

Further thanks to Dennis Carroll and Natasha Owen for their support.
Co-sponsored by the Department of Theatre and Dance and the Office of
Women's Research at the University of Hawaii at Manoa

Suggestions for further reading

Alexander, John. *Catherine the Great: Life and Legend*. Oxford University Press, 1989.

De Madariaga, Isabel. *Catherine the Great. A Short History*. Yale University Press, 1990.

Catherine II, *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great*. Ed. Dominique Maroger. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

And Forthcoming:

Dawson, Ruth. "Catherine the Great: Playwright of the Anti-Occult." *Thalia's Daughters: German Women Dramatists from the 18th Century to the Present*, ed. Susan Cocalis, and Ferrel Rose in collaboration with Karin Obermeier. Tübingen: Francke/Narr Verlag, 1996.

O'Malley, Lurana. "Masks of the Empress: Masks of the Empress: Catherine the Great's Polyphony of Personae and Her Play *Oh, These Times!*." *Comparative Drama*, Spring 1997.

———. "The Monarch and the Mystic: Catherine the Great's Strategy of Audience Enlightenment in *The Siberian Shaman*." *Slavic and East European Journal*, 41.2 (Summer 1997).

———. *Two Comedies by Catherine the Great. Empress of Russia. Oh, These Times! and The Siberian Shaman*, translated and with critical introduction by Lurana O'Malley. London: Russian Theatre Archive, Gordon and Breach/Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997.

For an international e-mail discussion of Catherine II, join the Ekaterina-L discussion sponsored by Professors Dawson and O'Malley; send an email message to the address LISTSERV@HAWAII.EDU containing this one line: SUBSCRIBE EKATERINA-L <your name>.

**A Reception will follow the reading.
You are all invited to stay, partake, talk, and enjoy.**

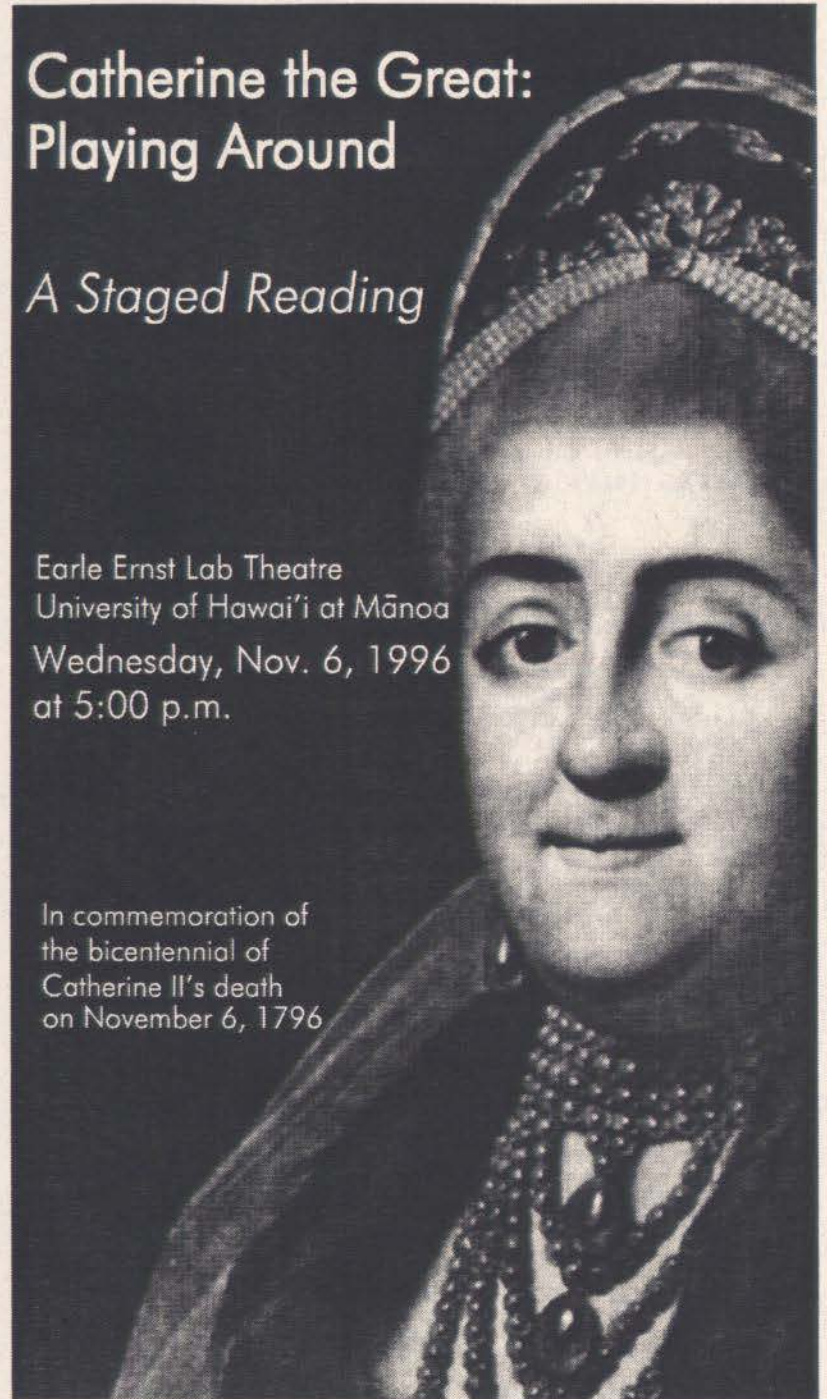


Catherine the Great: Playing Around

A Staged Reading

Earle Ernst Lab Theatre
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Wednesday, Nov. 6, 1996
at 5:00 p.m.

In commemoration of
the bicentennial of
Catherine II's death
on November 6, 1796



"Kate the Great" (1934) Cole Porter

Singer Stephanie Conching

Catherine II as narrator Lurana Donnels O'Malley and Ruth Dawson

Catherine Eden-Lee Murray

Great Catherine: a Thumbnail Sketch of Russian Court Life in the XVIII Century (whom Glory still adores) (1913) George Bernard Shaw

Shaw David Farmer
Catherine Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak
Edstaston David Farmer

Interlude (1968). Nikolai Erdman, trans. John Freedman

Catherine Stephanie Conching
Khrapovitsky David Farmer

Behind the Mirror (1994) Elena Gremina, trans. Melissa T. Smith

Matushka (Catherine) Eden-Lee Murray
Countess Bruce Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak
Sashenka Robb Bonnell

Oh, These Times! (1772) Catherine II of Russia, trans. Lurana Donnels O'Malley

English-Language World Premiere

Mrs. Marvel Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak
Milkstop Robb Bonnell
Notshallow David Farmer
Mavra Stephanie Conching
Khristina Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak
Mrs. Sanctimonious Eden-Lee Murray

The Siberian Shaman (1785) Catherine II of Russia, trans. Lurana Donnels O'Malley

English-Language World Premiere

Stage directions Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak
Bobin David Farmer
First St. Petersburg Stephanie Conching
Second St. Petersburg Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak
Amban Lai, the Shaman Robb Bonnell
Butler David Farmer
Prelesta Stephanie Conching
Ivan Pernatov Robb Bonnell

Off-Broadway as both actress and director and for a year was a member of the Polish Mime Company. While completing her MFA in Acting and Directing, she had the privilege of studying with and performing under the direction of Ying Reo Chung and performing principal roles in the first American production of *Nicholas Nickleby*. In Hawaii she has won Best Actress Po'okelas for Amanda in DHT's *Private Lives* and for her portrayal of Maggie in MVT's *Dancing at Lughnasa*. She is currently playing Amanda Winfield, the mother, in the ASATAD production of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*.

Lurana Donnels O'Malley was recently promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance. She teaches courses in Western theatre history, theatre research, and directing. She received her Ph.D. in 1991 in Theatre History and Criticism from the University of Texas at Austin, with a dissertation on early twentieth-century Russian versions of commedia dell'arte and has published many articles and reviews of the contemporary theatre in Moscow. Dr. O'Malley is currently at work on a book about Catherine's drama.

Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak is Professor of Theatre and Director of the Asian Theatre Program in the University of Hawaii at Manoa Department of Theatre and Dance, where she received her Ph.D. As a graduate student, she frequently acted in Kabuki and other Kennedy Theatre productions, and both acted and directed for Kumu Kahua. While carrying out the field research for her doctoral dissertation, she became the first non-Chinese to perform Beijing opera in the People's Republic of China. Since that time she has written and published on the performance structure and aesthetics of Chinese theatre, and has translated and directed one modern and two classical Beijing operas at the University of Hawaii; at Chinese invitation, both classical productions were given extensive performance tours of mainland China. Dr. Wichmann-Walczak is the first honorary (and first non-Chinese) member of the Chinese Theatre Artists Association.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Slides	Sean T.C. O'Malley
Posters, flyers, and cards	Julia Gilman
Catherine's costume	Sandra Finney
Lighting	Lisa A. Kramer
Stage Manager	Lynn Mayekawa
House Manager	Cindy Lee Meiers
Staging	Lurana Donnels O'Malley
Program notes	Ruth Dawson
Suggesting and locating the Cole Porter song	Virginia Bennett, William Drummond
Pianist	Blake T. Kushi
Recorded music	Sean T.C. O'Malley
Script typing	Sharla Horiuchi and Tricia Nakamura
Music stands	Byron Moon and Thomas Bingham
Reception	Anna Vdovenko on behalf of the Russian Club

performance. At her request, Voltaire promised to write a play with no love interest in it for her "regiment of Amazons." Although he did not write the play, he did contribute vigorously to Catherine's reputation as an enlightened monarch.

Viazemskii, Alexander (1727-1793)

A year after she came to power, Catherine appointed this previously unimportant man to suppress rebellious peasants assigned to factory labor in the Urals. When he was successful, she appointed him to the most important position in her government. With the title of Procurator-General, he essentially headed the internal affairs of the empire, including justice and finance. When it appeared that a court trying ⇒Pugachev in Moscow might engage in public tortures (which conflicted with Catherine's carefully nurtured image in the west and perhaps also with her convictions), she sent Viazemskii to conduct the trial and limit the numbers and kinds of punishments of the insurgents.

The above notes are indebted to the sources in the recommended reading list and to the program notes to a performance of *Behind the Mirror* directed by Melissa Smith at Youngstown State University in 1995.

Who's Who of This Evening's Performers and Organizers

Robb Bonnell, having had nearly all of his credits rejected after transferring to UHM from the mainland, is in his fifth year at the University of Hawaii as a senior majoring in English. He finds the Department of Theatre and Dance to be a refuge from the unsympathetic ignorami found in many positions of influence over him.

Stephanie Conching is a graduate of UH Theatre and Dance and currently works with the improv theatre troupe "Loose Screws." When not performing she can be found in the education department at Hawaii Opera Theatre.

Ruth P. Dawson, Director of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, received her Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literature from the University of Michigan. Her research concentrates on eighteenth-century Germany, including the emergence of feminist thought at that time and the texts and tribulations of the period's women writers. In the course of researching a book chapter about women dramatists of the eighteenth-century, she became interested in the four plays that Catherine wrote in Russian but also had translated, performed, and published in German. In a more contemporary mode, Professor Dawson is also engaged with cross-cultural feminism and with a colleague led a workshop last year at the NGO Forum of the Beijing UN Fourth World Conference on Women.

David Farmer is currently playing Tom in the ASATAD production of *Glass Menagerie*. He has appeared as Clov in the Solange and Associate's production of *Endgame* and in the Ernst Lab Theatre production of *Leanna*. His recent directing credits include *Uncle Vanya* for S&A, as well as *Think of a Garden* and *Medea* for Kumu Kahua. Educated at Carnegie-Mellon University and the Neighborhood Playhouse, David is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, Hawaii Chapter.

Eden-Lee Murray, after graduating cum laude from Harvard University, gained her Actor's Equity card with the Missouri Repertory Theatre, then worked

Who's Who of Names in the Script

--plus one murdered husband, one scholarly explorer,
and two lovers important in Catherine's life.

Spellings follow the usage of Catherine's biographer John Alexander where available.

⇒ means this person is also in the Who's Who here.

Catherine II, Empress of Russia (1729-1796)

Reigned 1762-1796. Born Sophie Auguste Friederike von Anhalt-Zerbst, she was chosen as an aristocratic picture bride for the future Russian tsar, Peter III, with whom she led for eighteen years a miserable and often distant marriage. During this humiliating period, she turned to books for education and several lovers for entertainment. As her dull-witted (and unfaithful) husband's prospects for assuming the throne increased, so did the possibility that he would divorce her. Soon after he came to power, she overthrew him and was able to consolidate her hold on the throne when he was murdered. Catherine was an intelligent and energetic ruler who obtained the cooperation of the aristocracy in her reform of the provinces (1775) and the Charter to the Nobility (1785). While she mainly avoided conducting war with her European neighbors, she succeeded in seizing vast lands from the partitions of Poland and conquest of the Crimea. She sponsored the geographic and ethnographic domestication of the multiethnic Russian Empire, aided by scholars such as ⇒Pallas. She encouraged learning and the arts, and was herself a prolific writer—in Russian, French, and, in short passages, German—of government documents, personal correspondence, and about two dozen plays and operas. On November 6 (by the Old Style calendar), 1796, she died from a stroke, attended by Dr. ⇒Robertson. For the history of an apocryphal version of the cause of death, one that inflicts scurrilous misogynist punishment on Catherine as a woman for her accomplishments, see John Alexander's biography in the list of recommended reading, pp. 332-335.

Bruce, Praskov'ia, née Rumiantseva (1729-86)

As the daughter of Catherine's first lady-in-waiting when she arrived in Russia, and exactly the same age as the German princess, Praskov'ia became one of Catherine's longest lasting friends. She sometimes appeared in the plays produced at court by amateur performers--other productions of course used professional actors. When the mature empress began a series of affairs with young men, Praskov'ia, now Countess Bruce, "supposedly served as Catherine's 'éprouveuse' or tester of male capacity, competing with ⇒Potemkin to control the succession of favorites" (Alexander 215). Catherine, who wrote several incomplete memoirs, dedicated one version to the Countess.

Diderot, Denis (1713-1784)

Man of letters, philosopher, and chief editor of the multi-volumed digest of enlightenment knowledge that Catherine devoured in her program of self-education, the *Encyclopédie*. In 1773, the year after his work on the *Encyclopédie*

was finished, Diderot accepted Catherine's invitation to visit her in Saint Petersburg, where he stayed for five months, accompanied by Baron ⇒Grimm.

Elizabeth, Empress (1709-1761)

Reigned 1740-61. Daughter of ⇒Peter the Great and ⇒Catherine I, she assumed the throne by imprisoning a male tsar who was still a child. She built the extravagant Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, to which Catherine's Hermitage became an extension. To marry her nephew, the heir apparent, ⇒Peter III, Elizabeth selected Catherine.

Grimm, Friedrich Melchior, Baron (1723-1807)

As a German living in Paris and devoted to everything French, Grimm produced a newsletter about French culture for the nobility of all Europe. He met Catherine while accompanying ⇒Diderot to St. Petersburg. The lifelong friendship of the Empress and the connoisseur is preserved in their frequent and friendly letters. When Catherine discovered that her correspondence with ⇒Voltaire had been published (after his death--and without her permission), she wrote to Grimm asking him either to burn her letters to him or to ensure that they would remain undiscovered for a century.

Khrapovitskii, Alexander Vasilyevich (1749-1801)

Her secretary and sometime confidant kept a close record of his days with the empress. He wrote a comic opera with her in 1789 that was first staged at the Hermitage Theater.

Lanskoi, Alexander Dmitrievich, "Sashin'ka" (1758-1784)

Catherine's "favorite" from 1779 until his sudden death in June 1784. When they met, he was a twenty-three-year-old officer of the horse-guards and Catherine was the fifty-year-old empress. When Sashin'ka died, perhaps of diphtheria, Catherine suffered a severe depression, which was alleviated, she later said, by reading and writing.

Orlov, Grigorii (1734 -1783)

Military officer and Catherine's lover from about 1760 to about 1772. He and a brother helped her plan and conduct the coup against ⇒Peter III and organized Peter's murder. When Catherine let it be known that she might consider marrying Orlov, she found out how perilous remarriage would be to her, unleashing plots to depose her in favor of her son and perhaps dangerously rousing her husband's ambitions for status.

Pallas, Peter Simon (1741-1811)

As a young German scholar he was appointed Professor of Natural History in St. Petersburg in 1767. The next year he set off on a six year expedition along the Volga, through the Urals, and across Siberia to the Chinese border, charting the lands and peoples of the empire. His account of his observations formed the basis for Russian anthropology and may have been a source for Catherine's depiction of the "Siberian" shaman in her play.

Peter I, the Great (1672-1725)

Ruled 1689-1725, modernizing Russia and westernizing some of it. His second wife, who ruled after him until her death (1725-27), was Catherine I, which is why ours tonight is II.

Peter III (17 -62)

The not so great husband who ruled for six months in 1762 and whom Catherine's supporters murdered to put her safely on the throne. He probably fathered Paul I, Catherine's eldest son. The boy's birth meant that Catherine, as the heir apparent's wife, had fulfilled her principal duty of producing a future tsar, but also that once the child came of age dissidents could try to use him to replace her. She disliked and distrusted Paul. When he finally got the throne two hundred years ago today, he prohibited women from holding it in the future in Russia.

Potemkin, Grigorii (1739-91)

The "Prince" referred to in *Behind the Mirror*, he was an intelligent and ambitious official from the minor nobility who became a war hero, then, for about two years, Catherine's lover, and finally an important minister in her cabinet. An able administrator, extravagant, generous, and very unpredictable. Chief architect of many projects and illusions, including the legendary "Potemkin villages" that adorned Catherine's official tours of her empire.

Pugachev, Emel'ian (1740/42-1775)

A Cossack from the Don and deserter from the army, of obscurely humble origins, Pugachev was an illiterate but wily conspirator who, playing on the dangerous gender politics that allowed a woman on the throne only if no man was available, posed as Catherine's husband ⇒Peter III returning to claim his crown. Leading a horde of 20,000, he provoked fierce counterattacks from Catherine's army. Defeated in 1774 and captured a month later, Pugachev was tried, convicted, and, in Moscow on 10 January 1775, beheaded.

Rogerson, John Samuel (1741- ?)

The Scottish doctor was Catherine's physician from 1769 until her death. His treatments included drops, purges, and, of course, bleeding, all common in the eighteenth century. While Catherine endured the procedures, she had little faith in their efficacy and chose to lampoon doctors in several of her plays. She did, however, champion getting inoculated against smallpox.

Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet) (1694-1778)

A brilliant genius of the Enlightenment, Voltaire suffered imprisonment, beatings, and exile for his ideas, while also thriving as a man of business, letters, and philosophy. He was simultaneously reviled and admired by kings of France and Prussia, whose feelings he returned. When Catherine, soon after assuming the throne, wrote a major treatise on reforming Russia in the Enlightenment spirit, Voltaire became her ardent admirer and avid correspondent. In 1772, the year in which she wrote *Oh, These Times!*, she reported to him on the school for girls she had established in St. Petersburg and the instruction of the girls in theatrical