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Volpone Program

University of Southern Maine Department of Theatre

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RUSSELL SQUARE PLAYERS PRESENT

an adaptation of Ben Jonson's play



THE FOOTNOTE

Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598) gives this definition for Volpone: "an old fox, an old reinard, an old craftie, slie, subtle companion, sneaking lurking wily deceiver." As a trickster, Volpone uses his wits to wrestle a fortune from the estates of fools. These gulls are so petty, we can share in Volpone's delight at his successes, at least until the knavery goes a bit too far and crosses the boundary of mischief into harm.

Ben Jonson, like the Volpone of his creation, teetered on the precipice of justice. In 1598, during the same month that his first great comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*, was produced successfully (with William Shakespeare playing a leading role), Jonson killed an actor, Gabriel Spencer from Philip Henslowe's company, in a duel. The normal punishment for such a felony was the gallows, but Jonson claimed "benefit of clergy," which at that time gave those who were literate immunity from the gallows. To prove his literacy, he read "neck-verse." He was punished instead by the confiscation of his goods and by the branding of his thumb. Later, due to his satires of influential men, he was threatened repeatedly with prosecution, but was protected by the intervention of his powerful friends and patrons.

Other character names in *Volpone* have animal meanings that suggest character traits or purpose in the play. Mosca, according to Florio, means "any kind of fly" and Beelzebub, the "Prince of Devils," is Hebrew for "the Lord of the Flies." The parasite Mosca is a stock figure hailing from Greek and Roman comedy, especially from the satires of Lucian, Horace, and Juvenal, in which legacy-hunters and flatterers were ubiquitous.



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The name Voltore means "a ravenous bird called a vultur, a geyre, or grap. Also a greedie cormorant." Corbaccio is "a filthie great raven." And from the 1611 edition of Florio's book, Corvino means "of a ravens nature or colour." The dove Columba, from the *commedia dell'arte* Columbina, and the hungry dog Canina round out the zoo of creatures that satirize the cynical attitude, which suggests that we may as well give up civilized affectations and become primitive as the animals again.

Volpone was one of the few Jacobean plays to continue playing until around the beginning of the eighteenth century, by which time its popularity was in decline to the extent that it would not draw an audience unless the companies padded "the bills with long entertainments of dances, songs, caramouched entries, and what not," as one writer during the Restoration period recorded.

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VOLPONE

*A free adaptation of
Ben Jonson's comedy*

Directed by
Minor Rootes

Scenic Design
Charles Kading

Costume Design
Su Brown

THE CAST

Mosca
Volpone
Voltore
Corvino
Corbaccio
Leone
Capt. of the Sbirre
Judge
Policemen

Volpone's Servants

Corbaccio's Servants

Voltore's Servant
Court Clerk
Canina
Colomba

Craig Foley
Percy Simon
Richard Petereit
Tim Wooten
Harold Withee
Matthew Power
William Gardner
William Temple
Randy Aromando
David Kivus
Don Jellerson
Richard Sebastian
Jane Sylvester
Mark Dube
Richard Thomson
Michelle Damato
Ed Needham
Lisa Bess/Cathy Counts
Sue Fernald

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Theatre Manager
Business Manager
Stage Manager
Master Carpenter
Assistant Costume Designer
Photographer

Costume Technicians
 Ginny Kazarian
 Jaye Churchill

Wardrobe Mistresses
 Nancy Vanier
 Peggy Connolly

Hair and Make-up Designer
 Jude Bernal

Costume Crew
 Margaret Millard
 Aimee Moffitt
 Amy Ray
 Peggy Connolly

Stage Crew
 Kim Gowen

Properties
 Jane Sylvester
 Howard Wood

Harold Withee
 Yvonne Smith
 Ingrid Horvat
 Stephen Price
 Cecile Metivier
 Paul Luise

Lighting
 Catherine Purington
 Tara-Lee Hofbauer

Sound
 Betsy Hutton

House Manager
 Lori Gage

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THE ACTING COMPANY

SU BROWN
 (Costume Designer)

Su teaches costuming at USM. She earned her bachelor of fine arts degree in drama production at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she designed costumes for many plays, including *The Petrified Forest*, *When You Comin' Back Red Ryder?*, *The Leader*, *Aria Di Capo*, and *The Loveliest Afternoon of the Year*. Her professional costume designing experience includes *The Sea Horse* at Stray Theatre, *Chapter Two* at Le Theatre, and *Godspell* at UART Summer Repertory, all in Tucson. A Theta Alpha Phi National Honorary student, Susan has won a number of awards and scholarships for her work, among them the Faculty of Fine Arts Creative Achievement Award, the Regents Fine Arts Scholarship, the Miller Foundation Scholarship, and the Halderman Scholarship. Susan studied at the Gallaudet College of the Deaf in Washington, D.C., as a special student in the fall of 1981, and since has been involved with performing arts interpreting for the deaf and deaf theatre workshops, as well as signing with "Loving Inspiration," a song signing group based at Gallaudet College. In 1983 at the American College Theatre Festival, Susan won a Meritorious Achievement

Award in Acting for her interpretation for the deaf. She won a similar award at the Arizona College Theatre Festival a year earlier.

RONALD A. AROMANDO JR.
 (Policeman)

Randy was last seen as Gus in *The Dumbwaiter* earlier in the season on the Russell Square Players stage. As the skittish Cornelius Hackel in last spring's Russell Square Players production of *The Matchmaker*, Randy delighted our audiences. A sophomore theatre major from Moody Beach, Randy performed as Simon Stimpson in *Our Town* and as Munro Murgatroyd in *Dirty Works at the Crossroads*. Randy was also seen on the RSP stage in the fall of 1983 as Lieutenant Rooney in *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

LISA BESS
 (Canina)

Lisa is primarily interested in scenic art. At Skowhegan High School, Lisa won set awards her sophomore, junior, and senior years from contest plays at the state level. She has worked on the sets of such plays as *The Second Shepherd's Play*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Life and Death of Sneaky Fitch*, *Rhymers of Eldritch*, *On Borrowed Time*, *The Rivals*, and has acted in some of these



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plays as well. Her favorite performance was in *Under Milkwood*, for which her school won the Ensemble Award at the Maine Drama Festival. At the University of Maine at Presque Isle, Lisa was scenic artist for *Guys and Dolls*, *A Thousand Clowns*, *Sleuth*, and *Of Thee I Sing*. Lisa worked on the set of *The Dumbwaiter* here at USM, where she is a freshman majoring in theatre and minoring in art. Besides interests in art and performance, Lisa enjoys cooking, sculpting, and weightlifting.

CATHY COUNTS

(Canina)

Cathy will be remembered by Russell Square Players audiences as Scraps, the patchwork girl in *Talking With*. In the 1970s Cathy performed with the Treehouse Players in *The Unknown Citizen*, *Who's Happy Now?*, and *Stop the World I Want to Get Off*. She has toured with the Storymime Players of Connecticut and the Children's Theatre

of Maine in such roles as Eeyore, Rabbitt, and/or Piglet in *Winnie the Pooh*, Koko the Clown in *The Clown and His Circus*, and Don Quixote in *Quixote!* for which she won the Cate Thomas Award for Excellence in Acting. This summer Cathy performed in summer stock with North Country Productions as the Woman in the two-role Sondheim musical, *Marry Me A Little*. An oral interpreter and published poet and fiction writer, Cathy was state coordinator of *Maine! Writers! Live!* reading series last year. With a bachelor of arts degree, *magna cum laude*, from USM, Cathy is working toward a second degree in theatre before combining the two areas of study in graduate school. Since re-entering the University last January, Cathy has been writing the promotional material for Russell Square Players and was publicity director for *The Most Happy Fella* this summer.

MICHELLE DAMATO

(Voltore's Servant)

Michelle is a freshman theatre major here at USM. Hailing from Perth Amboy, New Jersey, she moved to Maine at the age of 12 and graduated from Rockland High School, where she performed in several productions. For her feature role performance in *A New Sunrise*, Michelle won the Maine Drama Festival 1983 All Star Cast Award. Michelle has also performed with the Camden Civic Theatre. Her hobbies include poetry and gymnastics, a sport in which she was the state high school champion in her junior year in the floor exercise event. Michelle will be remembered by RSP audiences for her performance in *Talking With* as hammer-wielding Mary Titfer, owner of Tat the Cat.

MARK DUBE

(Corbaccio's Servant)

Mark collects everything from bottle caps and wrapping paper to poetry. From Topsham, Maine, Mark is currently a freshman art major, and is a recipient of the Steven Sylvester Theatre Award for outstanding achievement in art. Last spring Mark was the Cabman in *The Matchmaker*. He has also appeared as the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*, Rusty Charlie in *Guys and Dolls*, and Count Mauntjoy in

The Mouse That Roared. Mark likes to be original, to dream, and not plan too far in advance.

SUSAN FERNALD

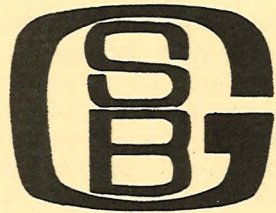
(Columba)

Susan, of Cherryfield, Maine, was elected to the All Star Festival Cast for outstanding performance in *The Good Doctor* last year. With the Narragagus High School Drama Club, she performed in *The Holy Terror*, *Twain by the Tail*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and in *Meet Me in St. Louis*. A freshman theatre major, Susan was a lighting technician for Russell Square Players first season production, *Victoria Station* and *The Dumbwaiter*.

CRAIG FOLEY

(Mosca)

Craig directed the season's opener, *Victoria Station* and *The Dumbwaiter*. A senior theatre major at USM, Craig performed as Chris in the Russell Square Players production of *All My Sons* and as Barnaby Tucker in *The Matchmaker* last season. Craig's other roles with RSP have included Valentine in *Twelfth Night*, the police officer in *Inspector General*, and Prince John in *The Lion in Winter*. Last year Craig wrote, produced, and directed two one-act plays at the Rafters on the Gorham campus of USM. Craig is co-



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chairperson of Russell Square Players Association. Locally he has performed in his one-man show as the clown in "Through the Eyes of a Clown." A proficient juggler, mime, and clown, Craig has perfected the five-ball juggle.

BILL GARDNER

(Captain of Police)

Bill earned his bachelor of arts degree in communications from USM and is working toward a second degree in theatre here. A native of Portland, Maine, Bill was involved in shows with the Children's Theatre of Maine. At Portland High School, Bill won the Sullivan Award for Track. Bill enjoys travelling and going to the theatre, and has a special interest in karate.

DON JELLERSON

(Volpone's Servant)

Don most recently performed as the Driver in Harold Pinter's *Victoria Station*, an American premiere. Now a sophomore at USM studying English and theatre, Don has also performed as the suitor in *The Marriage Proposal* at the University of Maine at Orono, as Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady* in high school, and, with Russell Square Players, the roles of Ambrose Kemper in *The Matchmaker* and Al in *The Most Happy Fella*.

DAVID A. KIVUS

(Policeman)

David feels that acting is an excellent outlet for usually unseen talents. A sophomore political science major from Lewiston, Maine, David is appearing for the first time on the Russell Square Players stage. At Bates College in Lewiston, David performed in *Peter Pan*, and at the Lewiston Community Theatre, he performed in *Oliver, Brigadoon*, and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. David's interests include sports and communicating.

ED NEEDHAM

(Court Clerk)

Ed is from Gorham and takes theatre classes at USM. RSP audiences saw him in *The Most Happy Fella* this summer. He has also been involved in several high school productions. Ed was in the All-State Chorus last year. He enjoys playing the piano, playing tennis, and is pursuing a career in acting.

RICHARD PETEREIT

(Vulture)

Richard, of Thomaston, Maine, has performed in such productions as *You Can't Take It with You*, *Brigadoon*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Love, Sex, and the I.R.S.* A second-semester freshman majoring in theatre at USM, Richard is appearing for the first time

with the Russell Square Players. Richard enjoys collecting comic books.

MATTHEW THOMAS POWER

(Leone)

Matthew is in his senior year at USM, where he is working toward a degree in theatre with a music minor. This past summer, Matt performed as the Man in the Stephen Sondheim musical *Marry Me A Little* at Thomas Playhouse in South Casco. Russell Square Players audiences will remember him as Frank in *All My Sons*. Matt also performed in the new musical *Personals* with RSP and with the Windham Community Theatre as Japeth in *Two by Two*, directed by David Goulet. A student of dance at Ram Island Dance Center, Matt regularly participates in medieval combat. He says his hobby is avoiding reality.

RICHARD J. SEBASTIAN

(Volpone's Servant)

Richard is a transfer student from the University of Maine at Presque Isle. A graduate of Winslow High School, Richard was involved in a number of productions there and won the United States Achievement Academy Speech and Drama Award. With the Waterville Summer Music Theatre, Richard performed in *Annie, Oklahoma*, and *The Student Prince*. Richard has also performed with Waterville Players and the Waterville Repertory Company in such musicals as *Carousel*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, *Brigadoon*, *Oklahoma*, *Camelot*, *Sound of Music*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. At UMPI, Richard was in the chorus and the vocal ensemble. He performed in such college productions as *Anything Goes*, *St. George and the Dragon*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The Music Man*, *Damn Yankees*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, and *The Matchmaker*.

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Richard handled props for RSP's *Talking With*. Richard is a junior now at USM, majoring in theatre and minoring in voice.

PERCY J. SIMON

(Volpone)

Percy earned his master of arts degree in philosophy from the City University of New York and is currently completing his Ph.D. dissertation. A member of the USM Philosophy Department faculty, Percy is also executive director of the television show, "Kaleidoscope," and business manager of the Children's Theatre of Maine. Over the years he has been involved as an actor in four films with Warner Brothers and Danny DeVito Productions. He has also been employed as a radio announcer, playwright, and actor in professional theatre. In Maine, Percy has acted for two years with the Children's Theatre of Maine and in the Portland Stage Company's production of *The School for Wives*. Russell Square Players audiences will remember him as the lecherous old man in *The Music Man*, as Hucklebee in *The Fantasticks*, and as Joe Keller in *All My Sons*, which was selected for regional competition by the American College Theatre Festival last season. A native of New York City, Percy is a martial arts instructor with a fifth degree black belt.

JANE B. SYLVESTER

(Volpone's Servant)

Jane is a senior theatre major. She transferred from St. Edward's University and Southeastern Louisiana University, where she made the Dean's list every semester. Jane has enjoyed extensive production experience at Mary Moody Northen Theatre in Austin, Texas, working on *Butterflies Are Free* with Yvonne DeCarlo, *Our Town*, *Lady's Not For Burning* with Sandy Dennis and Noel Harrison, *Roar of the*

Greasepaint Smell of the Crowd, *Chapter Two* with Marian Ross, *Bells Are Ringing*, *Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Sticks and Bones*, and *Caligula* with Leonor Nimoy, to mention only a few. A winner of Chanson d'An, an international competition in France for L'Alliance Francaise, Jane also won the Austin Music Award for best original composition, "Home for the Weekend." Besides performing and involvement in other aspects of theatrical production, Jane composes songs, plays flute and piano, dabbles in poetry, and lifts weights. Most recently, Jane was stage manager for *Talking With*, Russell Square Players last production. Jane is on the Dean's list of *Who's Who in American Students*.

WILLIAM REED TEMPLE

(Judge)

William is a freshman at USM, majoring in theatre and minoring in classics. A native of Portland, Maine, William has appeared in a number of productions at Deering High School, including *Runaways*, *Red Peppers*, *Open and Shut Case*, *God, Museum*, and, at Catherine McAuley High School, in *Finian's Rainbow*. William was All State Football middle linebacker last year and won the Unsung Hero Award on Thanksgiving Day. A stand-up comedian, William was second speaker in humorous interpretation at the Deering High School Invitational Speech Festival. About himself, he says, "Yes, that's right, I am a YOUNG COMEDIAN. Thank you too much."

RICHARD THOMSON

(Corbaccio's Servant)

Richard is on exchange this semester from King Alfred's College in Winchester, England, his hometown. A sophomore majoring in theatre and minoring in television, Richard served as language advisor and operated the dumbwaiter

for RSP's season opener of Harold Pinter plays. He also was assistant director for *Talking With* and ran sound for that production. In high school, Richard performed in *Othello*, *The Three-penny Opera*, and *The Good Doctor*. At King Alfred's College, Richard performed in *Camino Real*, *The Woman, Lovers*, and *The Way of the World*.

HAROLD WITHEE

(Corbaccio)

Harold is currently touring with the Children's Theatre of Maine as the Emperor in *The Emperor's New Clothes*. From Anson, Maine, Harold is a sophomore theatre major and German minor at USM. Last year Harold performed in *Miss Julie*, as Jonathan in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and as Rudolph the waiter in *The Matchmaker*, all with Russell Square Players. At Carrabec High School, Harold performed in *Spoon River Anthology*, as Judas in *Godspell*, as Sgnarelle in Moliere's *Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and as Petruchio in *Taming of the Shrew*, for which he was selected for All-State Cast in 1983. While in high school, Harold was also in the KV Music Festival, went to Boy's State, and won third place in the "Voice of Democracy" competition. In the summer of 1981, Harold apprenticed at the Lakewood Theatre (now the State Theatre of Maine) where he was a member of the cast of *South Pacific*. Harold is box office manager this season at Russell Square Players, and is interested in pursuing a career in theatre management.

TIM WOOTEN

(Corvino)

In real life, Tim is a field representative for the Maine State Employees Association, a public employee labor union. Currently, however, he is on a leave of absence until January, during which time he is taking courses here at USM in fiction writing and playwriting. As a student at USM in the late sixties and early seventies, he appeared in *The Crucible*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Fantasticks*, *The Good Woman of Szechuan*, *The Poor of Portland*, *The Beggar's Opera*, *Ethan Frome*, *Carnival*, and *The Unknown Citizen*. He was also a member of USM's national award-winning forensics team. In addition to his stage experience at USM, Tim has done summer stock, radio, television, and film. All in all, Tim has more than 100 stage roles to his credit, starting at the tender age of seven in his native California. He currently lives in Randolph, Maine, where his activities include distance running, writing poetry, fiction, and plays, and single-parenting his 10-year-old daughter, Sarah.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, a play that I have reread every other year for the past two decades, has had a magnetic pull on my subconscious. Recently its theme of greed has surfaced in my conscious thought most blatantly. No longer can I disguise this vice as "needing enough to be financially comfortable" or "having enough money to support charity properly." No, I discovered that I want to become rich—lavishly, luxuriously, sinfully *rich*. This desire has become for me a detrimental obsession.

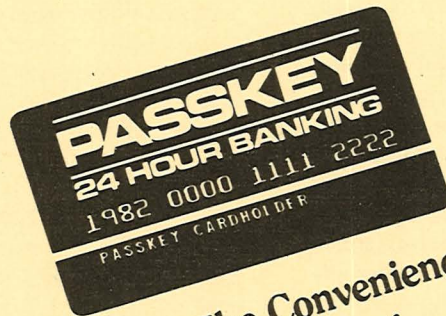
Now, it is no sin for a young person to desire wealth. Rather, this yearning can be the motivating factor that propels one into the world of commerce. Such thinking can be an asset for someone young.

Even when one reaches the middle-aged years, the wish to be rich is not pernicious and is still accepted by the general public as a positive attribute. After all, in this uncertain world, one never knows when financial disaster may strike. The accumulation of riches is merely insurance for one's impending old age.

But if one reaches the pinnacle of financial success, with present comforts and the means for all future needs provided, yet still wishes for more wealth, then that once applaudable attribute becomes a sin. No matter how one describes or rationalizes it, greed is greed is greed.

Comedy's purpose is to ridicule, for through ridicule the culprit realizes his or her foibles. Being laughed at has a cleansing effect on us, purging us of our follies and deviances, so that we are no longer the subject of humor. Recognizing my greediness, I turn to directing the play *Volpone* in hope of cathartic self-improvement. This action might reduce my drive for riches, thus allowing me to be better satisfied with my life's situation.

Following this performance, I shall be cleansed. Greed will have been vanquished, never again to infiltrate my thoughts and sabotage my contentment with my modest lot in life. My wishes will be simple: enough money for meeting my needs and granting me comfort in old age, and—oh, yes—just enough millions left over so I can become a famous philanthropist.



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