



The
Foreigner





Erika LaVonn, Aaron Cabell, and Scott Rollins in this season's magical production of A Christmas Carol. Photo: Kerton Yeager

In the early 1960's, The Wells Theatre shared in the general decline of downtown Norfolk by converting to an X-rated movie house and occasionally staging live Burlesque acts. The backstage area was walled off from the auditorium and the stage itself became The Jamaican Room, one of Norfolk's most infamous gin mills and brothels.

~ On average, seven professional actors from all over the country are hired for each production. They make Norfolk their home for approximately six weeks, staying in local hotels and in apartments rented by Virginia Stage Company. VSC's company manager makes their travel arrangements, takes them to the grocery store, and assures that their living accommodations are of the best quality. During one production at Virginia Stage Company, the company manager makes an average of 40 trips to the airport.

~ Virginia Stage Company enjoys a relationship with The Governor's School for the Arts' theatre department. Students of this program serve as production and administrative interns and are hired as followspot operators, members of the run crew, and front-of-house staff.

~ To make stage blood, the properties master mixes a concoction of peanut butter, Karo syrup and dye, so that the substance does not stain the costumes. On stage, ice cream is usually portrayed by mashed potatoes.

~ "Greeking" is the process through which labels, UPC codes and other identifying marks are removed from items that appear on the stage. This is done when the product name is not germane to the production or dates the prop or set.

There used to be an unwritten rule that January and February were the best months for producing the heaviest dramas. The thinking was, we assume, that no one wants to go anywhere when it's cold, so it doesn't much matter which plays you do...

Well, we're going to warm away your winter chills today with Larry Shue's rollicking farce, *The Foreigner*, and we hope you'll be back for *The Old Settler*, next month's warm and funny play about two sisters and their life together in 1940's Harlem.

We're grateful you're here and wish you the very best of everything in the New Year.

Best regards,

Charlie *Steve*

Charlie & Steve

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

VSC PLAYBILL

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Marcia Gay Harden appeared in several commercial films including *Miller's Crossing* and *Spitfire Grill*. She can be seen in Disney's *Flubber* opposite Robin Williams. In 1988, she appeared as La Presidente de Tourvel in Virginia Stage Company's production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

Young Evan Bonifant starred as Timmy in VSC's 1996 production of Lanie Robertson's *A Penny for the Guy*. He has a new film called *Breakout* and has a starring role in the Blues Brothers sequel, *Blues Brothers 2000*, with Dan Ackroyd and John Goodman.

The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

VSC operates under agreements with the League of Resident Theatres; Actors' Equity Association; and the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, the union of professional directors and choreographers in the United States. VSC is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for non-profit theatres.

ssdc The Director and Choreographer are members of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. An independent national labor union.

The Foreigner

in order of appearance

"Froggy" LeSueur	Allen Lewis Rickman
Charlie Baker	Ken Bolden
Betty Meeks	Georgia Southcotte
Rev. David Marshall Lee	Jeremy Davidson
Catherine Simms	Connan Morrissey
Owen Musser	Don Carter
Ellard Simms	Brian Quirk
<i>Act One Scene One</i>	<i>Evening</i>
<i>Scene Two</i>	<i>The following morning</i>
<i>Act Two Scene One</i>	<i>Afternoon, two days later</i>
<i>Scene Two</i>	<i>That evening</i>

There will be a 15-minute intermission.

Production Assistant	Shelly Payne
Assistant Scenic Designer	Kathleen L. Martin

VSC extends a very special thank you to Town Point Centre, UNUM Life Insurance Company of America, and Divaris Real Estate for providing the rehearsal space for this production.

SPOTLIGHT ON KATHLEEN L. MARTIN, PROPS MASTER



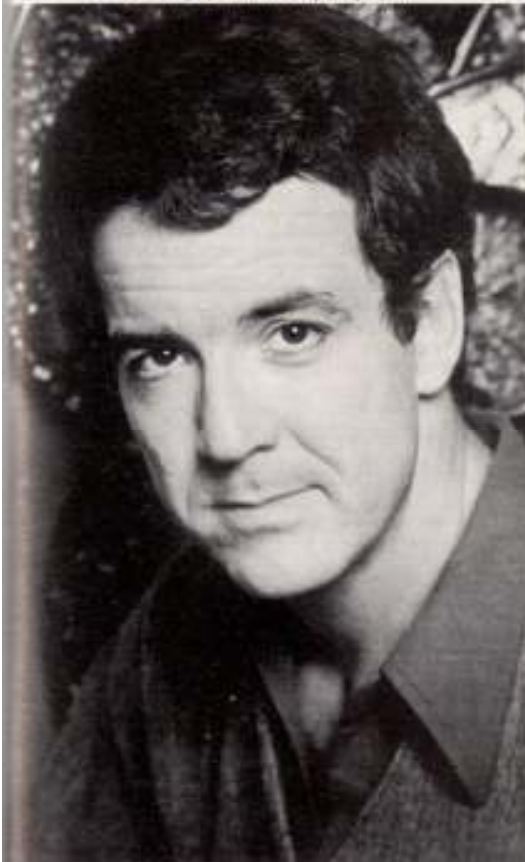
What are properties?

The best way to define properties, or props for short, is to use the example of a new house. If you bought a house, everything you would need to bring into that house to furnish it is considered a prop: carpets, furniture, lighting fixtures, dishes, blankets, food, even your pets!

What does a properties master do? My job is to buy, beg, borrow, rent, or build all the props for the show. I create a "shopping list" and the set designer designs and provides detailed drawings for most of the props. During the rehearsal process, a director may also make additions to the list based on the script and on the actors' movements and actions on the stage. My greatest responsibility is to make sure all the properties are in keeping with the style or period of the play. Consequently, the greatest asset any

props master can have is an awareness of the world around them, especially within their local community—knowing where to find props is one of the biggest challenges of my job. Whenever a prop has to be built, we become carpenters, upholsterers, stitchers, painters—whatever it takes to complete the job. I spend a great deal of time browsing in antique stores and researching in the library, because I want everything in the show to be absolutely believable.

What is the hardest part of your job? What's your favorite part? The hardest part of my job is interpreting what people mean—quite often the set designer may not be entirely specific about the details of a prop, and it is left for me to research and design, and without a concrete image, the possibilities are nearly limitless. My favorite part is when the show is finally up and we have an audience; I'll sit in the back of the house and wait for someone to laugh, cry, applaud, react in some way to what they are seeing onstage... I love it when the curtain goes up and the audience applauds—that makes me know we've done our job and made a difference, and that's the greatest feeling in the world. 11



This Shue Fits

Larry Shue's two most unforgettable plays, *The Nerd* and *The Foreigner*, are still produced throughout the world, and if not for his tragic death at age 39, he might well have gone on to become one of America's leading comic playwrights.

Born in New Orleans in 1946, Shue discovered theatre at a very young age. His father taught drama at Tulane University, and Shue went on to graduate from Illinois Wesleyan University's theatre arts program, where he studied design, directing, and stage history and performed in college productions.

Shue began his career as an actor. In 1972, he performed with the Harlequin Dinner Theaters of Washington, D.C., and Atlanta. In 1976, he joined

Milwaukee Repertory Theater as an actor, where he appeared in such productions as *High Time*, *Fighting Bob*, and David Mamet's *Lake Boat* and *The Frog Prince*.

While there, Shue began writing plays himself. Milwaukee Rep produced the premieres of *The Nerd* (which is not the same story as the film featuring comic Steve Martin), *Wenceslas Square*, *The Foreigner*, and his autobiographical comedy *Grandma Duck Is Dead*. He died in a commuter plane crash in 1985 while in the midst of preparing for his Broadway debut in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. He had also recently completed the screenplay of *The Foreigner* for Disney Studios (which was never filmed).

Steve Martin, managing director of Virginia Stage Company, worked with Shue while with the Chicago Theatre Project. "He was continually reworking his scripts. I remember several days before our premiere of Shue's *Wenceslas Square*, he came bounding into the theatre at 3 AM asking for feedback on some changes that he made. He acted out every change while I and the rest of the crew just stared in awe at his talent."

"Larry's great energy and generosity are what I remember most," says Charlie Hensley, VSC's artistic director, who was a fellow actor with Shue during their theatre days in Atlanta. "Funny, resourceful, intuitive—he loved the theatre and he loved to hear audiences laugh."

This energy is reflected in Shue's work. His farces are highly theatrical and depend heavily upon the artistry of the actors. His scripts give the actors a lot to do and ask that they interact often with the audience. This combination creates the rare, hilarious comedy for which Larry Shue is known.