



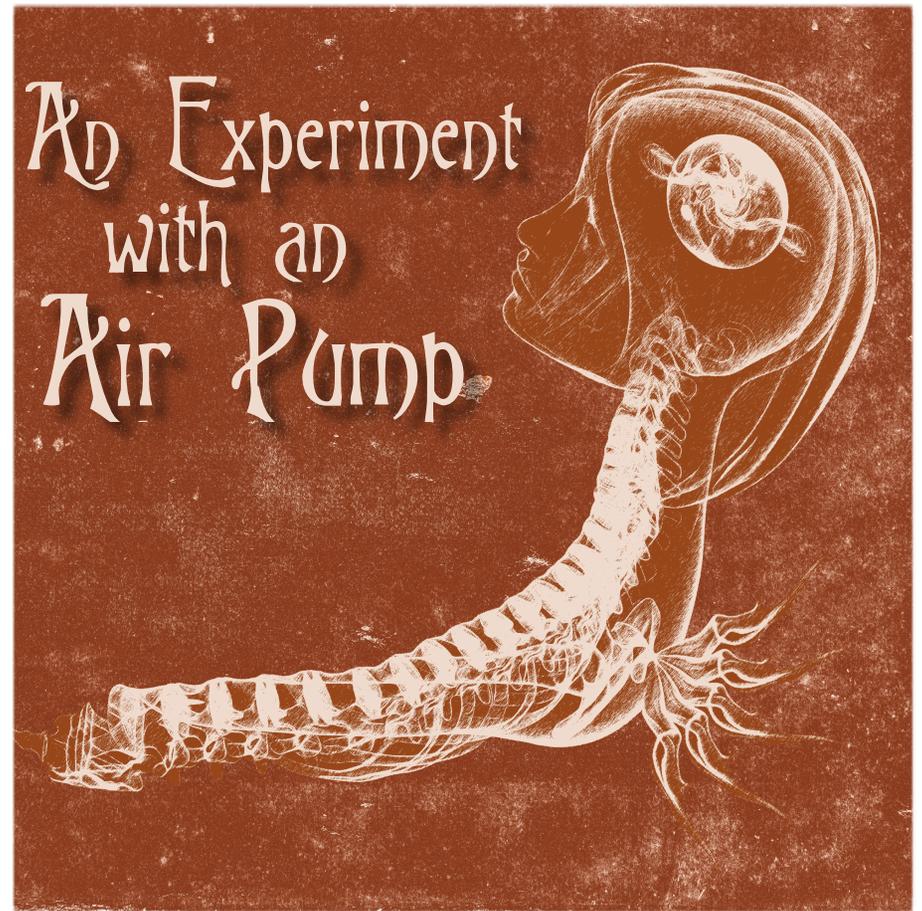
Written by British playwright and actress Shelagh Stephenson, the play was inspired by the painting “An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump” by Joseph Wright. This masterpiece from 1768 features human subjects and a scenario that informs many elements in the play. Wright’s work was known for exploring the relationship between science, religion, and industrialism, while implementing the use of chiaroscuro, a technique that emphasizes the

contrast of light and dark—much like the themes of this play. Reminiscent of a painter, Stephenson blends history, science, ethics, gender roles, matters of faith, and human nature on a three-dimensional canvas.

Like the remarkable painting that inspired it, this “Air Pump” explores the ethical complexities of placing fragile creatures under pressure—forces that result from the insatiable human passion for progress and the acquisition of knowledge. Though curiosity and creative inquiry have propelled our species to amazing advancements, those same traits often result in the abuse and destruction of innocent victims (whether intended or not). And yet, as Ellen notes in the prologue, the “intoxication of discovery” is a powerful motivator shared by many who have wanted “to be god.”

Stephenson explores this timeless layer of human nature and hubris through the use of a compelling dramatic structure—alternating between 1799 and 1999—while employing a shared setting and actors who perform roles in both centuries. In doing so, she achieves something that simultaneously pays homage to the singular and powerful moment captured in Wright’s painting, while adding dimensional and kinetic qualities to his subjects and themes. The end result confirms that while the machinery of human invention evolves with the passing of each century, our dilemmas and desires remain strikingly constant.

—David Legore



By Shelagh Stephenson

# An Experiment with an Air Pump

by Shelagh Stephenson

presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York

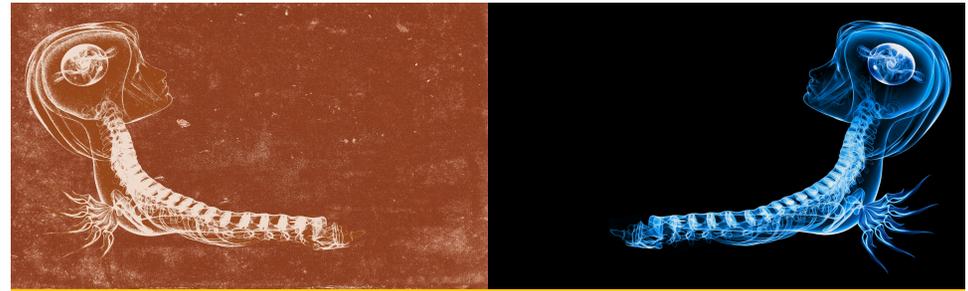
## CAST: (in Alphabetical Order)

ISOBEL	Brielle Brown
ROGET	Trey Davis
MARIA	Allisa Johnson
FENWICK/TOM	Zac Reynolds
HARRIET/KATE	Hannah Schmidt
SUSANNAH/ELLEN	Britnie Tucker
ARMSTRONG/PHIL	Jeron Tucker
MALE UNDERSTUDY	Whitten Helton
FEMALE UNDERSTUDY	Anna Midkiff

## ARTISTIC STAFF

DIRECTOR	Professor David Legore
PRODUCTION DESIGNER & TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	Professor Scott Spidell
ACTING COACH	Professor Shannon Ivey
COSTUME & MAKEUP DESIGNER	Emily Ullrich
STAGE MANAGER	Tyler Salinas
STUDENT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	Timothy Gapinski
MASTER ELECTRICIAN	Sarah Flores
LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR	Whitten Helton
MEDIA BOARD OPERATOR	Christopher DeLuca
RUNNING CREW/ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS	Bryan Mittelstadt Peyton Webster

CREW Members of the company and DRAM 101/111



## SCENE:

Time: The play takes place at the turn of two centuries: 1799 and 1999

Place: A home in Newcastle, England

The play is presented in two acts, with one 15 minute intermission.

## The TLU Dramatic Media Ensemble (in alphabetical order)

Ryan Beene	Whitten Helton	Shanice Philips
Brielle Brown	Allisa Johnson	Selina Ramirez*
Trey Davis	Caroline Jordan	Zac Reynolds
Christopher DeLuca	Robert M. Leija	Tyler Salinas*
Connor Dillon	Adriana Lopez	Hannah Schmidt
Sarah Flores	Anna Midkiff	Tabatha Steakley
Erika Gallo*	Bryan Mittelstadt	David Soop*
Timothy Gapinski*	Jordan Morales	Peyton Webster
Taylor Gardner*	Luke Nelson*	John Paul Woda

\*denotes Crew Head

## SPECIAL THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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EDDIE'S TAXIDERMY (Terry Jahns, owner) • BLUE HILLS ANTIQUE MALL