



THE DMTC MOCK PRODUCTION PROJECT PRESENTS

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

By Stephen Adly Guiris

The Detroit Mercy Theatre Company's Mock Theatre Project created student teams to create a production in a collaborative event, all while being mentored by professional guest artists. Over the course of 6 weeks, students worked within their teams to perform research and determine a cohesive design approach to the production. They were mentored through the process of creating written work, production paperwork, and final designs. Students have the opportunity to submit their final products to the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

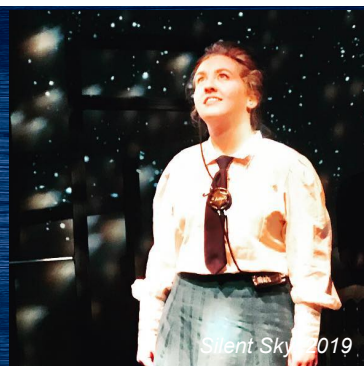


Stage Manager Jade Sibert
Lighting Designer. Taylor LaPorte
Sound Designer. Preston Cornelius
Dramaturg Jeremy St. Martin

Professional Guest Artist Greg Trzaskoma
Set Design & Technical Director Alan Devlin
Lighting Design Mentor Seth Amadei
Costume & Dramaturgy Mentor. Mary Elizabeth Valesano
Stage Management Mentor. Sarah Drum
Department Chair & Managing Director Greg Grobis

The Department of Performing Arts trains students to develop their intellectual, ethical and practical skills for a creative future. Along with five core concepts, Detroit Mercy Theatre Company is the praxis for student education and training.

DISCOVERY
COLLABORATION
SKILLS
MENTORSHIP
FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES



NOTES FROM THE DRAMATURG COMPILED BY JEREMY ST. MARTIN

THE NEW TESTAMENT GETS A NEW YORK TRIAL

What if the world's most famous sinner got due process for his infamous crime?

In Stephen Adly Guiris's play *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, the titular character gets his day in court. And through the process of his trial, we learn that morality and spirituality are not always black and white.



Guiris wrote the play--which held its premiere in the early spring of 2005--for New York's Off-Broadway LAByrinth theatre company. Philip Seymour Hoffman directed the work and the cast featured formidable talent with the likes of Sam Rockwell (of *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind* fame) playing the titular role, Callie Thorne (*Rescue Me; Necessary Roughness*) in the role of the persistent defense attorney, Fabiana Aziza Cunningham, and Eric Bogosian (writer and star of *Talk Radio*) as the weaselly (but tempter-tantrum prone) Satan.

Guiris wrote the play as a critical response of God's treatment to Judas Iscariot. In an interview with *The Telegraph*, Guiris states: "[Judas's condemnation] threw me a big jolt. I was [8 years old] but I remember thinking, well, if I can forgive someone, why can't God, who was supposed to be all loving. That was the beginning of the end of my Christian experience." And because of his examination of the story of Judas's avalanching action to Christ's death, we are treated with a New York version of the major players from the Gospel.

And no one is safe this time around. Everyone's dirty laundry is aired, judgments are questioned. Even more modern historical characters are given the "Oooh! What's about to happen here?" treatment, with the likes of Mother Teresa and her connections to the tyrannical dictator Jean-Calude Duvalier, as well as Sigmund Freud's 12 year long "research" on the medicinal effects of cocaine. You never quite side with anyone. Even Satan's ideas about humanity and God make you question everything you understand about the scripture and the message therein. Our idea of the saints and apostles are torn open and exposed as gritty, real, vulgarity spewing, pop culture...well...humans.

The setting mostly takes place in the courtroom known as “Hope” which is in the larger Manhattan Borough of Purgatory (yes, Purgatory). “Hope” is stark in contrast to the actual meaning of the word. The majesty of the courtroom is being stripped and perhaps made into a parking lot at some point. Alan Devlin’s set is complete with a celestial/infernal off ramp, which holds a Biblical brilliance, and yet makes you think of the courtroom as a stop along the way to judgment. Get ‘em in, put ‘em on the stand, get out. Taylor Laporte’s lighting takes contrast from warm colors to brilliance to shocking vulnerability, giving further accentuation the humanity of the characters. Preston Cornelius’s sound design throws out the Baroque era sacred stylings of Handel and Vivaldi, and replaces it with the dirty classic rock akin to The Stones.

We now relate to these characters in a Thursday prime-time sort of way. Which leads us to Judas. Through flashbacks (stunningly lit by Laporte), we see Judas’s moments of fragile humanity that lead us to this place. You can almost hear the Law and Order “chunk chunk” as we cut to moments of Judas’s life where you have to (gladly) empathize with him and his ultimate crime. By the end, we are witness to a broken man wracked by his choices which are motivated by love.

Guirgis pulls no punches in making these characters flawed, even though fantastical. *Last Days* is an epic story of justice, muddy morality and the less pretty side of love. Guirgis took a long-standing question of faith and spray-painted it beautifully, New York style.



Adrian Martinez, Yul Vázquez, and Jeffrey DeMunn at the Public Theatre



The Group Theatre, 2017



Almeida Theatre, 2008