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Dramatic Publishing

IN THE COMPANY OF SINNERS AND SAINTS

A Play with Music by
MONICA MICHELL

In collaboration with
DIANE MICHELLE and BARBARA LAU

Music and lyrics by
DIANE MICHELLE and NICOLE ANDREWS



Dramatic Publishing

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The premier production of *In the Company of Sinners and Saints* was given at Texas State University-San Marcos, September 20 2010. Director: Heidi Mendez Harrison, scene design: Dwight Markus, costume design: Lindsay Jones, stage manager: Kristi Kyle.

CAST

Lucy. Nicole Maldonado
Alex. Kirsten Langham
JD Emily Darwin
Connor Auston Newman
Video Guy Burton Chance Murphey
St. Lucy. Nicole Bennett

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

The idea for *In the Company of Sinners and Saints* emerged from a conversation I had with a colleague at Texas State University-San Marcos as we discussed the challenges freshmen face in their first year away from home. For many students, freshman year is an unprecedented time of increased freedom and greater responsibility, of fewer rules but more consequences. We wanted to jumpstart a conversation about issues of personal accountability and moral ambiguity. We wanted to challenge the freshmen to think about difficult choices and we wanted to do it in a way that gave the students a voice. *In the Company of Sinners and Saints* was incorporated into the freshman year curriculum at Texas State University-San Marcos in what may have been the first-ever collaboration of its kind between a theatre department and a freshman year program at a major university. Over three thousand students and their professors saw and discussed the play as a part of the university's 2009-2010 Common Experience. My hope is that the play will challenge audiences of all ages to explore the role of duality in their own lives, to consider the nuanced differences between "avenge and revenge," to think about the rights and responsibilities of Internet use, and to examine the unexpected similarities between technology and religion revealed in the play. Audiences are expected to leave the theatre with more questions than answers. While it helps to know that Saint Lucy is the patron saint of the blind and that limbo is a place or state of uncertainty, even without this prior knowledge, audiences can relate to the moral dilemma Lucy faces.

NOTES ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Duality plays a prominent role in this drama. For the premiere at Texas State University-San Marcos, we used modular set pieces to suggest the various locations in the play. The simplicity of this design facilitated the quick changes between scenes and helped visually re-enforce the underlying concept that things are not always what they appear to be. An overhead projection screen helped to further establish location and added a layer of technology, appropriate in a play set in a technology-rich environment. The projections were especially effective in depicting the hospital monitor and the game show marquee in Act II. We used the projections to help blur the line between real and absurd, but other design choices could achieve the same effect. The projection screen could also be used for the optional YouTube video of the little girls singing their chant in the very beginning of the play.

The recurring motif of light and the frequent references to sight and blindness underscore the play's emphasis on the difficulty of seeing clearly. The light that Saint Lucy switches on with her opening line in Act II should be one that she can turn off and on as needed. "Lucy's Lullaby" is the only song sung live. All other music is played from the accompaniment CD. It is important that references to technology and movies stay current. Directors are encouraged to make the necessary adjustments to keep the script updated and relevant.

IN THE COMPANY OF SINNERS AND SAINTS

CHARACTERS

LUCY a 17-year-old girl

ALEX a 17-year-old girl

JD a 17-year-old girl

CONNOR a 15-year-old boy

VIDEO GUY a clerk at the video rental store

MOTHER Lucy's mother

ST. LUCY patron saint of the blind
(COP/CUSTOMER/DOCTOR)

TIME: The present.

ACT ONE

Three children (LUCY, ALEX and JD as little girls) run DC and recite the chant below while playing a three-way hand-clapping game. When they come to the word “hell,” LUCY and JD both put fingers to their lips in exaggerated avoidance of the forbidden word. ALEX brazenly shouts “hell,” which makes them all giggle. After the game, they run off laughing.

Alternatively, the chant can be heard only as an auditory element; or the children singing the chant can be shown in a YouTube-style video projection.

Saints and sinners, sinners and saints. One’s goody goody and the other one ain’t.

Saints go to heaven; sinners go to (hell). Sometimes the difference is really hard to tell.

SCENE 1

SCENE: *Friday morning. LUCY, ALEX, JD and CONNOR are seated in the car DC. ALEX sits in the driver’s seat. LUCY rides in the passenger seat. JD is relegated to the*

backseat but leans forward in an effort to be part of the front-seat conversation. CONNOR slumps in the seat behind ALEX, completely removed from the girls' conversation. All four wear clothing appropriate for high school. LUCY's outfit (including a hat) reflects her fashion edginess and innovative style. ALEX sports a very expensive, trendy look. JD's clothes are a cheap imitation of ALEX' style. CONNOR wears jeans and a T-shirt. All four use their electronics (iPods, cell phones, iPhones, etc.) throughout the scene. CONNOR has a small guitar case in the seat beside him. He carries the guitar with him wherever he goes. The business of driving, and all related action associated with being in the car, is pantomimed. As the lights come up, the girls recite the last lines of the chant in unison.

LUCY, ALEX, JD. ...saints go to heaven, sinners go to hell, sometimes the difference is really hard to tell! *(They all laugh.)* I can't believe you put that on YouTube. I swear! I could not stop laughing last night.

JD. You put that on YouTube? Alex! You promised you wouldn't!

ALEX. Oh come on, JD! We were in kindergarten. It's hilarious.

JD. I was fat!

ALEX. Chubby. But in a cute way.

LUCY. We looked so innocent.

ALEX. We looked adorable.

JD. Don't you think it's kind of random that the new blog is called, "Sinners and Saints"?

LUCY. What new blog?

JD. "Sinners and Saints." Haven't you seen it?

LUCY. No. Who writes it?

JD. Nobody knows. It's anonymous.

LUCY. What's it about?

JD. Everything. Students, teachers...what they're doing... or not doing! It's so cool! It's already had over 2000 hits. Everybody's talking about it.

ALEX. Well, *I'm* not. Can we move on?

JD. I'm just saying...

ALEX. So, Lucy, that's a new...look.

LUCY. Yeah. Like it?

ALEX. You'll never get the hat past Mr. Kellerman.

LUCY. So, I'll take it off if I see him.

JD. Is that real? (*She indicates something unusual on the hat: fur, a feather, a jewel, etc.*)

LUCY. I think so.

ALEX. Where'd you get it?

LUCY. Goodwill.

ALEX. Oh, Lucy, gross.

LUCY. What?

JD. My cousin once found a twenty-dollar bill in the pocket of a jacket she got at the thrift store.

ALEX. What does that have to do with anything?

JD. I'm just saying...

ALEX (*to LUCY, smugly*). We're meeting tonight. I told you he would.

LUCY. Who? Alex! Not that random creeper you met online?

ALEX. He's not a creep. And he's not random. We have mutual friends.

LUCY. You don't know anything about him.

ALEX. Exactly. That's why we're meeting.

JD. Remember what happened last time?

ALEX. Shut up, JD.

LUCY. She's got a point.

ALEX. He posted a picture. He's definitely *not* a creep.

LUCY. Well there you go, 'cause, gosh, an Internet photo, *that's* reliable.

ALEX. You're just jealous, Lucy.

LUCY. Jealous? Of what?

ALEX. Of me. 'Cause I'm willing to take a risk...and you're not.

LUCY. I take risks.

ALEX. Yeah, right. Thrift store hats.

JD. Lucy's the only one who dove off the high dive.

ALEX. I'm not talking about that kind of risk.

(LUCY stares straight ahead, stone-faced.)

JD. What kind of risk are you talking about?

ALEX. She knows.

LUCY. Why do you think breaking the rules makes you somehow better than the rest of us?

ALEX. I don't. But you do.

LUCY. I do not!

ALEX. Oh, you *know* you do, Lucy.

LUCY. I think I know what I think, Alex.

ALEX. Okay, okay. Fine. So, you'll come with me tonight?

(LUCY doesn't answer right away.)

JD. I'll go with you, Alex.

LUCY. Where are you meeting?

ALEX. At the MoviePlex.

LUCY. I have to be home by midnight.

ALEX. Tell your mom you're spending the night with me.

JD. I don't have a curfew.

LUCY. What are you going to tell *your* mom?

ALEX. She and my dad are in Cancun.

JD. I can come over. My mom won't care.

(ALEX and LUCY ignore JD.)

ALEX. Well?

LUCY *(after a moment of indecision)*. Okay. Just don't tell my mom your mom's not home.

JD. So, what time are we going to meet him?

(ALEX and LUCY exchange a look.)

ALEX. It's just gonna be me and Lucy tonight, JD. I don't want to overwhelm the guy.

JD. Oh come on! It's a movie theatre. There'll be tons of people.

ALEX. Meet us there. Get your mom to drop you off.

JD. You *know* she works the late shift.

ALEX *(her smile and tone are artificially solicitous as she looks at JD in the rearview mirror)*. Then, how about your dad?

JD. Just forget it.

LUCY. JD, I'll text you.

JD. Gee, thanks.

ALEX. So, did you get that at the thrift store, too?

LUCY (*fingering her necklace*). This? No, it was my great-grandmother's. I found it in a box with a bunch of other old stuff.

ALEX. What is it?

LUCY. Her Saint Lucy medal.

ALEX. Her what?

LUCY. Her Saint Lucy medal. It's like her patron saint or something. I don't know, my mom explained it. It's a name thing.

ALEX. Your great-grandmother was named Lucy, too?

LUCY. Uh huh.

ALEX. So maybe Saint Lucy's *your* patron saint.

LUCY. Yeah, well, I don't think it's automatic. (*Suddenly noticing a store up ahead.*) Hey, Alex, stop up there at the Film Attic, will you? I've got to return this DVD.

(*ALEX pantomimes changing lanes and pulling into the Film Attic parking lot.*)

CONNOR. Hey, why are we stopping? We're gonna be late again.

ALEX. No one except you pays attention to the first bell. JD, run this over to the drop box, will you?

JD. Why me?

ALEX. 'Cause if Lucy tries to run in those shoes, she'll break an ankle and then we really will be late. (*She hands the DVD to JD who grudgingly runs offstage.*)

LUCY. I read your poem in the paper, Connor.

CONNOR. You did?

LUCY. Yeah, it was really good. That stuff about the polar caps melting? I liked your metaphor.

ALEX. Excuse me. Maybe you could continue this excruciatingly mind-numbing conversation some other time?

(CONNOR rolls his eyes and returns to his iPod.)

LUCY. Jeez, Alex.

ALEX *(uses the rearview mirror to apply lip gloss, then turns to LUCY with a grin)*. My car, my rules! Hey, I'm kidding. I just wanted a chance to talk to you about JD before she comes back. *(She checks to make sure JD is nowhere near.)* You heard what's going on, right?

LUCY. No. What?

ALEX. Her dad and the secretary? I mean, really, how unoriginal is that? Anyway, there's gonna be a totally messy divorce.

LUCY. How do you know all this?

ALEX. My dad's law firm is representing her mom.

LUCY. Wow, poor JD.

ALEX. I know. I feel really bad for her. Do you think she's been putting on weight?

LUCY. What? No...what kind of a question is that?

ALEX. It's just that someone like JD really can't afford to get all fat. You know. *(LUCY gives ALEX a look.)* What? I'm not trying to be mean. You saw that YouTube video. She has a tendency. I'm just trying to prevent a disaster, okay? We're her friends.

(JD comes running back to the car and climbs in.)

ALEX. What took you so long?

JD. The stupid return slot was jammed. I had to go all the way inside. Hey, guess what? There's a new guy working.

ALEX. Is he cute?

JD. He was nice.

ALEX. Oh. *(She starts the car and reaches to turn on the radio. The song "My Mean Side" is playing. Music cue.)*

JD. Oooh! "My Mean Side"! I love this song. Turn it up.

(LUCY reaches to turn up the volume on the radio. LUCY, ALEX and JD sing along.)

(SONG: MY MEAN SIDE)

My mean side, my mean side, oh what a keen side.
To come up in a fight or perhaps just to spite.
It comes out of nowhere, crawls up through my
throat,
it claws at my gums wearing a heavy black coat.
It knows all the juice, it knows all the dirt;
its main objective being solely to hurt.
But shortly it ceases, shrinks back and deceases;
the dirty deed is done. The battle's been won.
Oh what a fun time my mean side has had
And until the next time, I'm left oh so sad.

(As the song nears the end, CONNOR tries to be heard over their singing.)

CONNOR. Alex. Alex. HEY ALEX! Pull over. There's a cop behind you.

ALEX (*checks the rearview mirror and turns off the radio*).

Oh crap! Not again. Lucy! Slide over here and take the wheel.

LUCY. Are you crazy?

ALEX. I can't get another ticket!

LUCY. No!

ALEX. Come on. I'll pay the ticket. I just can't lose my license.

LUCY. The cop will see us.

ALEX. You can't see through these windows. Please. (*Three short bursts of a police siren are heard, the kind that indicates that the driver should pull over. ALEX pantomimes pulling over.*) Lucy! You know I'd do it for you.

LUCY (*muttering as she exchanges places with ALEX*). Oh! I can't believe I'm even doing this.

(*COP enters. Begins to walk slowly toward the car.*)

JD. Lucy! Your seatbelt. Oh great. It's a lady cop.

ALEX. We're screwed.

COP. Everything okay in here? You seemed a bit reluctant to pull over.

LUCY. Yes, ma'am, I was, um, looking for a safe place... out of the flow of traffic, you know?

COP. I see. And you are?

LUCY. Lucy. Lucy Sullivan.

COP. And is this your vehicle, Lucy Sullivan?

LUCY. Um, no. No, ma'am. I'm just driving. It's my friend's car, actually. She, uh—

ALEX. —I sprained my ankle yesterday in volleyball practice. The doctor said—

COP. —Uh huh, I see. Where are you headed?

LUCY. School. The high school. This is our carpool group.

COP. Carpool. Really. Well, isn't that conscientious. *(She shines her flashlight at the others in the car.)* Not planning to skip school are you? *(JD and CONNOR shake their heads vigorously.)* Well, I don't want you to be late on my account. Look, the reason I stopped you is because your right brake light is out. You'll want to get that fixed.

ALEX. That's it?

LUCY. Yes, ma'am. We'll take care of it. Right after school. Thank you. Thank you.

COP. Just doin' my job. You have a good morning.

(The COP exits. LUCY and the others can't believe their good luck. After a beat, JD's high-pitched giggle breaks the tension and all four dissolve into laughter as LIGHTS FADE.)