

WITTY WOMAN



A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

By Felicity Nussbaum

September 25, 2021

A Dramatic Reading by UCLA MFA Theater Graduates

Directed by Michael Hackett

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The play will last approximately two hours with one short intermission.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

Hester Thrale (1741–1821)

Bluestocking wit, diarist, biographer, lively, outspoken, clever,
a little wild, petite 30-something

Henry Thrale (1721–1781)

Brewer, Hester's 1st husband, tall, good-looking, reserved, 50ish

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784)

Brilliant literary critic, biographer, essayist, pompous, slovenly dressed
with grey wig askew, corpulent, frequent convulsive motions, late 60s

James Boswell (1745–1790)

Scottish lawyer, biographer of Samuel Johnson, rival to Hester,
arrogant, panders to Johnson, notes poking out of his pockets, early 40s

Frances Burney (1752–1840)

Bluestocking novelist, friend to Hester, diarist, playwright, shy,
attractive, mid-20s

"Queeney" Thrale (1764–1857)

The Thrales' firstborn child, a prodigy, haughty, in her late teens

Gabriel Piozzi (1740–1809)

Thrale children's Italian music teacher, tenor, composer,
handsome, kind, early 40s

Abigail

Servant to Thrale family

FRONT IMAGE: Joshua Reynolds (British, 1723–1792)
Mrs. Thrale and her Daughter Hester (Queeney), 1781
Oil on canvas, 140.3 x 148.6 cm, Gift of Lord Beaverbrook
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, accession number 1959.178

ACTORS

PERRY DANIEL - Hester Thrale

Perry Daniel is an actor, puppeteer, and director. At UCLA, she teaches Puppetry, Teaching Artistry, is Program Director of ArtsBridge (an arts enrichment program in partnership with LAUSD), and Co-Creative Director of the Pre-Collegiate Acting and Performance Summer Institute. Perry is also on the board of the Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry where she chairs the Outreach Committee. Favorite projects: Clowns Without Borders/South Africa tour, Nick. Jr.'s *The Wonder Pets*, Cyllene in *Trackers* at The Getty Villa. MFA Acting, UCLA.

JACOB LOUIS - Henry Thrale

Jacob Louis is a bicoastal Mexican-American actor, singer, composer, educator, and theater director. A recent graduate of UCLA's MFA program, his films include *Every Hidden Thing* (feature) and Netflix's *Mortel* and *Summer Nights*. Jacob's most recent professional stage performances include *Twelfth Night*, *Moby Dick Rehearsed* at Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum, and *You Can't Make This Sh*t Up: Selected Readings From the Mueller Report* at LA's Saban Theatre. He is a proud member of SAG-AFTRA, AEA, The Recording Academy, LULAC, Alpha Psi Omega, Educational Theatre Association, and the International Theatre Schools Association.

MICHAEL BAUER - Samuel Johnson

Michael Bauer is a recent graduate of UCLA's MFA acting program. Since graduating Michael has written, produced, and performed in such award-winning comedy films as *Farewell Mr. Baker*, and *Don't Jump* winning awards at Austin Film Fest, Oregon Film Fest, LA Comedy Fest and many more. When he is not performing onstage or producing, Michael works as an audiobook narrator for ACX Audible division.

BRETT CALO - James Boswell

Brett Calo received his MFA in Acting from UCLA and his BFA in Film from NYU Tisch. During his time at UCLA, Brett enjoyed playing Menelaos in Michael Hackett's production of *Helen*. His other favorite UCLA roles include Anton Schill in *The Visit* and Kulygin in *Three Sisters*. Since graduating, Brett has focused on musical theater and has also worked as a voice actor and casting director for Netflix, Amazon, and HBO. He is very grateful for this opportunity.

ROSHNI SHUKLA - Frances Burney

Roshni Shukla is a multidisciplinary theater artist. She recently was in the chorus of *The Bacchae* with the SITi Company at the Guthrie, BAM Harvey, and the Getty Villa. Roshni is a graduate of UCLA's MFA Theater program and BADA's Shakespeare program at Oxford University. TV Credits: *9-1-1* (FOX); *Roar* (Apple TV). Theater Credits: *Arranged Marriage* (Ryerson Theater, Toronto, Canada);

A Midsummer Night's Dream (UCLA); *A Christmas Carol* (A Noise Within); *Queen of The Remote Control* (Sacramento Theatre Company).

JESSICA TOLTZIS - "Queeney" Thrale

Jessica Toltzis is an LA-based actor. She holds an MFA in acting from UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. Her short film *Georgeanne.MOV*, which she wrote and starred in, won Best Micro Mockumentary at the 2020 Portland Comedy Film Festival and was a finalist at the 2020 Jelly Film Festival. Jessica is represented by Framework Entertainment and PKA. She is a proud member of SAG-AFTRA.

ISRAEL LÓPEZ - Gabriel Piozzi

Israel López is an artist based in Los Angeles and has performed in theaters across the country including The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Guthrie Theater, Kirk Douglas Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, Ojai Playwright's Conference, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 2021 he was awarded a play commission by the Latino Theater Company supported by Warner Media and the AT&T Foundation. He received his MFA in Acting from UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television.

ANABELA NGUYEN - Abigail

Anabela Nguyen is a Junior at UCLA TFT's Undergraduate Program with an emphasis in Acting. Anabela has recently performed at the Hammer Museum in *Quad*, also directed by Michael Hackett, and was the head makeup artist and lighting designer on *The W Project*.

FELICITY NUSSBAUM, Distinguished Research Professor at UCLA, is the author of books and articles on eighteenth-century topics. Researching her book, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater*, sparked her interest in writing plays about eighteenth-century women. This is her first play, and she is working on another about Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

MICHAEL HACKETT is a Professor of Directing and Theater History in the Department of Theater at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. He is a co-editor and wrote the introduction for *Five Comedies by Carlo Goldoni* for the University of Toronto Press.

Witty Woman: A Play in Two Acts is presented in conjunction with the conference *Celebrating Hester Thrale Piozzi (1741–1821)*. For more information and the full program schedule, please visit: www.1718.ucla.edu/events/thrale/

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