

# *The King Stag*

By Carlo Gozzi | Translated and Adapted by Natalya Baldyga

Directed by Natalya Baldyga  
Choreography by Daniel McCusker

Tufts University Department of Drama and Dance Winter Production

## **Synopsis**

Angela found the love of her life and was preparing to live happily ever after. But now her beloved king has been enchanted and his evil advisor has taken over the kingdom! What's a girl to do? Welcome to Carlo Gozzi's magical fairy tale of love and laughter, of transformation and treachery, of deceit and delight! Charming audiences since its premiere in eighteenth-century Venice, *The King Stag* combines hilarious physical comedy with theatrical beauty and charming romance. Will good triumph over evil? Can love really conquer all? And what's up with the mysterious parrot that's popping up everywhere? Join us in this fantastical world of magic and intrigue to find out!

*The King Stag* is one of several fairy tales for the stage that Carlo Gozzi wrote in 18th-century Venice, as part of his theatrical war against fellow playwright Carlo Goldoni. (Gozzi loved commedia dell'arte -- with its improvisation, physical comedy, stock characters, and masks -- whereas Goldoni was a fan of Molière and preferred to focus on dialogue and original characters.) This production will embrace Gozzi's theatrical magic, but without attempting to duplicate a historical commedia dell'arte performance. There will be improvisation and physical theatre (humans transforming into animals, humans transforming into other humans, set pieces that allow the actors to create and manipulate our magical world) and plenty of comedy. We will take a literal translation of the text and create a new adaptation, one that alters the gender and sexuality of some characters, takes the play out of a specifically European context, and gives women a lot more power than they were originally allowed. Actors will have an opportunity to help shape the adaptation during the course of rehearsals.

Act I of our original translation, as well as all three acts of a different translation, are available in the box office for your perusal.

## **Character Breakdown**

*The King Stag* requires 13 actors 4W, 5M, 4 M/F for numerous different roles.

- ANGELA (F) – a member of the court. Brave, smart, and resourceful. Not afraid to stand up for herself and others. Has the ability to see through facades and into the truth of people's hearts. In love with Deramo.
- LEANDER (F) – Angela's sister. A knight at court. Athletic, impetuous, and romantic by nature. In love with Clarissa.
- CLARISSA (F) – a member of the court. Sweet, honest, more timid than her friend Angela. In love with Leander.
- SMERALDINA (F) – social climber. Silly, vain, wildly flirtatious, and overly-confident in her own abilities. In an on-again, off-again relationship with Truffaldino.

- DERAMO (M) – the king. Smart, honest, impetuous, sometimes overly suspicious (he’s been burned in the past) and other times overly-trusting of the wrong people. In love with Angela.
- TARTAGLIA (M) – Deramo’s prime minister. Our villain. The father of Clarissa. Vain, ambitious, ruthless, clever – but not as smart as he thinks he is. Wants the throne. And Angela.
- PANTALONE (M) – Deramo’s second minister. Loving, goodhearted, a little foolish. The father of Angela and Leander.
- BRIGHELLA (M) – Deramo’s butler. The brother of Smeraldina. Pompous, rude, also a bit of a social climber, usually annoyed with his sister.
- TRUFFALDINO (M) – birdcatcher. Prone to emotional highs and lows, often in a dither. Not the brightest bulb, but somehow things always work out for him. In an on-again, off-again relationship with Smeraldina.
- CIGIOTTI (M/F) – storyteller, leads us through the world of the play – also plays a guard, an elderly peasant, a magic statue, and a bear!
- DURANDARTE (M/F) – magician, for most of the play is the puppeteer for our saucy parrot
- CHORUS (2 people, M/F) – **non-speaking roles**, ideal for mimes or dancers! – these performers will play our stags and help to create the physical world of the play.

A NOTE ON ACTING STYLE – some characters would benefit from training or experience in improv, physical comedy, clowning, and/or mime: Smeraldina, Brighella, Truffaldino, Cigolotti (and to a lesser extent: Leander and Pantalone)

A NOTE ON THE CHORUS – some characters will serve as part of an ensemble that will create the physical world of the play through movement and by manipulating elements of the scenic design. Chorus members include, at specific times, Leander, Clarissa, Smeraldina, Pantalone, Brighella, Truffaldino.

Although we especially welcome those with experience in improv, physical comedy, clowning, and/or mime, this shouldn’t dissuade you if you don’t have a lot of experience. The most important qualities that we are looking for are a sense of teamwork, a serious work ethic, curiosity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to leap into the unknown.

We welcome and encourage every person to audition for *The King Stag*. All roles are open to any race and ethnicity. Most roles are open to any range of physical ability (with the exception of the performers who play the stags or the bear) (yes, we have stags and a bear).

### **Audition Information**

Auditions will be **Thursday, September 8 from 6:00-10:00 PM** and **Friday, September 9 from 5:00-10:30 PM in the Performance Hangar**. Callbacks will be **Sunday, September 11 from 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM (including a dinner break)**. Please come to the Performance Hangar at least 10 minutes before your audition time to check in.

Please **prepare a comedic monologue** between 1-1.5 minutes in length. It can be either classic or contemporary, and you may read the opening monologue of our adaptation if you do not have anything else. When you come to audition, please wear loose clothing and shoes that allow you to move freely (no heels, flip flops, or heavy boots).

### **Rehearsals and Performances**

Rehearsals will begin **Monday, November 21, at 7:00pm** with design presentations and a read-through. Rehearsals for actors will be Monday-Thursday from 7:00-11:00 PM, and Sundays from 1:00-6:00 PM. There will be two all-day professional days on Tuesday, January 17 and Wednesday, January 18, which will **require you to return from winter recess early**. We will have rehearsals on Tuesday, November 22, so please book Thanksgiving travel plans accordingly.

Tech week will be **February 11-15. Performances are at 8:00 PM on February 16-18, and February 23-25 with an additional matinee at 2:00 PM on February 25.** Strike will be on Sunday, February 26. Although we can accommodate some conflicts for legitimate reasons during the rehearsal period, **we expect a fulltime commitment from actors during tech week and performances.** We have no understudies, so missing a performance is impossible.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Stage Manager, Mitchell Katz ([mitchell.katz@tufts.edu](mailto:mitchell.katz@tufts.edu))

Thank You!

Natalya Baldyga, Director  
Daniel McCusker, Choreographer  
Mitchell Katz, Stage Manager  
Peter Secrest, Assistant Director