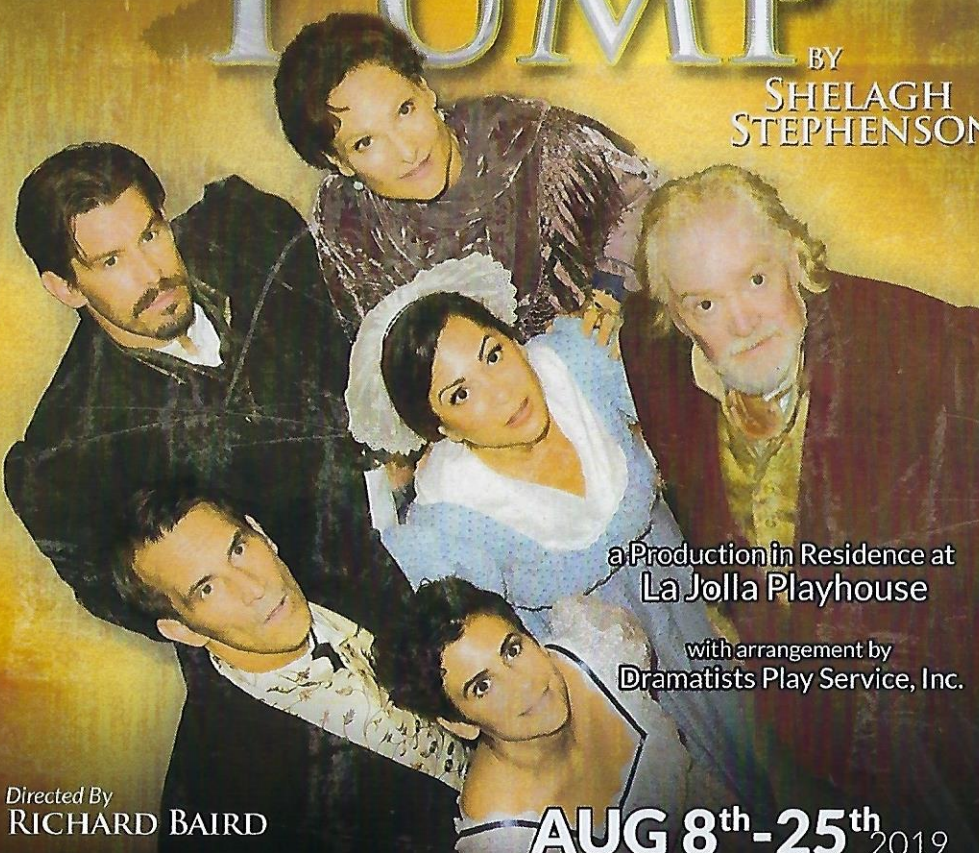




PRESENTS

AN EXPERIMENT WITH AN AIR PUMP

BY
SHELAGH
STEPHENSON



a Production in Residence at
La Jolla Playhouse

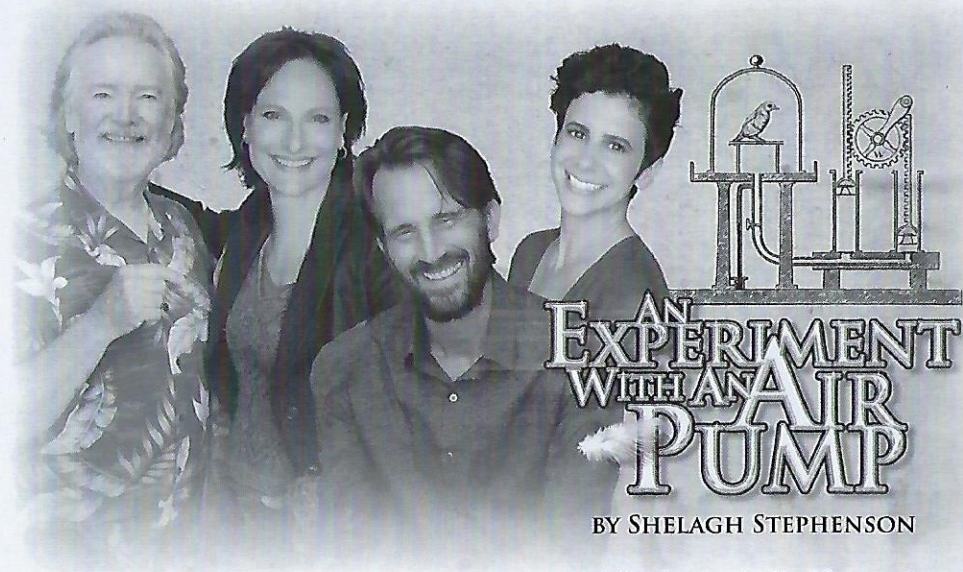
with arrangement by
Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

Directed By
RICHARD BAIRD

Starring
SUSAN ANGELO, FRANCIS GERCKE,
JESSICA JOHN, CAROLINE KEELER,
JUSTIN LANG, OLIVIA CORDELL
AND ROBERT SMYTH

AUG 8th-25th 2019

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE'S
THEODORE AND ADELE
SHANK THEATRE



A Production in Residence at
La Jolla Playhouse

CAST OF CHARACTERS

FENWICK (1799)/TOM (1999) – Robert Smyth

SUSANNAH (1799)/ELLEN (1999) – Susan Angelo*

ARMSTRONG (1799)/PHIL (1999) – Francis Gercke*

HARRIET (1799)/KATE (1999) – Caroline Keeler

ROGET (1799) – Justin Lang

MARIA (1799) – Olivia Cordell

ISOBEL (1799) – Jessica John

PLACE

A home in northern England.

TIME

The play travels back and forth in time between
1799 and exactly 200 years later in 1999.

There will be one 10 minute intermission

PRODUCTION STAFF

Backyard Renaissance Executive Director

Jessica John Gercke

Backyard Renaissance Artistic Director

Francis Gercke

Backyard Renaissance Producing Director

Anthony Methvin

Backyard Renaissance Photographer

Daren Scott

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* Director**

Richard Baird

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* Lighting Designer**

Joel Britt

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* Costume Designer**

Jeanne Reith

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* Scenic & Properties Designer**

Tony Cucuzella

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* Dialect Instructor**

Vanessa Dinning

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* Sound Designer**

TJ Fucella

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* Stage Manager**

Colleen Keith

***An Experiment with an Air Pump* House Manager**

Nan Pace

ABOUT THE PLAYERS

Susan Angelo* (PLAYING Susannah/Ellen)

Recent roles: Hannah Jarvis, *Arcadia*; Alice, *Dance of Death*; Cleopatra, *Antony & Cleopatra*; Queen Elizabeth, *Richard III*; Countess, *The Rehearsal*; Constance, *Madwoman of Chaillot* at A Noise Within in Pasadena, where she is a resident artist. Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Barbara, August: Osage County; Ariadne, *Heartbreak House*; and Madelyn, *Women of Lockerbee* at Theatricum Botanicum. She has played leading roles at The Pittsburgh Public; NYC's Workshop Theatre; Indiana Repertory; William Inge Theatre; Syracuse Stage; American Players Theatre and The Shakespeare Theatre. Recent film and tv include *Bosch*; *How to Get Away with Murder*; *Criminal Minds*; *Liza on Demand*; *Jack Reacher*. Susan has a BFA, CalArts; MFA, George Washington University. She is also a director and teaches Shakespeare in her private studio, www.susanangelostudio.com.

Olivia Cordell (PLAYING Maria)

Olivia studied theatre at USC, Brown University, and the British American Drama Academy in London. Her theatre credits include Christopher in *Curious Incident*, Celia in *As You Like It*, Alonso in *The Tempest*, and many other Shakespearean men. Her writing credits include the award-winning plays *This Our Now*, *Changed* and the feature film *Waldgeist*. Learn more at www.oliviacordell.com!

Francis Gercke* (PLAYING Armstrong/Phil -BYR ARTISTIC DIR.)

In 2015, Gercke co-founded Backyard Renaissance and has served as its artistic director. Recent roles include: *Noises Off*, *Camping with Henry and Tom*, *The Explorers Club*, *Equivocation*, *Freud's Last Session* (Lamb's Players); *Stupid F***ing Bird*, *True West*, *Fool for Love* (Cygnets Theatre); *Smokefall*, *The Zoo Story*, *Abundance*, *Parlour Song*, *The Elephant Man* (Backyard Renaissance); *The Behavior of Broadus* (Capital Stage Company); *In the Next Room*, *Honky* (San Diego Rep); *Accomplice*, *Suzette Who Set to Sea* (La Jolla Playhouse WOW and POP Tour); *A Life in the Theatre*, *Time Stands Still* (NCRT); *The Pride* (Diversionary Theatre). He is a resident artist with Cygnets Theatre and recipient of the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Award for acting and directing. He teaches at Palomar College and privately through Actors Approach. He is a graduate of the Actors Studio Drama School. *Performance sponsored by Lynne Thrope.*

Jessica John Gercke (PLAYING Isobel - BYR EXECUTIVE DIR.)

Jessica is the co-founder and executive director of Backyard Renaissance. She has performed as an actor in Backyard Renaissance's *Smokefall*, *Abundance*, *The Elephant Man*, and *Parlour Song*. Other select work includes North Coast Rep: *Gabriel*, *School for Lies*, and *A Shana Maidel*; Lamb's Players: *Noises Off*, *The Explorer's Club*; Cygnets Theatre: *Private Lives*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Mauritius*, *Communicating Doors*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (SD Playbill - Best Actress), *Burn This* (SD Critic's Circle - Best Actress); ion theatre: *Angels in America*; New Fortune: *Dangerous Liaisons*; New Village Arts: *The Playboy of the Western World* (Patte - Best Actress); and Renaissance Theatre: *A View from the Bridge* (SD Critic's Circle - Best Actress). *Performance sponsored by Joseph John and Katherine & Joel Spengler.*

Caroline Keeler (PLAYING Harriet/Kate)

Caroline is an east coast transplant who is thrilled to be making her San Diego theatre debut with Backyard Renaissance! Over the last ten years she has been involved in multiple projects in both Boston and New York. Select credits include *Amadeus* (Constance), *First Love is the Revolution* (Bailey Chicken), *Doubt* (Sister James), and *Penny Penniworth* (Penny). She recently wrapped production on an upcoming holiday movie, and you can catch her next winter in Moxie Theatre's production of *Red Bike*. Caroline would especially like to thank her Mom and Dad for their continued support (and for traveling cross-country to see the show!), as well as the entire BYR family for this amazing opportunity. Love, always, to Cody. www.carolinekeeler.com

Justin Lang (PLAYING Roget)

Justin is thrilled to be making his Backyard Renaissance debut! He has been acting in San Diego theatre for over a decade at theatres such as; New Fortune, Moxie, Diversionary, Ion, Intrepid, North Coast Rep, Poor Players, New Village Arts, Playwrights Project. He is also a director/teaching artist with San Diego Junior Theatre and a teaching artist with the La Jolla Playhouse. Justin is thankful to Jessica, Fran, and Anthony for this fun experiment!

Robert Smyth (PLAYING Fenwick/Tom)

Robert Smyth has been acting since a cheerleader dared his high school football team to audition for the school play. He got a role. In 1978 he was a founding member of the acting ensemble at Lamb's Players Theatre. Since 1985 he has been that theatre's Producing Artistic Director. Under his leadership LAMB'S grew to become San Diego County's third largest theatre company (after the Old Globe & the La Jolla Playhouse) in its resident theatre in Coronado's historic Spreckels Building. He has performed in more than 120 productions in San Diego, with favorite roles including George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, C.S. Lewis in *Shadowlands*, John Adams in 1776, and the leaper priest of Moloka'i in the one-man show *Damien*. He lives in Coronado with his wife, actor/director Deborah Gilmour Smyth and their rescue pup, Banjo. *Performance sponsored by Lynne Thrope.*

**The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors & Stage Managers in the United States.*

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION STAFF

Richard Baird (EXPERIMENT DIRECTOR)

Richard is an award winning actor, director and producer. Backyard Renaissance: Debut. Directing credits include NCRT: *Of Mice and Men*, *A Walk in the Woods*. He is the founding Artistic Director of New Fortune Theatre Company: *The Birthday Party*, co-director *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *Henry V* (San Diego Critics Circle Award for Direction). He served as Associate Artistic Director of Southwest Shakespeare Company: *As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale*. Intrepid Theatre: *Much Ado About Nothing*; Diversionary Theatre: *Edward II*; Oregon Shakespeare Festival Black Swan Series: *The Changeling*. As Poor Players Artistic Director he directed over 20 productions of Shakespeare's plays. He is a proud member of Actor's Equity. *Direction sponsored by Lynne Thrope.*

Tony Cuzella (EXPERIMENT SCENIC & PROPERTIES DESIGN)

Tony is happy to be continuing his collaboration with Backyard Renaissance Theatre. He has been designing in San Diego for the last thirty years for such companies as San Diego Comic Opera, San Diego Junior Theatre, JCompany, The Welk and Diversionary Theatre. He is currently the Technical Director for the Performing Arts Department at Palomar College in San Marcos.

Colleen Keith (EXPERIMENT STAGE MANAGER)

Colleen E. Keith is a San Diego based Stage Manager. Recent Stage Management credits include *Falling* (InnerMission Productions), *Bedrooms* and *Boyfriends* (Compulsion Dance & Theatre), *Master Class*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, and *Kin* (ion theatre company). Assistant Stage Manager credits include *The Revolutionists*, *Ruthless! The Musical*, *Our Lady of Kibeho*, and *The Curious Case of the Watson Intelligence* (MOXIE Theatre) and *La Pastorela de Plata* (Teatro Máscara Mágica).

Joel Britt (EXPERIMENT LIGHTING DESIGN)

Joel is happy to be back creating with Backyard Renaissance Theatre Company. Selected Design work includes: *Significant Other* (Diversionary Theatre), *Mr. & Mrs. Fitch* (Backyard Renaissance), *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Taming of the Shrew(d)*, *Strange Men*, *Vieux Carré*, *(w)holeness*, *Other People*, *Sin Eaters*, and *Angels in America* (UCSD), *South of the 8* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Heaven on Earth* (Sledgehammer_), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (The Barn Stage Company), *Rent*, *Somebody Called* (TX State). Selected Assistant and Associate work includes *The Bands's Visit* (National Tour), *Hamilton* (National Tour), *Come From Away* (National Tour), *Summer: The Donna Summer*

Musical (Broadway), *Freaky Friday*, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *Squirrels* (La Jolla Playhouse), *The Lorax* (The Old Globe), *The Tales of Hoffman* (LA Opera), *Christmas Carol* (Zachary Scott, Austin).
Design sponsored by Wes Anson.

TJ Fucella (EXPERIMENT SOUND DESIGN)

TJ is grateful and excited to return to Backyard Renaissance as a sound designer. He has been working in San Diego as a sound designer and mix engineer for the last 3 years. Recent credits include *Mr. & Mrs. Fitch*, *Tarrytown* (Backyard Renaissance); *Rock of Ages*, *Gypsy*, *On The 20th Century*, *Shockheaded Peter*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Spamalot* (Cygnnet Theatre); *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, *Guadalupe in the Guest Room* (New Village Arts); *Father Comes Home From The Wars*, and *Perfect Arrangement* (Intrepid). He'd like to thank all of his friends in the San Diego theatre community, as well as his amazing wife Julia for their love and support.

Design sponsored by Wes Anson.

Jeanne Reith (EXPERIMENT COSTUME DESIGN)

In her 25-year career as a Theatrical Costume Designer, Jeanne has dressed over 350 productions. She has served as a Resident Designer for theatres in Los Angeles, Glendale, and Santa Barbara, and locally at Lambs Players Theatre Coronado and Cygnnet Theatre. Costume Design Awards include: San Diego Critic's Circle, Patte, LA Weekly, Backstage West, and Dramalogue. Jeanne also teaches Fashion History, Draping, Pattern Making, and other fashion-related classes at San Diego Mesa College and San Diego Continuing Education, West City.

Design sponsored by Lynne Thrope.

Anthony Methvin (BYR PRODUCING DIR.)

Anthony is Producing Director at Backyard Renaissance, where he directed *Bachelorette*, co-directed *Abundance* and the World Premiere of *Tarrytown*, and, for their *Unleashed* series, directed and co-adapted readings of *Showgirls*, *Mommie Dearest*, *Troll 2*, and *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*. He is also the Producing Associate at Diversionary Theatre, where he directed *Significant Other*. Assistant Director: *Buyer & Cellar* and *Sense & Sensibility* (Old Globe), and *Dogfight* (Cygnnet). Local performances include Sir Bedevere & others in *Spamalot* (Cygnnet), Doug in *Gutenberg! The Musical!* and Lord John in *The Elephant Man* (Backyard Renaissance), and Roger in *A New Brain* (Diversionary). Upcoming: director/co-adaptor of *Queen of Outer Space* for Backyard Renaissance Unleashed and director of *The Santaland Diaries* at Diversionary Theatre. Follow him on Instagram @anthonymethvin.

Shelagh Stephenson (EXPERIMENT WITH AN AIR PUMP PLAYWRIGHT)

Shelagh Stephenson is an English playwright and actress. Her stage plays include *The Memory of Water* (1997), *An Experiment with an Air Pump*, *Ancient Lights*, *Five Kinds of Silence* (radio play 1996; stage play 2000), *Mappa Mundi* (2002), and *Harriet Martineau and The Long Road* (2008). *An Experiment with an Air Pump* was revived in 2009 at Hampstead Theatre, where the original production appeared in 1998 after premiering at the Royal Exchange, Manchester. The play has since been revived at the universities of San Diego and New Orleans, the English Theatre, Berlin, the University of Waterloo and the Giant Olive Theatre Company, in London.



ABOUT BACKYARD RENAISSANCE

Backyard Renaissance Theatre Company is a non-profit 501(C)(3) with an "art to the gut" sensibility. Founded in 2015 in San Diego, CA, Backyard Renaissance believes that exception storytelling is rooted in a sense of joyful play, human connection and gutsy intensity.

For more information go to www.BackyardRenaissance.com

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