

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF  
Carol Sorgenfrei's

# **Cordelia Victorious**



**October 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24,  
1982**

Kennedy Theatre  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Honolulu, Hawaii

THE UNIVERSITY THEATRE  
presents, in celebration of the University of Hawaii's 75th Anniversary,  
the world premiere of

# Cordelia Victorious

A Noh Cycle by  
**CAROL SORGENFREI**

Directed by **TERENCE KNAPP**  
assisted by **Barbara Fitzsimmons**  
Choreographed by **ONOE KIKUNOBU**  
assisted by **Onoe Kikunobukazu**  
Music composed and played by **ROBERT C. HERR**  
assisted by **Michiko Ueno**  
Scene design by **RICHARD G. MASON**  
Costumes and masks designed by **SANDRA FINNEY**  
Lighting and Technical Direction by **MARK BOYD**

The characters of the cycle (in order of appearance):

THE CHORUS .....	Paul Lux (leader) John Musgrove Lynn Sager Katherine Edwards
KING LEAR .....	Terence Knapp
CORDELIA, Lear's daughter .....	Teviot Pourchot
THE KING OF FRANCE, her husband .....	Tom Peterman
GONERIL, Lear's daughter .....	Shanti Reinhardt
REGAN, Lear's daughter .....	Didi Leong
KOKEN .....	Cheryl Kohashi Newton Koshi

The time and place of the play is set in the misty past of Celtic and Druidic Britain. The action is played through a cycle of scenes in traditional Noh style and traces the consequences of Lear's expulsion of his daughter, Cordelia.

- Scene 1     The God Play
  - Scene 2     The Warrior Play
  - Scene 3     The Woman Play
  - Scene 4     The Madperson Play
  - Scene 5     The Demon Play
- There will be one intermission.

NOTICE: Smoking is not allowed in the auditorium, nor may photographs or recordings of any kind be made during the performance.



## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES:

CORDELIA VICTORIOUS was preordained to be written in the Noh form of the unified cycle of plays, in this case scenes. Miraculously, instead of forcing the story into an alien form, I discovered the truth in something I have often taught my students of Asian theatre, that formal technique allows the greatest freedom of creativity. It is a great paradox, but absolutely true. The form was not stifling, but it did mold the way the story would be told. For example, I had to eliminate the Fool (with awful regret!) and Gloucester's subplot. Also, I had to cut the number of characters to a minimum and find out what the essence of the play I wanted to write was all about. Then, I had to cope with the all-pervasive presence of Shakespeare. Now Euripides is a great writer, but how many of us can quote from his Medea? Whereas Lear is closer to our own culture and consciousness, and many people can quote from the play easily, others do so without knowing the source. But for me, I had to find a way to escape "bardolotry" without losing the power. For example, how can you do a play about Lear's daughters and avoid the storm on the heath? But surely no one would be foolish enough to rewrite it. The Noh, however, freely quotes from well-known poetry and other literature, so that the form itself gave me the freedom to utilize Shakespeare's words when necessary.

What I have tried to do, then, is to write a new play with a new theme, related to, yet different from Shakespeare's; in some ways a commentary on KING LEAR. Inspired by the original, as Shakespeare himself was in almost every play inspired by another, pre-existing source, I have attempted to make a statement about the redeeming power of love, and the need for all humans to accept the ancient, traditionally feminine, principles which are too often trampled by "reality."

I hope that I have created a world which is fresh and exciting, and that this play can perhaps cast new light on the work which inspired it. And I certainly hope that Terence Knapp has enjoyed directing and acting in it. Few playwrights are as privileged as I have been when it comes to who will direct the first production of a new work. I feel honored by the care and love lavished on this production, by the faith of a director who constantly encouraged me in a positive way, and by the very rare opportunity I have been given. Without Terence Knapp's perceptive and miraculous suggestion that I might enjoy writing this play, CORDELIA VICTORIOUS would never have existed. It is therefore to him that the work is dedicated.



## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Carol Jay Sorgenfrei's **MEDEA: A NOH CYCLE BASED ON THE GREEK MYTH** was produced in 1980 at Kennedy Theatre. Directed by Terence Knapp and choreographed by Onoe Kikunobu, **MEDEA** was highly acclaimed by the Honolulu reviewers. This lyric dance drama won the Sherrill C. Corwin-Metropolitan Theatres Playwriting Award in 1975. **MEDEA** won the American College Theatre Festival New Play Award in Washington, D.C. Other plays she has written are: **THE DEATH OF CRISTOBEL** (1967), **TO PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE** (1973), **MAGIC PEARL** (1973), and **DIVORCE! DIVORCE!** (1976).

Sorgenfrei's plays have been influenced by her Japanese studies. She studied Kabuki technique with Leonard Pronko, Kyogen technique with Don Kenny and Mansaku Nomura, and Noh technique with Akira Matsui and Nagayo Kita. Her Ph.D. dissertation topic, at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was "Shuji Terayama: Avant Garde Dramatist of Japan."

At present, Sorgenfrei is an Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of California, Los Angeles, specializing in directing, playwriting, Japanese theatre, and dramatic literature, history, and criticism. This past summer, she was nominated for a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend by the University of California, Los Angeles. Also, in the past year she judged the Samuel Goldwyn Playwriting Awards and directed **TANGO** by Mrozek. Carol Jay Sorgenfrei's plays in progress are: **THE SHINING PRINCESS**, a musical play for children and adults; and **THE ORCHID GROWER'S WIFE**.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Both the Noh of Japan and the tragic theatre of Europe grew out of religious education and ritual, drawing from primitive legend and myth. In this cycle, **CORDELIA VICTORIOUS**, Carol Sorgenfrei combines the formal structure of Noh with the ancient tale of King Lear. She was inspired to quote from Shakespeare's titanic tragedy by the time honored practice of integrating Buddhist sacred writings and sutras.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of California, Los Angeles, for the grant awarded to Ms. Sorgenfrei enabling her to write this cycle especially for us; to my assistant Barbara Fitzsimmons for her 'eye and ear'; and to Kikunobu *sensei* and her associate, Onoe Kikunobukazu for their partnership in evolving this production. It is my pleasure to be performing, after an absence from the Kennedy stage of four years, with Teviot Pourchot. Teviot has returned, especially from her travels in the Pacific and Southeast Asia, to follow her triumph as Medea (1980), by gracing this production as Cordelia.