

The 25th Anniversary Season

THE OEDIPUS CYCLE

by Sophocles; translated by Peter Constantine

As we begin The Pearl's 25th season of classics, we gather at the well from which all drama springs. Greek Tragedy of the 5th Century B.C. created theatre as we know it, and probed every facet of human responsibility – responsibility to family, god, state, self. No one explored this world more searchingly than Sophocles in his three plays of Oedipus and his family: *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*. Peter Constantine's world premiere translation, adapted by him for The Pearl's groundbreaking presentation of *The Oedipus Cycle* as a single theatrical event, tells a story as sweeping and powerful as myth itself and as intimate as the playing out of one family's discovery of grace and wisdom through suffering and loss.

NATHAN THE WISE

by Gotthold Lessing; adapted by Richard Sewell

The holiday season offers us stories that change the world – stories of birth, love, hope, compassion, and the readiness for renewal in a time of darkness. This holiday season The Pearl is thrilled to reprise its own favorite story of hope: *Nathan the Wise*. The tale of a Jewish merchant in Muslim Jerusalem at the time of the Christian Crusades is the story of a world determinedly clinging to hope in a time of chaos. Gotthold Lessing's poignant fairytale of tolerance and understanding helped launch Germany's national theatre, later terrified the Nazi regime, and invites audiences to believe in Reason and in the unlimited power of Storytelling to do good in the world.

TWELFTH NIGHT

by William Shakespeare

All humans that breathe in Illyria love. They love to distraction. Lost brothers, forlorn music, song and drink (lots of drink) – they revel in the love of life. They love the people they can't have and ignore the people they can. They love tragic maidens and women in disguise, lute players, and lovelorn dukes. Sometimes they don't even know which gender their beloved is—and it doesn't matter. In Shakespeare's joyful, madcap dance of mistaken identities, cunning plans, and miraculous discoveries, the only real mistake you can make is not to love at all.

TARTUFFE

by Molière

The inflammatory, scandalous, provocative Molière practiced the art of dangerous comedy. For five years he had taunted and teased the Parisian rich and powerful; at last he'd gone too far. The wickedly gleeful *Tartuffe* offers audiences the story of Orgon, a husband and father ready to sacrifice his family's happiness to Tartuffe, the religious hypocrite who has him in his sway. Stung at this (accurate) portrait of their follies, Molière's enemies forced the play from the public stage. Molière's scathing satire skewers false moralists and those blind or frightened enough to follow them, but also offers the hope that true goodness and plain old common sense can save anyone—if only they'll agree to be saved.

VIEUX CARRÉ

by Tennessee Williams

At 722 Toulouse Street, in the Vieux Carré district of New Orleans, Mrs. Wire runs her dilapidated boarding house. She and her tenants, forgotten runaways from the outside world, struggle to find peace and meaning in an existence both absurd and heartbreaking. *Vieux Carré*, Tennessee Williams' shadowy meditation on sexuality, decay, and the awful power of loneliness, stands as the most autobiographical of his late plays: his last attempt to find hope for and give voice to those he dubbed the "fugitive kind."