

AUDITION INFORMATION!!!

BLOOD WEDDING

By Federico Garcia Lorca

10 Women, 9 Men (with doubling)

Where: the James G. Severns Theatre

When: Sunday, September 29th, at 3 p.m.

What: please prepare a monologue of no more than 1 ½ to 2 minutes in length, written in heightened language (Chekhov, Eliot, Williams, etc.). You may perform a poem if you wish—just treat the poem as a monologue, so that you're playing a character who has an objective, and who is fighting for something.

Callbacks: Monday 9/30 at 6:30 p.m. in the Severns—wear clothes for movement. You will also be asked to sing a bit.

Please note: there are plenty of non-singing and non-dancing roles!

Blood Wedding

SYNOPSIS

The play is a poetic, lyrical tragedy about doomed love, fate, and revenge, set against the Spanish landscape of Andalusia. The story concerns a Bride and Bridegroom preparing for their wedding day, but lurking in the background is another man, Leonardo, who once courted the Bride and belongs to the family that killed the Bridegroom's father and brother long ago. We soon discover that the Bride and Leonardo are still in love and long for each other, but the wedding day fast approaches. Leonardo, who is in a loveless marriage, steals away with the Bride, who goes willingly with him on what was to be her wedding night. The entire village pursues the lovers through the woods as a shadowy collection of abstract characters comment on the chase like a Greek chorus. The play ends in death, who actually appears on the stage in the form of a Beggar Woman, and the survivors are left to mourn the loss.

At the heart of the play is a sense that it is better to die than to live an empty life where love is absent or where one is not allowed to feel passion. Characters feel the strong pull of duty to family ties, but they also burn for love. "Leonardo" means: leo-lion, ardo-longing or burning. From the beginning of the play, a veil of inevitability seems to hang over the action, but it moves forward inexorably to its fateful end as we see the Bridegroom heading toward the same violent death suffered by his father and brother.

The play at times resembles realism, but then sharply turns into a theatricalized piece that combines elements of Expressionism, Symbolism, and Surrealism. The action will be staged in a dance-like fashion with musical accompaniment (from a guitar, violin, and viola) that creates a moody atmosphere of the flamenco tradition.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

(In order of appearance)

MOTHER—this character is the mother of the Bridegroom and she is no stranger to suffering. The only way she can endure the loss of her husband and eldest son is to mourn them everyday. Mourning is a cloak she wears, but the role shouldn't be played with deflated sadness; instead, mourning empowers her and gives her the strength to survive. She relishes suffering and abandons herself to it. Her husband and son were murdered long ago by the Felix family (whom she hates), and when they died, so did a part of herself. She lives now for her son, the Bridegroom, and to keep alive the memory of the dead. She is an archetypal character, representing duty in motherhood that denies the self. For the Mother, married life is: "a man, a woman, and a wall three feet thick."

THE BRIDEGROOM—he is young, wealthy, handsome, strong, and secure. He feels that his life is just beginning with his engagement to a young, wealthy, and beautiful woman. He takes pride in his ingenuity; he has just purchased a vineyard, difficult to cultivate on such arid land, but he does not doubt his ability to make it thrive. He loves his Mother and teases her when she enters into a rant on the destruction of knives; he does not allow himself to become upset at her obsession with the murders of his father and brother. He is the archetypal son with a strong arm, brave heart, and commitment to expanding the family's wealth.

NEIGHBOR/GUEST 2/MOURNER—this functional character appears in Scene 1 for expository reasons, and serves also as a foil to the Mother. She also is a Spanish matron, and although she lives closer to the Bridegroom's family home than anyone else, she rarely visits. She provides valuable information, and appears during the wedding scenes as one of the guests. She participates in the wedding dance. She also appears in the final scene as a silent mourner, donned in black.

MOTHER-IN-LAW—she is the mother of Leonardo’s wife, and therefore his Mother-in-Law. She is another archetypal mother, but she is a happy one, and sings a strangely dark lullaby to her infant grandson. She has a tense relationship with her son-in-law and tries to stay out of his way as much as possible, but shows him deference when she can. She also appears at the wedding celebrations and in the final scene of mourning.

WIFE—She is wife to Leonardo, long-suffering, dutiful, gentle, and proper. She is probably a very good Catholic girl, and she is cousin to the Bride. She married Leonardo some time after the Bride rejected him, and she clearly loves her husband. She’s deeply hurt by his indifference and is sensitive to any mention of her cousin’s former relationship with her husband, but when the situation calls for her to be strong, she is able to assert her rights as a wife. She sings and dances to her infant son, who is held by her mother.

LEONARDO—he is young, handsome, brooding, bitter, and passionate. He is frequently seen riding his horse across the Andalusian plains as fast as can be, and he seems to be a man possessed with longing. Leo means lion, and –ardo refers to longing or burning, and the choice of name for this character only in the whole play indicates that he is at the center of the tragedy. Leonardo belongs to the Felix family, who is responsible for murdering the Mother’s husband and son. The Felix family is not as well off as the Bridegroom’s family, but the work is the same—plowing, planting, harvesting. Leonardo is in love with the Bride, and although he is married (to her cousin), he cannot forget that the Bride rejected him years ago because his prospects for wealth were slight.

THIRD GIRL—she is a young girl who lives near Leonardo and his Wife. She is the youngest of the three girls, and, like the other two, is very excited by the prospects of the wedding celebration. She is excitable and curious, and loves to know everything going on. She and the First and Second Girls sing and dance at the wedding, and act as a kind of Greek chorus in Act 3, as they roll “a great skein of wool.”

MAID—she is maid to the Bride and has been since the Bride was very young, but she is not old herself; she’s in her mid-to-upper 30s. She is responsible for dressing the Bride every morning, fixing her hair, picking up after her, and she enjoys a certain degree of intimacy with the Bride—up to a point. The class system is entrenched in this land, so she knows her place, but also feels her charge’s moods sometimes as if they are her own. She mothers the Bride at times, and puts up with her irritability. The Maid becomes very lyrical after the wedding; she has her own poem/song.

FATHER—he is father of the Bride and descends from an old and respected family line with significant wealth. He lost his wife when their daughter was just a small child, perhaps an infant. He is the quintessential, archetypal Father: protective, proud, and ambitious for his daughter’s future. But he’s also had to make do without his wife and the land he possesses does not yield easily to farmer’s work. So he’s worked hard all of his life and is anxious that that his daughter should reap the benefits.

BRIDE—she is young, beautiful, and accustomed to a certain standard of living that made her reject Leonardo’s proposal of marriage seven years ago. She is now almost 22 and her sense of family duty is strong, so she plans to marry the Bridegroom and unite their two great families. But she is still in love with Leonardo. She vacillates between detesting the Bridegroom and wanting to be married to him immediately, so as to seal her fate and squelch this longing that she feels. In the end, she cannot deny her passion for Leonardo, and she runs away with him on her wedding night.

FIRST GIRL—she is the oldest of the three Girls, but just as excited at the prospect of a wedding. She sings and dances prior to and after the wedding, and with the other two girls, acts as a kind of Greek chorus in Act 3, as they roll a skein of red wool.

SECOND GIRL—she is older than the Third Girl, but younger than the First. She also is starry-eyed at the prospect of a wedding, and like the other two girls, dreams of the day when she herself will be married.

YOUNG MAN 1/FIRST BOY—he is a companion to the Bridegroom and joins him in the chase after the Bride runs away with Leonardo. He also sings and dances prior to and during the wedding.

YOUNG MAN 2/GUEST 1—he is a friend to the Bridegroom and appears in the wedding scenes and during the chase in 3:1. He might also be playing one of the Woodcutters.

WOODCUTTERS 1, 2, & 3—these are a kind of Greek chorus that comments on the chase scene during Act 3. They speak all in verse and will be given very stylized movements with their axes. They are sort of mystical figures who represent the people of the land.

MOON—this abstract character also speaks entirely in verse that is very image-laden. The actor playing this role will be bare-chested, unless I cast a woman in the role, in which case, she will be in a rather see-through garment. This actor should also be comfortable with movement or physical expressiveness to match the heightened language. It is possible that this actor will also be moving with a lighted orb of some kind.

BEGGAR WOMAN—this character is an abstraction of Death and Lorca actually thought she should not be listed among the Cast of Characters. She is of the earth and tied to the Moon's presence as a harbinger of discovery and destruction. She is not evil, but she appears when death is imminent and feeds off of the energy of bloodshed.