

Cygnet Productions

Presents



Xingu, by Edith Wharton
Originally produced for
Cygnet Radio Theatre, April 2021

Directed by Louanne Moldovan

Cast:

Mrs. Ballinger.....	Vana O'Brien
Mrs. Plinth.....	Wendy Westerwelle
Mrs. Leveret.....	Nancy Benner
Miss Van Vluyck.....	Luisa Sermol
Laura Glyde.....	Jocelyn Seid
Mrs. Roby.....	Patty Flynn
Osric Dane.....	Linda Hayden

Crew:

Line Producer.....	Carol Ann Wohlmutter
Music Composer.....	Rody Ortega
Engineer.....	Mike DiNapoli
Editor.....	Damian Staffon

Setting

New York City, circa 1916.

Running Time

One hour and five minutes, not including the conversation with Jay Dickson, PhD, English and Humanities professor at Reed College.

Tickets

Xingu is free to stream, thanks to generous support from the Ronni S Lacroute Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation.

Synopsis

Mrs. Ballinger is one of the ladies who pursue Culture in bands, as though it were dangerous to meet alone. To this end she had founded the Lunch Club, an association composed of herself and several other indomitable huntresses of erudition. The celebrated novelist Osric Dane has been invited to be present at the next meeting, and all the Lunch Club members are “fluttered by the thought of exchanging ideas with the author of ‘The Wings of Death.’” All save one...

***Xingu* Production History—Cygnet Productions**

In 1999 Cygnet Productions produced a well-reviewed reading of this knowing, ironic short story. Four of the women who acted in the 1999 productions have returned, in their original parts: Nancy Benner, Patty Flynn, Vana O’Brien, and Wendy Westerwelle.

About the Author

Edith Wharton (1862 – 1937) was born, raised, and trained in New York society, and had little patience for pretention. She had a sharp eye and a sharper pen, with a keen sense of irony and the skill to put it all down on paper. Her novel *The Age of Innocence* garnered the first-ever Pulitzer for Fiction given to a woman, and she was nominated for the Nobel Prize three times.

Her first published book was *The Decoration of Houses* in 1897. She published an additional 10 nonfiction books on architecture, gardens, interior design, and travel; 15 novels, seven novellas, eighty-five short stories, and at least three books of poetry. She’s probably best known as the author of *The Age of Innocence*, for which she earned the first Pulitzer Prize for Fiction awarded to a woman. Her other most popular works include *Ethan Frome* and *The House of Mirth*. She had an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Yale University, and a full membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1927, 1928, and 1930.

Many people think “*Xingu*” is her best short story. As noted in the blog *A Striped Armchair*, “It’s a sharp satire of the intellectually pretentious that is as relevant today as it was one hundred years ago. And it’s funny enough to hold its own against a Wilde play!”

Producer/Director

Louanne Moldovan

Louanne Moldovan is the founder and artistic director of Cygnet Productions, the “literary cabaret” of Portland, Oregon. Cygnet’s mission is to produce entertaining, stimulating works of literature with social consciousness; the company presents dramatic adaptations of literary works as well as producing plays written for the stage.

She is the winner of an Oregon Book Award for Drama in 2004, as coauthor of *Vitriol & Violets: Tales from the Algonquin Round Table*.

She directs for companies including the Civic Theatre Guild and Artists Repertory Theatre. She also directs talent on-set for TV commercials and films.

In Los Angeles, Louanne worked for 20th Century Fox Films, was an acting member of the Company of Angels Theater, and writer and co-leader with the Women's Writing Project at the Los Angeles Theatre Center. She served as an artistic supervisor of the Imagination Workshop, a group of performers working with psychiatric patients to facilitate a creative experience.

For Louanne, theatre is the capricious, beloved stepsister to her divine daughter, Alex.



Guest Conversationalist

Jay M. Dickson

Jay M. Dickson is Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College. He received an A. B. in English and American Language and Literature from Harvard University, and his Ph.D. in English is from Princeton University. Professor Dickson has taught at Reed College from 1996 to 1999 as a Visiting Assistant Professor, and then since 2001 on a permanent basis. From 1999 to 2001 he was Assistant Professor of English at the University of Tennessee—Knoxville, where he was awarded the John G. Hodges Excellence in Teaching Award.



At Reed, he teaches in Humanities 110 and Humanities 220; he also teaches courses in the English department on British 20th- and 19th- century fiction; encyclopedic fictions; fictions of English India; and memory and desire in literature.

He has published on such modernist figures as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, E. M. Forster, and Lytton Strachey. His most recent article, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know: Ulysses and the Enkuklios Paideia," appeared in the Fall 2017–Winter 2018 issue of the James Joyce Quarterly. Currently, he is at work on a monograph entitled “Katherine Mansfield and the Limits of Modernist Emotional Expression.”

Cast

Nancy Benner, Mrs. Leveret

Nancy Benner is so grateful to Louanne Moldovan for coaxing her out of her very long retirement from the theater! Nancy did many shows in Portland in the 80s and 90s; her last performance was the musical comedy *Hats for triangle productions!*, directed by Don Horn. Other notable shows include *Slow Dance on The Killing Ground*, *Emergency Room*, *Angry Housewives*, *Baby with the Bath Water* and *Juicy Tomatoes*.



Nancy: “This radio performance of ‘Xingu’ is a reprise of the live show performed for Cygnet in 1999, and how fun it is to bring Mrs. Leverett to life again!”

Patty Flynn, Mrs. Roby



In the early nineties, Patty was a founding member of Book-It Repertory Theater in Seattle, Washington. Book-It’s mission is to bring literature to life through performance with all of the author’s words: narrative, descriptive, inner thoughts, and dialogue. In addition to acting, Patty has taught workshops for Book-It, teaching youngsters and adults how to script and perform a short story – serving the ultimate goal of promoting literacy. While living in Paris, Patty taught workshops for the Ecole Jeannine Manuel in association with Word for Word Performing Arts Company’s annual tours around France.

When Director Louanne Moldovan said she was resurrecting Edith Wharton’s story, *Xingu*, for Cygnet Radio Hour with four of *Xingu*’s original (1999) cast (which included Patty)] and three new, brilliant actors, P. Flynn did a mental handstand and three cartwheels!

“This news, along with the vaccine, is enough to keep me buoyant for a good year or so,” she thought. Patty’s head shot is by Caitlin Forster Photography.

Linda Hayden, Osric Dane

Linda Hayden received her actor training at Illinois State University, Columbia College and The Dell’Arte School of Physical Theatre. She’s worked with Seattle Rep, Empty Space, Portland Center Stage, Artists Repertory Theatre, and others; she was most recently seen in Profile Theatre’s “Sweat” in the role of Valerie.

She’s delighted to finally work with the wonderfully talented Louanne Moldovan and such a fantastic group of artists.



Vana O'Brien, Mrs. Ballinger



Vana's been a Cygnet company member from the beginning. Just a few of Vana's performances with Cygnet include *Xingu* (the 1999 production as well as 2021); *Cupid Unzipped*; *Tourists*; *Durang, Durang, Durang*; *The Jewish Wife*; *The Way We Live Now*; *Faith Healer*; *Kings and War Music*; *The Seagull*; *Women of Courage*; *Pinter on Pinter on Pinter*, and Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

She is a founding member of Artists Repertory Theatre (1981). She joined Artists Rep's Southeast Asia Arts America tours in 1991 and 1994, performing in *Driving Miss Daisy*, *The World of Carl Sandburg*, *Three Tall Women* and *A Journey through American Comedy*. One of her favorite productions is Donald

Margulies' *Collected Stories*, which she and her daughter Eleanor performed together at CoHo in 2007. Vana trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

Jocelyn Seid, Laura Glyde

Josie is an international creator of theater arts who moves in several circles. As a proud member of the LineStorm Playwrights Collective, she is the author of *Petite Dames*, which was nominated for the Kilroy list in 2015 and was recently workshopped at Lewis and Clark's Ray Warren Symposium on Race and Revolutionary Struggle.

Other works include: *Path of Glory*, *The Great God of the Dark Storm Cloud*, *Jordan's Wisdom*, *Overdue*, *Stand by Me*, and *This is Message Number 13*. Her short play, *A Wing and a Prayer* was recently featured in the nationwide Play At Home project.



She is also a resident artist with Artists Repertory Theatre. She's performed in shows on Portland area stages such as: *An Octoroon* with Artists Repertory Theatre, *Men on Boats* with Third Rail, and *Into the Woods* with Broadway Rose. She is also an international arts envoy who has performed in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt.

Josie has also directed productions in Portland including two world premieres: *Hazardous Beauty* with PassinArt and *A Dark Sky Full of Stars* with Vertigo. Her most recent film, *Forget Me Not, America*, in association with the ART Mercury company has taken Josie to new creative places and she is excited to imagine what's next!

Luisa Sermol, Miss Van Vluyck



Luisa Sermol has carved out a fine career in Portland and elsewhere. Her credits for Cygnet include *Bloody Poetry*, *Lady Windemere's Fan*, *Vitriol and Violets*, *Withering Looks*, and a coproduction with CoHo, *Heather Raffo's 9 Parts of Desire*. For Artists Repertory Theatre, Luisa acted in *Cuba Libre*, *Xmas Unplugged*, *Lost Boy*, *Three Sisters*, *The Goat*, *Night of the Iguana*, *Touch*, *Sideman*, and *Master Class*.

Other Portland credits include *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Suddenly Last Summer* (Shaking the Tree), *Company*, *No Way to Treat a Lady* (Broadway Rose) *Sans Merci* (Badass Theater), *Mary Stuart* (NW Classical/Cygnet), *Hen Night Epiphany* (Corrib Theater), *Boleros for the Disenchanted* (Miracle Theatre), *Moon for the Misbegotten* (CoHo), *Ashes to Ashes* (Profile), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Portland Center Stage), and *Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night* (Tygres Heart).

Luisa has also performed in New York/regionally with The Roundabout, Classic Stage Company, Colonial Theatre, and Williamstown Theatre Festival, as well as numerous Off-Off Broadway productions.

She is a five-time recipient of the Portland Drama Critics Drammy Awards for Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role. Television/film work includes *Grimm*, *Leverage*, *Personals*, *Zero Effect* and the award-winning animated short, *Insect Poetry*.

She holds an MAT from Lewis & Clark College, a conservatory degree in acting from The Juilliard School, and is a proud member of Actor's Equity Association.

Wendy Westerwelle, Mrs. Plinth

Wendy Westerwelle is a Portland icon. She was a core member of the late, lamented Storefront Theatre, and one of the original famed *Angry Housewives*, the longest-running musical in Oregon history. With Vana O'Brien, she created a burlesque monologue, *Soph: A Visit with the Last of the Red-Hot Mamas*, which she toured up and down the west coast. *Soph* received wide critical acclaim and solidified Westerwelle as a unique and major talent.

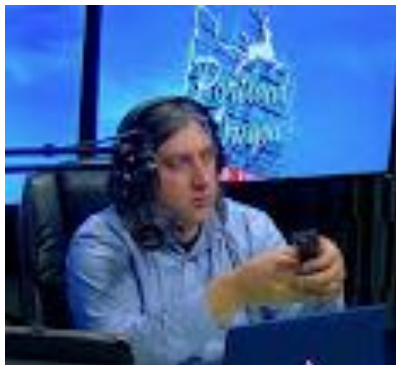
She's played many roles for Cygnet, including a stellar turn as Alexander Woollcott in *Vitriol & Violets*. She's worked with PICA, Artists Repertory Theatre, Dreamswell, and other companies. She's done numerous one-woman shows with triangle productions! including *Rose*, *Becoming Dr. Ruth*, and *Golda's Balcony*. triangle has also produced Wendy's one-woman shows, including *Recovering From Myself* and *Medicare-fully Fabulous!*



Wendy Westerwelle

Crew

Mike DiNapoli, Chief Engineer



Mike is the Chief Engineer for the [Studio at North Rim](#). Earlier in his career, he served as Production Engineer for the Mount Hood Community College Creative Writing Speaker Series and the weekly live broadcasts of Midnight Sunrise Radio and On the Block Radio. He directed the 2014 Pickathon Woods stage, where five of his sets were chosen as NPR Favorite Sessions.

He has helped produce many live-to-broadcast sports, entertainment, and charitable events in the Portland area. He's also traveled the country installing and designing infrastructure systems for radio, television, and telecommunications clients including NBC, AT&T, Time Warner, Verizon, and Comcast.

Kathleen Kelly, Social Media & Etc.

Kathleen is a polymath: Freelance photographer, video editor, and graphic creator. She was on the Artists Repertory Theatre marketing team as the Media Specialist until Covid broke the team up. Her charge? To maintain the brand identity of Artists Rep, by conceptualizing and producing show images and videos for each show in the season, and collaborating with the marketing team and freelance graphic designers. She's also a seasoned print media producer, designing print, online, outdoor, and broadcast advertisements, and creating show-related images for posters, postcards, lobby posters, banners, website, press materials, and social media.



Kathleen has longtime experience photographing subjects in portraits, headshots, weddings, and events, and for promotional material. For more information and to see examples of her work, you can visit Kathleen's website, www.kathleenalickelly.com. Kathleen: "Also, tell your dog I said hi."

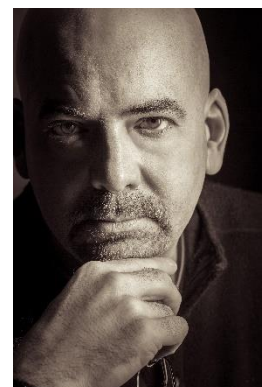
Sherry Lamoreaux, Media Relations



Sherry's been involved with Cygnet since the late nineties, both as a publicist and a coauthor of *Vitriol & Violets*. She was the press officer for Bag & Baggage Productions from 2009–2013. She's also worked as a writer and/or editor for high tech companies including Swan Island Networks, Act-On, and Intel. She's on the board of [PlayWrite](#).

Rodolfo Ortega, Composer & Sound Designer

Rodolfo has designed sound and composed music for some of the most prestigious theatre companies in the United States including The Oregon Shakespeare Festival (*The Tenth Muse*, *Romeo and Juliet*), Denver Center Theatre Company (*The Three Musketeers*, *Romeo & Juliet*), and South Coast Repertory Theatre (*The Monster Builder*). Rodolfo has also written the compositions for *Native Gardens* at Cleveland Playhouse and recently worked on Actors Theater of Louisville's production of *Flex* and *Nicole Clarke is Having a Baby* for the Humana Festival. In addition to being a Resident Artist at Artists Rep, Rodolfo is also an Associate Artist with Santa Cruz Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Man in the Iron Mask*, *Henry IV (I & II)*, *Henry V*). His composition for Santa Cruz Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* drew high praise from the *Wall Street Journal's* reviewer, who called his music "unexpectedly haunting".



For Artists Rep, Rodolfo has designed and composed music for 1984, *La Ruta*, *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, *Caught*, *Skin of Our Teeth*, *The Liar*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Exiles*, *Miracle Worker* and *Intimate Apparel*, just to name a few of the over one hundred shows he has done for Artist Rep since 2000. Rodolfo recently won the Prague Quadrennial Competition in Music for his composition for Artist Repertory Theater's *Magellanica*, where he was a featured Artist, in Prague in June 2019. He also works extensively at Northwest Children's Theatre where he has been commissioned to write numerous musicals (*Hansel and Gretel*, *Snow White*, *Pinocchio*, *Peter Pan*, *The Little Mermaid* and *El Zorrito*). Rodolfo spent 13 years working with Profile Theatre where his credits include sound design and music for *The Blue Door*, *A Lesson Before Dying*, *Lips Together Teeth Apart* and *Master Harold and the Boys*. He has also worked with Portland Playhouse, Oregon Children's Theatre, CoHo Productions, Corrib Theatre and Milagro Theatre. www.rodyortega.com

Carol Ann Wohlmuth, Stage Manager



Carol Ann has been the Stage Manager for over 30 plays at Artists Rep, where she is a Resident Artist. In addition, Carol Ann has been a properties artisan, production manager, board operator (and even an accountant) for a variety of theatres in the Portland area over the past 30+ years. These theatre companies include Portland Center Stage, Portland Rep, Stark Raving Theater, New Rose Theatre, triangle productions!, Musical Theater Co, Metro Performing Arts, Northwest Children's Theatre, and Carousel Co. Carol Ann also guest lectures on the topics of Stage Management and making a living in theatre arts at various educational facilities.