PR/Marketing .......................................................................................................... Jeff Bandurski/CUW Marketing, Footlights
Social Media/Graphic Design .................................................................................... Cassidy Mertzig
Photography ............................................................................................................ Terry Clark-Bauman

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Lavonne Young, Lisa Stenulson, Ashley Stenulson, KC ACTF, CUW Marketing, CUW Duplication Center, Student Life, CUW Business Office, Acacia Theatre, Bob McPherson and Terry Ronsman, Steve Hibbard and CUW Maintenance, Campus Safety, and anyone else we’ve missed due to deadline!

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CAST BIOGRAPHIES

GIOVANNA GRECO
(Ella Mae, Stylist Monologue)
Giovanna is excited for her third show at CUW in this production of Steel Magnolias. She hails from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is a Freshman majoring in K-12 Choral Education. Her past favorite shows have been Little Women (Josephine), Cinderella (Fairy Godmother), and Man of La Mancha (Antonia). Firstly, she would like to thank God for the many blessings in her life, and for this wonderful opportunity. She would also like to thank the cast, crew, director, and production team for all of their hard work, and her mom and dad for all of their support. Special thanks to God for giving her the opportunity to share her talents and live her dream. Psalm 23

ANNA THOMACK
(Shelby)
Anna is a Junior at CUW and is studying Lutheran Secondary Education and Broad Field Science with a minor in Theology. She is so excited to be in this amazing and thoughtful play about resilient female relationships. Some of her favorite roles were playing Dolly Levi in Hello Dolly, and a step sister in Rodger and Hammerstein’s Cinderella. At CUW, she as been apart of the cast of Music Man, and a hot box dancer in Guys and Dolls. She would like to thank her parents and past directors and crew for supporting her through her theater experiences.

CARRIE ROBINSON
(Jolene, Stylist Monologue)
Carrie Robinson is currently a junior studying Political Science with a minor in Social Sciences. This is her fourth production at Concordia and was last seen on stage in ‘Robinhood’ as “Old Widow” put on by the Concordia Players. She would like to thank her mom and her friends for being so supportive and her biggest fans. “For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

CASSIDY MERTZIG
(Ouiser (Pronounced Weezer) Boudreaux)
Cassidy is super excited to be apart of her 4th show with the CUW Players! She is a sophomore music therapy major/theatre minor from Sheboygan. Past roles have included Angi the Ox and Alma Hix. She enjoys her job designing t-shirts and posters for the CUW Players and running the CUW Players Facebook page (which she encourages you to follow). She’d like to thank her family, her friends, and God for being with her through thick and thin. Romans 8:18

AVRIELLE SCHNEIDER
(Loretta, Stylist Monologue)
Avrielle is excited to play the strong and independent Loretta in her second onstage CUW production. She was last heard playing her oboe for Guys and Dolls (Fall 2018) and for Music Man (Fall 2017.) In her first onstage production, she played Rebecca from Our Town (Spring 2018.) She is an English and Biology major with a minor in Theatre and is from Gilbert, MN. Special thanks to cast, crew, parents, grandparents, younger siblings, and friends. She also thanks God and CUW for this opportunity and knows there will be more to come.
CAST BIOGRAPHIES cont.

ANGELA PENTERMAN (M’Lynn)
Angela is very blessed to be playing the role of M’Lynn in her seventh production at CUW. Her past favorite roles include Miss Adelaide in Guys & Dolls and Cathleen in Long Day’s Journey into Night. She also choreographed Much Ado About Nothing this past summer with the West Bend Theatre Company. Originally from Kaukauna, Angela is a Junior majoring in Graphic Design with a minor in Theatre. She would like to thank this tight-knit cast for all of their love and support through the laughs and tears of this show, Lori Woodall for being the greatest mentor a student could ask for, and the entire production crew for bringing this show to life. Special thanks also to her family and friends for all their support, and to God for this amazing opportunity and all of the blessings in her life. Psalm 27:14.

ABIGAIL LUERSSEN (Clairee)
Abigail is thrilled to be making her CUW Theatre debut in Steel Magnolias. She is a Sophomore from Antigo, WI, majoring in Elementary Education with a minor in English as a Second Language. Some of her favorite shows that she has participated in include Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, as well as, her favorite role as Morticia Addams in The Addams Family at Antigo High School. Abigail would like to thank the cast, crew, and director for their guidance and encouragement; her mom, dad, and brothers for their love and support; and God for giving her another great opportunity. She hopes you enjoy the show!

TALITHA MARSHALL (Annelle)
Talitha is delighted to return to the CUW stage in this production of Steel Magnolias after her debut as Sarah Brown in Guys and Dolls. She is a Junior from Riverview, MI majoring in English with a minor in Theatre. She would like to thank the cast, crew, director, production team, and all involved for their work on the show. Many thanks also to her family and friends for all their support, and to God for this amazing opportunity and all of the blessings in her life. Psalm 27:14.

KARINA SEIDL (Truvy)
My name is Karina Seidl and I am a freshman majoring in pre-occupational therapy. I’ve been acting since I was nine, (even though this is my first non-musical) and I am so excited to continue my theatrical career here at Concordia! My favorite roles have included Louisa Von Trapp, Lily St. Regis, Ms. Darbus, and the variety of different dance core roles I have played. Truvy has been such a fun character to develop and I am so thankful for this opportunity! If I’m not at rehearsal or doing homework, I’m probably writing spoken word, taking a nap, walking by the lake, teaching, or hanging out with my friends…but in all honesty I’m probably taking a nap. Thank you all so much for coming to see this show and I hope you enjoy being transported to Chinquapin with us to tell one of the most beautiful stories of empowered women empowering women. Soli deo gloria!
PROF. LORI WOODALL-SCHAUFLER (Director/Producer) 
Prof. Woodall is beyond thrilled to direct this wonderful play about female friendships and the joys and trials of womanhood. She has recently directed at CUW Guys and Dolls, A Long Day’s Journey into Night, A Raisin in the Sun, Willy Wonka, The Women of Lockerbie, and Hairspray. Prof. Woodall has taught at CUW since 2006, and has led the program since 2014. She has been a professional Theatre artist for 30 years, having worked in this region, as well as southern California and abroad. Spending time doing voice overs, TV/Film, singing, and drama ministry are also passions of hers. Special thanks to her family for their love and support, and to the young ladies she has had the pleasure of working with over the last few weeks who continue to inspire her and infuse her with their infectious energy and laughter. To God be the glory, always! Hope you enjoy the show! Philippians 4:4-8

KATIE PELLETIERE (Stage Manager) 
Katie is a Junior Secondary Ed English major with a Theatre minor. She is from Lake Villa, IL. This is her ninth show she has done at CUW. Katie would like to thank her family and boyfriend for always encouraging her to follow her dreams. She hopes you enjoy this magical world that has been created on stage.

ALAN ATWOOD (Set Design and Construction) 
Alan is currently on loan from Morning Star Productions, where he serves as Artistic Director. This is his fifth set design for CUW, having designed for Macbeth, Always a Bridesmaid and 12 Angry Jurors. When not producing shows at MSP or performing his one-man plays in prisons across Wisconsin he enjoys spending time with his wife, Mary Ellen, his four kids and three grandchildren.

MICHAEL LANDERS (Set Design and Construction) 
Michael has worked professionally as an actor since 1980. Since that time, he has also performed Stunt work theatrically and on camera. Michael has worked as a coordinator for stunts and stage combat. Other accomplished pursuits include directing and producing plays, TV and film. At CUW, he has directed Gift of the Magi, The Lion, the Witch and Wardrobe, and Aesop’s Fables. Most recently, he designed this past winter’s Robin Hood. His hope is to serve the Lord through writing plays and screenplays that he can someday direct and produce as well. Through all of these venues, He welcomes the opportunity to teach and share what he has learned.

DR. BRIAN HARRIES (Set Construction/Carpentry) 
Brian Harries is an Associate Professor of English at Concordia University, specializing in Shakespeare and early modern English drama. He served as dramaturge for Macbeth (2015) and assistant directed Midsummer Night’s Dream last summer. He also frequently contributes his carpentry efforts to Concordia Players productions.

MICHAEL HAVEY (Scenic Coordinator) 
Mikey is happy to be returning to CUW to work in the backstage arena. He was last seen on the Concordia stage in Guys and Dolls. He now happily works as tech director in multiple area high schools. Mikey would like to thank Prof. Woodall for the start of his theater obsession and his wife, Sarah, for supporting him everyday.

SARAH DENKE HAVEY (Propmaster) 
Sarah is glad to be back at Concordia helping out with the Theatre. She is a graduate of CUW (2017) and now works
professionally in technical theatre. She’s very excited for everyone to witness the amazing friendships that Steel Magnolias showcases on stage. You can see more of her work in the upcoming productions of The Wizard of Oz at St. Paul’s Lutheran Oconomowoc (May 15) and Peter and the Starcatcher at Lake Country Lutheran (May 4-6). Proverbs 3:3

BRADLEY DUNIGAN (Sound)
Bradley is excited and honored to be working once again with the CUW Players as a sound engineer. He has been working with the theatre program since 2015 providing Audio support for both Musicals and Plays at night while during the days working as an Audio and Video support Technician for Potawatomi Hotel and Casino in Milwaukee. Bradley has also worked in the Past with Acacia Theatre as both a sound designer and engineer. Bradley always enjoys coming back to work with the Theatre department at CUW as he is an Alum of the program and loves seeing the hard work all of the students put into the shows. To the Cast and Crew he would just like to say Break a leg!

MIKE VAN DRESER (Lighting Design)
Mike Van Dreser is a graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a BA degree in Music and a Minor in Theatre Technology. After graduation, Mike started his career with a small production company named Badger Sound and Lighting. In August 2005, Mike was hired by David Cecsarini to be the Master Electrician and Board Operator of Next Act Theatre. In 2011 he became the Resident Technical Director for Next Act Theatre. One of his first duties was to help construct and put into process the moving of a theatre company from one home into a temporary rental home and then into Next Act’s current home at 255 South Water Street. Since the move to Next Act’s new home, Mike has taken on even more responsibilities. Mike is still the Resident Technical Director, but also is now the Facilities Manager and Event Coordinator. When Mike is not working for Next Act, he enjoys working on his own Lighting Design and Sound Design company where he provides design work and consulting for both professional and non-professional theatre in and around southeastern Wisconsin. Mike also enjoys spending time with his family, including a wife and two wonderful kids. Mike is looking forward to many more show at Concordia University.
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GYPSY
HAIRSPRAY
HAMILTON
HELLO DOLLY
INTO THE WOODS
LES MISERABLES
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
MAMMA MIA
MARY POPPINS
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PIPPIN
RAGTIME
RENT
SWEENEY TODD
THE LION KING
THE LITTLE MERMAID
WICKED