

Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre

PRESS RELEASE

9|24|10

Championing the cause of student theatre

GODSPELL

The Hit Pop Rock Musical

We'll Put A Spell On You:

GODSPELL

A New Work Enters the World of VCU Student Theatre

Godspell, the hit rock pop musical, is now being brought to the Shafer student stage in a whole new way. The structure of the musical is that of a series of parables, based on the Gospel of Matthew. Our parables have been fully revamped, merging timeless stories, like the "Good Samaritan" & "Prodigal Son", with modern pop culture references, like Lady Gaga & Oprah, to bring the audience into a relatable yet unique interpretation of this discovery-filled adventure. This audience interactive adventure features a cast of 10 actors with a skill for improv, creating a more personal and memorable night at the theatre. **Godspell's** success in the 20th century was critical as it reintroduced community values to a lost society. With the fresh new twist that director **Walid Chaya** has put on it, our production relates to today's audiences, young and old alike.

We're So Richmond

This beautiful story's adaptation is set in none other than the River City, Richmond, VA, allowing its audience to take familiar steps with wits characters throughout each scene and musical number. Not only is this a timeless story of love, hope, and faith set in VCU's backyard, but also pieces—literally pieces—of Richmond are spread throughout the set. Posters, citywide symbols, and even the costumes (some provided by local businesses such as Rumors), allow the feel of the city and emotions brought to life through the diverse array of characters created by the ensemble, who actually play themselves, inhabitants of Richmond.



Ensemble rehearses abandoning Jesus



"The Last Supper" – The Godspell Cast

Left to Right: Brent Gallahan, Jackie Reynolds, Celine Daubresse, Crystal Johnson, Maggie Horan (Jesus), Carolyn Sutherlin, Claire Yenson, Elizer Rios, Cat Wheelahan
Not pictured: Brvan Hall (John the Baptist/Judas)

Casting Jesus as a Wo(man)

A woman playing Jesus? Kind of controversial you may think. We think not. Although, this is the first production at VCU to have ever had a woman play the role of Jesus. The logic behind the production being composed this way is to reiterate the message of breaking conformity, and also that a leader, regardless of the outward appearance (gender, race, etc.), is capable of passing down ideas and values that the community can in turn use for their own benefit, which can be used perpetually for generations.

About Godspell

Godspell is a musical based on Gospel of Matthew originally written in 1970 by John Michael Tebelak with music by Steven Schwartz (better known for current Broadway hit, *Wicked*). This show was the perfect remedy for times of oppression and lost hope, and in turn, caused the sparked the dawn of a spiritual awakening. This production was such a success because it was not only for Christians, but all types of people, **from all backgrounds**. It's music stood at the top of many pop music charts, including the hit, "Day By Day", which reached #13 on the Billboard pop singles chart in the summer of 1972. To this day, **Godspell** is one of the most produced musicals in community theatres, schools, and universities, like ours.

GODSPELL

STUDENT RUN. STUDENT PRODUCED.

STUDENT PROPELLED

The unique composition of this production is not only due to the nature of the contemporary spin on the Broadway hit, but also since everything has been put together by VCU undergraduates (all from different backgrounds of theatre and theatre production) and with the experience of a well-trained graduate choreographer, Marie Boyette. Not only that, but a considerable amount of the students involved with the production are from outside of the Arts department within the university, including the Assistant Director, Ava Stone, and Musical Director Matt Jewell. This addition of new blood to a SALT production has allowed for a varied and diverse collaboration with a plethora of art as a result.


"Turn Back O Man" music & dance rehearsal

Ensemble rehearses the "Finale"

S.A.L.T Background and Mission:

The Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre (SALT) is a registered student organization at Virginia Commonwealth University. SALT facilitates, encourages, and promotes the public performance of student theatre at the Shafer Street Playhouse, offering opportunities for students to supplement their education within the University. SALT champions the cause of collaborative student theatre that reflects the overall diversity of the student body and the vast spectrum of theatrical possibility. This encourages all students in the University to take charge of their education and artistic growth by integrating their education before an audience. SALT's goal is that students will take personal and artistic risks, which will result in engaging, quality theatre that challenges and enriches the students involved and the community alike. SALT's mission is to provide all students with an equal opportunity to create quality theatre.

GODSPELL



JOIN US FOR A TIME YOU'LL NEVER FORGET

OCTOBER 8th & 9th AT 7:30 PM
OCTOBER 10th AT 2:00 PM

**“WE CAN BUILD, A
BEAUTIFUL
CITY....”**

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DIRECTED BY WALID CHAYA

PRESS RELEASE BY AMBER JOHNSON

Produced by special arrangements with Music Theatre International

THEATRE VCU

ATTN: SHAFER ALLIANCE LAB THEATRE

RE: GODSPELL / WALID CHAYA

922 Park Avenue

Richmond, Virginia 23284

GODSPELL

SHAFFER ALLIANCE LABORATORY THEATRE PRESENTS

GOSPEL

THE HIT POP ROCK MUSICAL

Book by John Michael Tebelak
Music & Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

October

8th – 7:30pm

9th – 7:30pm

10th – 2pm Matinee

Directed by Walid Chaya
Choreographed by Marie Boyette
Music Direction by Matt Jewell

Shafer Street Playhouse @ VCU
221 North Shafer Street

FREE

(Donations Accepted)

HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS LOCATED NEXT DOOR AT SHAFFER DINING COURT
PRODUCED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL

CREATED BY
liz lukens