

February 12 – March 21, 2020

INTO THE BREECHES!

By GEORGE BRANT Directed by LAURA KEPLEY

**THE SHOW
MUST GO ON**

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Production Guide

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The More You Know: *Into The Breeches!*



PLAYWRIGHT: George Brant

George Brant was born in Park Ridge, Illinois and studied acting at Northwestern before turning to writing for his own zeppo productions in Chicago during the '90s. George received his MFA in Writing from the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas at Austin and is a member of the Dramatists Guild. Brant's work has been produced internationally by such companies as Public Theater, Atlantic Theater Company, Trinity Repertory Company, Cleveland Play House, Alley Theatre, Studio Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory, City Theatre, Gate Theatre of London, Page 73, Traverse Theatre, Dobama Theatre, and the Disney Channel, among others. He now lives in Cleveland with his wife, Laura Kepley, the Artistic Director of Cleveland Play House.

Author bio sourced from: www.georgebrant.net

PRODUCTION STATS:

- **Playwright:** George Brant
- **Premiere:** Trinity Repertory Company, January 2018.
- **Productions:** This production will be the 8th time this new play has been produced.
- **The Play Within the Play:** Shakespeare's *Henriad*—*Richard II*, *Henry IV, Parts I & II*, and *Henry V*.

YOU SHOULD KNOW:

The playwright has given permission to the producing theatre to set the location to the city where it is being produced.

The production you will see is set in Sarasota, Florida in 1942 and will reference local historical places and people.

THINK IT OUT:

When this production was done by Trinity Rep in Rhode Island, they referenced Newport, RI. Come up with a list of potential locations in the Sarasota area that you think we might refer to in this production (you might want to do some historical digging and look up places that no longer exist).

FUN FACT Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP): were a group of civilian women pilots serving alongside men in the U.S. Air Force during World War II.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Oral History Toolkit: http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html

Oral History Project on WWII Women: http://cds.library.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html

Sarasota Oral History Interviews: www.newtownalive.org

Teaching The Henriad: <https://shakespeareshenriad.weebly.com/henry-iv-parts-1-and-2.html>

Defining Dramaturgy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oi1X249Dhk>

What's In a Title?!

The title of this show is quite clever and has multiple points of reference.

Breeches!

The women in this show take on the roles of the men in The Henriad. This is known as a "breeches role." A **breeches role** is when an actress appears in male clothing.

THINK IT OUT:

- What other examples of breeches roles can you think of in film or other media?



Into the Breeches! costume design, ANGELA BALOGH CALIN

ABOUT THE SHOW "It's a big-hearted comedy about being bold, taking risks and having courage in the face of obstacles. It's a play that celebrates inclusion, generosity and collaboration. This play is a love letter to the theatre and a reminder to all of us that our art form has the power to transform lives."

—Laura Kepley, Director

Pants!

In the 1940's, we saw a huge change in the mainstream fashion world as women in Western society started to wear pants for the first time. As women started taking over the work traditionally done by men, it became practical for safety reasons to start to wear pants instead of bulky skirts and dresses.

TRY IT OUT:

- Check out the history of pants in this [video](#). Since you know why pants became popular in the '40s think about what caused the styles to change in each decade.

Pantaloon!

Into the Breeches! is also a reference to a famous Shakespearean line from *Henry V*.

"Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger..."

This monologue is famous as King Henry gives a rousing battle cry of courage. Themes from The Henriad are reflected in our production. The women show great courage and patriotism while they fight the war at home.

TALK IT OUT:

- What role do you think the arts play in big issues like war?

War and Art!

This play is set in the fall of 1942 near the very start of America's involvement in World War II. The concerns of war can most easily be seen in the play with in a play. Check out the information below to read about why *The Henriad* was featured in this production and to read about one of the lesser known campaigns during this time period.

Want to brush up on your WWII history? Check out this [site](#) for a quick timeline of events.

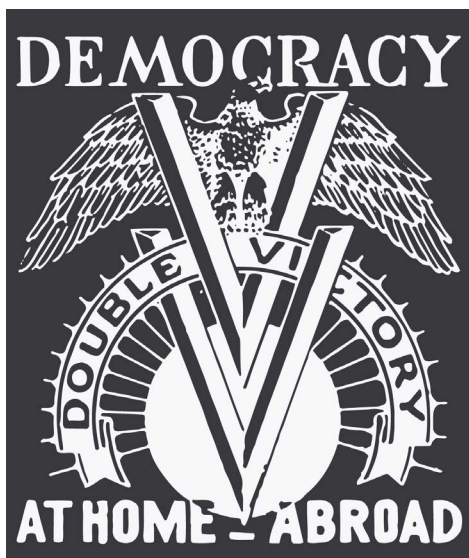
Brush Up On Your Shakespeare!

Into the Breeches! showcases that art can build community in times of hardship. The playwright used *The Henriad* (the play that is produced) as a way to examine the parallels between war in Shakespeare's time and the war in the 1940s.

What's the Henriad?!

The *Henriad* is a collection of historical plays, including: *Richard II*, *Henry IV, Parts I & II* and *Henry V*. Many believe that these plays were Shakespeare's greatest achievement as a political writer.

The plays within *The Henriad* examine power and politics and serve as a rousing call-to-arms and celebration of war. In writing these plays Shakespeare attempts to please the ruler, Queen Elizabeth I, who was a direct descendent of Henry V, and also to promote a sense of patriotism.



The Double V Victory

Just as we see the women in this show fighting for equal rights, we are reminded that there are others also struggling for equality. We see that LGBTQ+ individuals and African Americans in that time period were mistreated and viewed as less than human. In this show, Ida reminds the other women that though her loved ones will have sacrificed greatly for this country, they will still be viewed and treated as inferior because of the color of their skin.

At the end of the show, Ida wears a Double V Victory patch. This was a symbol that was used to promote the fight for democracy in the overseas campaign and on the home front. It highlighted the risks black soldiers and civilians took while participating in America's struggle in the war while being denied their rights as full American citizens back home: a V for the war and a V for the struggles at home.

TALK IT OUT:

- What do you know about the history of civil rights here in the Sarasota/Manatee area?
- How were African American troops treated differently?
- In what areas does your community still need to move towards justice and equality? How can you help?

Learn more about our history by visiting the [Newtown Alive Project](#) and listening to the oral histories there.

"V" for Victory: On July 19, 1941, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill gave a speech finishing up with a hand gesture of a V with the palm facing out (what many Americans today recognize as a peace sign) and the statement "V for Victory." This action amidst the time of war in England was heavily publicized as a form of resistance against the Axis Powers and eventually became a worldwide trend.

Classroom Connections

Homefront Warriors!

Essential Question: What were the people on the homefront in your family/community doing during WWII?

Learning Objective: To complete an oral history interview that will deepen understanding of the role of women in WWII.

Vocabulary: Oral history, interview, homefront.

*When we hear about wars in our history, most of the focus is on those who were fighting. **Into the Breeches!** gives us a glimpse of what the American women might have been doing as their loved ones were deployed. Find out what the women in your family/neighborhood did to support the troops, create community, and survive on the homefront by conducting an oral history interview. Oral history is the systematic collection of living people's testimony about their experiences, done in order to understand that time.*

TRY IT OUT:

- Identify a woman who was either alive during WWII or who remembers stories about that time period.

Ask this person if they would talk with you about life then.

- Create a list of questions for your interview.

Visit [this website](#) for some great examples. Here are some questions to start you off:

- Who in your family was deployed during the war?
How long were they gone?
- How did your life change because of the war?
- What did you do to support the war efforts?
- What brought you happiness during the hard times?
- How did life change as a woman during the war?

- Conduct your interview! It's best if you can meet in person for your interview, but if that's not possible, call or Facetime them. Bring something to take notes with for the big thoughts.

- Present your findings. Go over your notes, and highlight or pull quotes and information that stand out to you.

Once you have done this, decide how you will present this information. Would this information best be shared as a presentation? A digital story? A short narrative?



TALK IT OUT:

- What did you learn about WWII and life during that time?
What did you learn about your own family or community history?
- What other parts of WWII are you interested in learning about?
Who could you interview next to get that information?

BONUS:

Take some information from your interview and see how it informs other historical documentation. For example, if the person you interviewed talked about how they contributed to the war by doing _____ what do history books say were other efforts? Do they place the same amount of importance on these efforts as your interviewee?

Classroom Connections

An Actor Prepares!

Essential Question: How do actors use their bodies to physically create characters?

Learning Objective: Activate and create a physical characterization.

Vocabulary: Character, actor neutral, situations

This show gives you a behind-the-scenes view of how a play is rehearsed. You will get a glimpse of the process from auditions to the opening night. During one of the rehearsal scenes, we see the performers working to create their characters through a movement exercise. Try out this similar character creation game before seeing the show to better understand why they did this.

TRY IT OUT:

- Start by walking around an open space at “actor neutral.” This means you are moving at a normal relaxed pace, your hips are square over your feet, shoulders relaxed and even above the hips, and your head sitting nicely atop your spine.
- Now let’s create a character through physicality. First, start experimenting with the tempo of your character. Does this person move quick, slow, medium, a combination? Choose the one you like best.
- Next, choose the way your character moves between places. Experiment with going straight to one place and then another. Now, be indirect in your movements, meander between destinations. Which way fits better with the character you are creating?
- Finally, play with your character’s flow. Are controlled, tight and grounded, or are they free, light, and airy?
- Try another approach: Instead of building a character piece by piece, assign attributes to different types of characters.

A KING OR QUEEN

- What is their tempo? Why?
- Are they direct or indirect? Why?
- Are they bound or free? Why?

Now go through different character types and play with the combinations of physicality. Examples include: a celebrity, a thief sneaking away, a cartoon character, a dictator, a doctor, or an athlete.

TALK IT OUT:

- Were some character types easier to play than others?

Why?

- How/why might an actor use this type of work on stage?

- How did you feel when doing this exercise?

- The actors will be doing an exercise similar to this in the show.

Why do you think the playwright might have included this type of acting exercise?



FUN FACT “Mrs. Exception” was an insult created through propaganda encouraging everyone to contribute to the war efforts. As we’ll see in *Into the Breeches!*, there are also Mr. Exceptions. Those who did not contribute in the expected way were given this name to create shame.

Discover Dramaturgy!

What's a Dramaturg? Dramaturgs work in the theatre as experts on our dramatic past and as advocates for writers of today. The dramaturgs greatly impact every show you see on our stage because of the intricate work they do. Here is a breakdown of what our Dramaturg James Monaghan, and our Dramaturgy Apprentice, Annie Dent, do for our season.

AT THE END OF THE ASOLO REP THEATRICAL SEASON JAMES AND ANNIE WILL HAVE COMPLETED:

3-5 scripts read per week in preparation for assisting in the selection of the shows for the next season. That's about 160 plays!

8 meetings working with the Asolo Rep Guild, leading talk-backs and helping with the PlayReaders rehearsals.



James Monaghan

24 interviews of designers and artists to be used in the Playbill and beyond.

35 two-page articles written for the season Playbills.

40 talkback-style events that they lead with the goal of giving the audience a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the show and how it's made.

104 days of rehearsal, answering artistic questions during table work, tracking any changes made to the script, and providing background and context for the artistic team.



Annie Dent

480 pages of research written for the season's Dramaturgy Packets. In these packets, they define any words that might not be common knowledge for the actors/artistic teams and provide important backstories/research on topics that are relevant to the shows.

672 hours in rehearsal for the 2 new works in this season. In a rehearsal process for a new work, the Dramaturgs will be in the rehearsal room the entire time. Here they will work with the playwright and director doing research, checking facts, and tracking changes in the script.

Want to know more about dramaturgs? Check out this [link](#).

1940's

DEAR HARRY,

More reports of ships being sunk near Boca Raton – that brings the number to 22 in only a few months! What if they make it around the Keys to Tampa Bay? Father says it's the bright lights of the cities that let the German U-boats see the ships at night because they block the light. I knew you would be close to the action, but I never thought people would be dying only a few hours away...

Your loving Sister,

POST CARD

PLACE
ONE CENT
STAMP
HERE



MR. THOMAS,

Sarasota High School misses you, but has begun a daily flag ceremony to show our patriotic spirit. Each day, as the flag is raised in the morning and lowered in the afternoon, students and faculty stand at attention while the drums and bugles play. Some students are also part of a War Council – they focus on defense work within the school – while others are knitting for soldiers like you or learning first aid. As Senior Class President, I am very proud of our young students for all of their hard work.

Yours in service,

POSTCARDS FROM SARASOTA

Into the Breeches! transports us to a Sarasota past; an era when community members banded together to get through the trying times of America's entry into World War II. On this page are fictional postcards about a real Sarasota in the early 1940s utilizing research from Sarasota County Historical Resources.



DEAREST JOCELYN,

We are nearly 3,000 strong at the airfield, loyal army airmen all. The weather makes for smooth flying almost all year, so it's a proper place to train the 97th Bombardment Group. When the war ends, I think the army will give the land, much improved by our work and 250 acres expanded, back to the municipal fathers of Sarasota and Manatee counties. What would you think of joining me in Florida when that happy day comes?

Your husband,

DARLING STERLING,

Last night was another evening at the Municipal Auditorium. The second floor of the recreation club is an impressive place and so new, I believe the paint is still wet! Mrs. Weygal says that "Unless we realize the seriousness of our jobs we aren't doing it right" and that "service men's lives have been disrupted every night of the week, not just one." We're to spend at least one night a week at the Club as well as attending the dances on Friday and be organized into platoons and squadrons ourselves. I miss you so and wish you were back home to be my dancing partner.

Yours always,

POSTCARDS FROM SARASOTA

SON,

Drove into town the other day to help with the scrap metal drive. Old John Ringling's wooden bridge from Golden Gate Point to St. Armands is starting to show some wear and tear in the face of all this heavy traffic and Mayor Smith has asked for larger vehicles to be diverted to other streets. Council members have said the same about army vehicles going up and down Main... the city just keeps growing.

I'm proud of you.

TRY IT OUT:

- The postcards you see on the previous pages were created from James and Annie's research for the season Playbill.

TALK IT OUT:

- Why do you think James and Annie chose to present their research in the format of postcards?
- What information about Sarasota in the 1940s do you see conveyed in the postcards?
- How might the actors use this information in their work? The director? The designers? The audience?

MY WILLIAM,
Do you find it as hard to imagine where I am as I do where you are? I don't know what I'd do if it weren't for the WSPB updates every hour on the radio. I've enclosed a "Tiny Tribune," hopefully that will help you feel connected to your home. Remember the afternoon we spent swimming at the Casino on Lido Beach? Or watching a picture at the Ace downtown? I hold on to those memories of us.

Happy New Year,

HI JIM,

How are you doing over there? I hope you're safe and that they're feeding you well. The Smack's burgers and shakes just aren't the same without you. Bobby told me the other day that a place up in Bradenton, Garcia's, has air conditioning! Can you believe it? My birthday is just around the corner and I'll join up to be with you fellas faster than you can say "Gator Bait". Best,



HIYA BROTHER!

I hope you are giving the Nazis hell over there. We are doing what we can here. Mom nearly had a fit the other day because she thought she had lost her ration stamp book (and on the day the ration calendar in the paper finally said we could get more sugar no less!). Mom says all the canned stuff is going over to the war effort and that it takes too much gas and wastes too much tire rubber to ship fresh stuff very far. So we'll just have to make do. Wish I was old enough to be with you.

Come Home Soon,

Into the Breeches! 9

Explorations for Everyone: Dramaturgical Digging!

Essential Question: How does historical context impact a theatrical production?

Learning Objective: To research and apply historical information to the artistic process.

Vocabulary: Dramaturg, research, historical context.

One large part of James and Annie's work is doing an in-depth read of the script and creating a dramaturgical packet that explains the historical context of the script.

*Start some dramaturgical digging by reading this dialogue from **Into the Breeches!***

Ellsworth: The Oberon is not a cake, Mrs. Dalton, it is a business. The '41 season was a wash, and now that Roosevelt's tacked on this 10% entertainment tax on every one of our tickets—no, better to wait this out and come back at full strength in a year.

Maggie: A year?! So— so you would have your neighbor deprived of art as well as chuck loin?!

Ellsworth: Art? Don't you know there's a war on, Mrs. Dalton? The Air Corps is practicing dive bombing on Longboat Key, the Navy's housing troops in the Miami Biltmore, and last week they caught a German agent sabotaging planes right here at the Sarasota Army Airfield!

Maggie: Yes, and we'll be selling war bonds and stamps in the lobby, letting soldiers on leave see the show for free—

TRY IT OUT:

- Underline any words or phrases that you don't know how to define in red.
- Create a glossary of these words by looking them up and writing down their definitions.
- Look over the text again, what big ideas, themes, or historical context do you see in them? Choose one and do some more in-depth research on the subject and write a paragraph or two on it.

TALK IT OUT:

- How does the artistic team, the director, actors, and designers, use this information to inform their performance?
- How might knowing this information affect how you feel when seeing the show?

PRE SHOW DISCUSSION:

- Much of *Into the Breeches!* centers around forming community in times of crisis. What communities are important in your life? How does your community react in a time of need?
- *Into the Breeches!* takes place during WWII. What was happening in the US and abroad during this time period? In the Sarasota/ Manatee area?
- During WWII how do you think those who stayed home supported the war abroad? How is this different today?

POST SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Take a moment to answer the following:
 - What did you see?
 - What did you hear?
 - How did the show make you feel?
- When were moments in the show that you saw characters making decisions that went against the "norm" of their communities? Have you ever had to make a decision that goes against the beliefs of your community?
- This show takes a stand against injustice in many forms. What injustices do you see today? How could you use art to address them?

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES AT ASOLO REP

Spring Break Intensive

March 16–20. 9AM –5PM

Love theatre and want to learn more? Join Asolo Rep for the Spring Break Intensive, an experience where students can hone their performance technique and design skills while working with professional theatre artists.

Ages 13-18. Space is limited!

Go to www.asolorep.org/engage-learn for details.

Snow White Family Show at Asolo Rep

June 11–28

The New International Encounter brings this modern dark fairy tale all the way from Europe. The actors play multiple roles and instruments as they give this classic fairy tale a new twist! This 21st Century Snow White is incredibly fresh, and at the same time delightfully familiar.

Family Day at Snow White

Saturday, June 20

12:30PM Pre-show activities

2PM Matinee Performance

See this innovative and modern fairy tale with friends and family. Special pre-show activities welcome the young and the young-at-heart. Family ticket packages are available through the Asolo Rep Box Office: 941-351-8000 for details.

Summer Intensive

More Information Coming Soon!

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NOW AVAILABLE! | \$35 for full-time students 25 and younger. Receive one ticket to each 2019-20 **Asolo Rep** and **FSU/Asolo Conservatory** performances for last-minute, best-available seating, subject to availability. Call the Box Office at 941-351-8000 or online: asolorep.org/youthpass

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