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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Wow! October's three productions clearly demonstrated the remarkable talents of our actors, designers, directors, stage managers, and technical crew as they gave us scenes that made us laugh, cry, and everything in between. In November we get to see Peter Pan's darker side in Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers. How lucky we are to be Friends of Theater at Mason.



This is our last newsletter before the holiday season and a time to reflect on the many benefits we receive as Friends of Theater. Not only are we entertained with live theater, we are given an opportunity to peer behind the curtain and see what it takes to be a good actor and to bring a production to the stage. And we get to associate with dedicated faculty members and tremendously talented students. You may know that many of our students submitted an application for a Friends of Theater scholarship on November 1. The number of students we can help and the amount of each scholarship depends exclusively on membership donations. Please consider a new or additional gift to help Theater students continue their education. Go to <http://theater.gmu.edu/affiliates/friends.html> and click on the link to support Theater at Mason.

Though your gift is certain to be "regifted" (as a scholarship), it will make many people happy and be greatly appreciated.

See you at the theater!

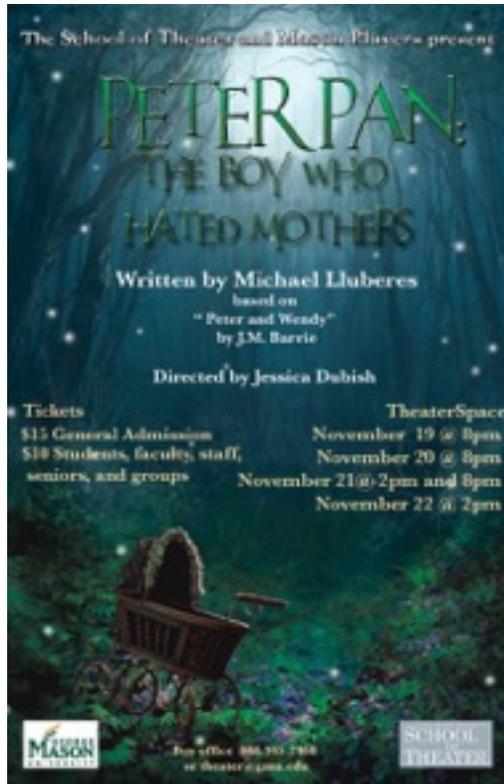
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mack Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mack Miller, President  
Friends of Theater at Mason



**MASON PLAYERS**  
present

**PETER PAN:  
THE BOY WHO HATED MOTHERS**



**A Studio Series Performance**  
**Written by Michael Lluberes**  
**Based on *Peter and Wendy* by J. M. Barrie**  
**Directed by Jessica Dubish**

**This radically fresh retelling of the J.M. Barrie classic is not to be missed. Exploring the original ideas and inspirations behind this iconic fantasy unveils a darker story of the boy who wouldn't grow up. This is Peter Pan as you have never seen it before but how it was always meant to be told.**

**PERFORMANCES**

**November 19, 2015 - November 21, 2015 at 8:00 pm**  
**November 21, 2015 - November 22, 2015 at 2:00 pm**

**TheaterSpace**

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE



In the past few years there has been a resurgence in the popularity of Peter Pan, much to my delight. But can you remember the first time you met a boy named Peter Pan? Was it by reading the classic book, seeing the Disney cartoon, the Broadway musical, or one of the countless film or live television versions that have been made throughout the years?

I was 8 years old when my fascination with Peter Pan took flight. My parents bought me a copy of the 2003 film *Peter Pan*, directed by P. J. Hogan. I would watch this film at least 3 times a day for the duration of my childhood. The stories of Peter Pan inspired hundreds of hours' worth of make-believe and imaginative play for my younger self. It was this playtime that inspired me to propose this show.

*"There are two worlds, the world of everyday and the world of the imagination. When children play, they pass quite naturally through the two worlds all the time, so that at one moment a child may hold a stick and pretend it's a sword. At one moment you can tell him to drop that stick and he responds to that. At the same time you can tell him to drop that sword and he responds to that. The two worlds coexist. ...The theatre should be a meeting place between these two worlds."* -Peter Brook

This latest version of Peter Pan is an examination of the psyche of a child, both a child's dream and nightmare played out at the same time, for both children and adults to explore the pain and inevitability of growing up.

As a company we've worked together to imagine and recreate the feeling of playing make-believe as a child, and now I invite you not to sit back and enjoy the show but to use your imagination with us as we take you on a voyage through the mind of a child; full of zigzag lines leading to islands, savages and gnomes, first day of school and religion, and so much more.

Welcome to Neverland,  
Jessica Dubish

# THOUGHTS FROM THE DRAMATURG

## On Peter Pan and Barrie



Working with a story as legendary as *Peter Pan* is a wonderful treat for a dramaturg. Through every era of writers, there always seems to be a new adaptation of Barrie's tale. Some are highly original and some are direct descendants of the 1904 play and 1911 novel. The text our director, Jessica, has chosen, *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers*, is extremely close to the original story Barrie had intended with *Peter Pan*. Many of the scenes and dialogue are taken straight from Barrie's work and manipulated into a contemporary script. The playwright, Michael Lluberes, has even provided us with lovely quotes and playwright notes as to why he chose this particular path in adapting *Peter Pan*. As a dramaturg, I get to explore all the adaptations and histories of *Peter Pan* and isolate what is not only different, but what is similar between each text. I personally find the experience incredibly enriching because it allows me to understand all the possibilities and perspectives writers might have with a singular story.

As for the original text from Barrie, *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers* is actually the closest adaptation I have read to Barrie's original story. This version not only draws inspiration from Barrie's original play, but also from his original stories from *The Little White Bird* and *Peter in Kensington Gardens*. Characters such as The Neverbird appear in this adaptation which is something new, and the idea of Captain Hook being played by Mrs. Darling. The theme of this adaptation is also incredibly darker when compared to stories such as the Disney film or *Peter and the Starcatcher*. There is still the magical qualities of Neverland, but the overall atmosphere of the show is darker and somber. The characters are tragic and vulnerable as opposed to being happy go lucky all the time. Even Tinkerbell is a little punchy in this version.

## On Dramaturgy Itself

Dramaturgy is a position that often goes unnoticed, but we do not mind. Dramaturgy is very much a research and analytical job. In the beginning of the production, before rehearsals have started, a dramaturg typically focuses on researching the play and playwright. It is our aim to understand what the production history of the text is and any historical influences that might have affected the playwright. There is also a large focus

on researching the period in which the play takes place. If the setting is a specific time period, then we isolate phrases and lines that might have a different connotation than what we are used to now. An example would be insults, in many plays that I have served as dramaturg, the phrases used to insult someone differ from play to play based on their location and time period. We also strive to understand exactly what the director's vision of the show is and to provide an outside look on whether or not that vision is coming through. Many times, dramaturgs are a second pair of eyes.

Once rehearsals begin, dramaturgs can be present. I personally will attend rehearsals at the beginning and then at the end of the process. During table work and early blocking, if there are any questions about words or phrases in the text, I am there to clarify what it means. A simple idea from this play would be the reference of "golden arrows" a character makes, which does not actually mean golden arrows, but a reference to the sun's rays pointing to Neverland. As the rehearsal process goes on, I typically come back later after technical elements are put in and blocking is solidified. I will watch the show and note down moments that stand out to me or take me out of the show. I am a buffer for the director to get a sense of whether or not her/his vision is coming across. The usage of a dramaturg can be incredibly helpful because it allows a director to explore and receive feedback from an analytical eye. Since a director works so closely with the actors and text for months, years on end, it can sometimes become difficult to step back and watch the show with a fresh perspective. This is why dramaturgs exist, to give that fresh look and offer suggestions which the director is more than welcome to use or not use. Dramaturgs are quiet wallflowers. We only talk to the directors about our notes and everything is done on a very one on one basis. It is not a glorified position because almost all of your work is behind the scenes and with one person, but it's a necessary role to have filled on your production team. I enjoy being the silent watcher and knowing that I am there to help my director's vision come across as clear as possible. As for *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers*, Jessica's vision is incredible and I absolutely cannot wait for audiences to experience a Neverland unlike any other.

Best Wishes,  
Andrew Reid

Andrew will be graduating this winter from George Mason's School of Theater with a BFA in playwriting and dramaturgy. He has been an active participant within the department having served various roles on numerous productions and having two plays performed in the annual ten minute play festival. Mason Players productions include, *An Experiment with an Air Pump*, Assistant Director, *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers*, Dramaturg, *A Bright New Boise*, Dramaturg, TMP 2014: *Monsters Calling Home*, playwright and TMP 2015: *Here's Your Crown*, playwright. The HUB Theatre's Emerging Playwrights Festival *Footsteps in Common Shoes*, playwright.

## TECH TALK

While visiting an early rehearsal, this editor had the opportunity to glimpse at some of the technical challenges of this production. The cast was hard at work blocking a scene where Peter is being chased by his shadow. An audience rarely considers the elements that go into a fall, a fight, a summersault or slap, but theater students learn how to perform these acts without hurting another actor or hurting themselves.

Here's a peek at some of it:



Use of projection is one of the technical challenges of this version of Peter Pan. Mary Grant, Projection Designer has a few words to share:

*The biggest challenge as projection designer is justifying its use in the production. I have seen plays inject projections without thoroughly considering why they want an effect there. With each proposed projection effect I step through and ask myself why is this effect necessary, can it be done with another technical element, if it can then what about doing the effect via projections adds to the play? As we learn in our classes here, theater should not just be about spectacle. Everything we do in design, construction, directing, and acting is about teasing out of the script the best story we can tell. Finding how to help meaningful works reach out and expand the minds of our audiences audiences through our own personal artistic abilities. As Professor Casey (Lighting and Production Design teacher at Mason) always asks us "How do you tell the best story?" I can't wait for us to share our story of Peter Pan: the Boy Who Hated Mothers with you all.*

Sincerely,  
Mary Grant  
Projection Designer

## ALUMNI AT WORK

### Rafael Sebastian



Rafael Sebastian graduated in 2013 with a B.A. in Global Affairs and a double minor in Theater Performance and Music. His last production with The School of Theater was *Into the Woods* (Jack) in the fall of 2012.

Since graduating, he has worked professionally in the Washington D.C. theater community as well as the San Francisco Bay Area. He returns to California this fall for *Cinderella* with the Sacramento Theater Company. Visit his [website](#) here.

## Rebecca Wahls

When I arrived at Mason in the Fall of 2011, I figured that I would spend a fun four years here and then head for New York. I had no idea that I would fall in love with Washington, DC's vibrant and extensive theatre scene.

I was lucky enough to direct several productions at Mason and also to work as an Assistant Director on two different professional shows while still in school. All of the work I did at Mason has truly prepared me for the life I'm leading today, which has two main parts: working as an Artistic Associate with Acting for Young People and as the Directing Intern at Forum Theatre.



With AFYP, I'm continuing my work as a Teaching Artist while also working to develop new projects. For example, our Advanced Actors Showcase this year is an adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream (called A Midwinter Eve's Dream). My work at Mason on Dido, Queen of Carthage prepared me for the task of writing this new adaptation. It's so wonderful to be able to see your work being produced, and AFYP is a wonderful artistic home for me.

At Forum, I just finished Assistant Directing World Builders, which opened on November 1 and plays through November 24 at the Woolly Mammoth Rehearsal Room. I will also be working on front of house installations for upcoming productions. My next Assistant Directing venture is still to be determined--but there are some really exciting possibilities coming up!

I'm loving my career so far and I have Mason to thank for it.

Visit me online at [www.rebeccawahls.com](http://www.rebeccawahls.com).

Photo credit: Barry Morgenstein

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