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Dramatic Publishing

ARCHIPELAGO

A Full-length Play
by
LeeAnne Hill Adams



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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LeeAnne Hill Adams

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ARCHIPELAGO premiered at Brigham Young University (Provo, Utah) at the Pardoe Theatre on March 19-April 5, 2003, with the following:

CAST

Nina DIANE RANE
Peasant Woman, Old Woman, Female Prisoner #2
ANNEMARIE HINTZE GARRET
Vyshinsky, Factory Worker, Dima, Drunk Man.
MACLAIN NELSON
Passenger, Criminal, Scrubwoman AMANDA SCHUTZ
Yagoda, Announcer, Factory Worker, Andrei, Garanin
PAUL GABRIELSEN
Yezhov, NKVD Officer, Factory Worker,
Examining Judge, Michael, Guard #2 CORT KIRKSEY
Krylenko, Factory Worker, Valeri, Old Bolshevik
LOGAN MILLER
Molotov, Factory Worker, Pavlik’s Father, Criminal,
Guard #1, Censor, Sasha BENJAMIN A. SANSOM
Nursing Mother, Young Girl #1 BRYN CHANDLER
Stalin, Peasant Man, Factory Worker, Man at Train,
Criminal, Camp Manager. CLAY BUNKER

Nadya JONI H. CLAUSEN
Katya. LAUREL SANDBERG
Female Prisoner #1, Young Girl #2 HOLLIE BEARD
Children JANELLE MATHENY, TORINA MOORE,
AARON STEWART, MICHAEL STEWART,
BRADFORD WINDLEY, ALLI WINDLEY

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director RODGER SORENSEN
Media Director THOMAS RUSSELL
Line Producer RUSS RICHINS
Production Stage Manager. EMILY PROVANCE
Media Technical Director TYLER WESTON
Dramaturg SHELLEY TUCKFIELD GRAHAM
Choreographer JONI H. CLAUSEN
Scenic Designer JENNI NELSON
Costume Designer SARAH LOCK
Lighting Designer. MICHAEL G. HANDLEY
Assistant Lighting Designer DAVE BILLINGS
Make-up and Hair Designers LUCY D. BARBER,
JENNIFER MORALES
Sound Designer. KREG PEELER
Music Composer and Designer SCOTT THOMAS LESSER
Assistant Costume Designers EMILY CANADY,
EMILY FICKENWIRTH
Assistant Stage Managers MEAGAN DOWNEY, J. SCOTT
MONTGOMERY
Assistant Media Technical Director. CHRISTINA LYON
Sound Engineer. KENNETH GOEPFERT
Make-up and Hair Running Crews. TMA 367 STUDENTS
Dressers SYLVIA LOEHNDORF, AARON PAGET,
DAVE MASON

ARCHIPELAGO

A Full-length Play

For an ensemble cast of ten actors—5 female, 5 male. Each member of the ensemble plays multiple parts. Listed below are the play's principle characters. This list does not include all of the characters in the play.

PRINCIPLE CHARACTERS

NINA: Based on gulag survivor Nina Hagen-Torn, Nina is a middle-aged woman who at times serves as a guide to our journey through the camps. Nina Hagen-Torn was nicknamed “Sunshine” by her fellow prisoners. She embodies hope and optimism even in the face of brutality.

VALERI: An actor in his mid-30s, separated from his wife and children and imprisoned in Far Eastern Siberia.

NADYA: An undisputed star of the Leningrad stage in her late 20s, also now a prisoner. She is the quintessential diva, with a strength of will that lifts her above camp life.

DIMA: Former theatrical director—now prisoner—who organizes his fellow prisoners into a theatrical troupe for a performance of *The Inspector General*.

KATYA: A girl in her early 20s. She retains a sincere caring for her fellow prisoners even while her belief in the goodness of others is being shattered.

CAMP MANAGER: Head of the Siberian labor camp in which the play is set, he is a Communist idealist as well as a lover of the arts.

MOLOTOV: Stalin's right-hand man during the Purge and the Terror of the late 1930s. He was instrumental in the creation of the system of concentration camps later known as the Gulag Archipelago.

GARANIN: Red army general who oversaw the mass executions of hundreds of thousands of political prisoners in Siberia in 1938.

PLAYWRIGHTS NOTES

ABOUT CASTING: There is essentially no maximum limit to the number of actors in the ensemble. There are no specific requirements in terms of age, race or body type for the actors in the ensemble. Each actor is intended to play a range of roles.

ABOUT THE SET: The set is intended to be theatrical rather than realistic. The space should remain fluid—the action of the play moves rapidly through dozens of settings, some undefined. Therefore, the set should be as simple and suggestive as possible.

ARCHIPELAGO

SCENE: *The space is dark and bare-fluid. Settings are suggested by light, minimal props and the actors' movements.*

AT RISE: *Lights up on NINA, alone at first. She is gradually joined by the members of the ENSEMBLE who enter randomly, set the stage, talk among themselves, etc. They are fully aware of the audience.*

NINA *(to the audience)*. We don't have much to work with. An empty stage is like a blank sheet of paper. Just scratching a few lines on it doesn't make a story. You won't find a story on a stage, either. All we can give you are lines on paper, careful movements, thoughtful acting. Not much to work with.

FEMALE ACTOR #1 *(laughing)*. What kind of an introduction is that?

MALE ACTOR #1. You want them to leave?

NINA. But it's true. We can't make it real. *(To audience.)* The story has to happen in your minds; we can only hint at it. So, why are we here? [Insert name of Male Actor #2], why are we here? *(Pause as MALE ACTOR #2 considers carefully. The other members of the ENSEMBLE throw out suggestions.)*

MALE ACTOR #2. Because we have a duty to the dead.

(The ENSEMBLE is silent.)

NINA. But how do we begin to tell their story?

FEMALE ACTOR #2. We're not the first to try.

NINA. No. Millions of lines have been written, but did they tell it?

MALE ACTOR #3. They couldn't.

NINA *(to audience)*. The story has to happen in your minds. You can see it, if you'll look past the lights...

(When the ENSEMBLE speaks together, each new line indicates a different voice.)

ENSEMBLE.

The actors,

The sets.

Look past the stage.

See it.

Moscow.

A room in the Kremlin behind thick wooden doors.

A lacquered table.

And around the table, some very important men.

In 1935, these were the most important men in the Soviet Union.

Strange, the lines in the history books don't mention the table.

The thick wooden doors kept history from happening there.

But you can see it.

You've got to see it.

That's where our story begins.

(Lights out on NINA and the ENSEMBLE as they come up on the conference. Around the table sit STALIN, MOLOTOV, YEZHOV, YAGODA, KRYLENKO and VYSHINSKY.)

YEZHOV. Kulaks! Bourgeois capitalists! What do they need their gold for? You should see the way they hoard it! We had to beat the last fellow black and blue and threaten to do the same to his daughter before he'd cough it up.

VYSHINSKY. How much did he have?

YEZHOV. Almost thirty thousand rubles. Hidden in the basement of his shop. Dirty, capitalist dog! What business does he have saving up that kind of money?

KRYLENKO. While we can barely afford to keep the lights on!

VYSHINSKY. Forget lights! I need bicycles! A bicycle for every investigator,¹ that's what's needed! How am I supposed to administer justice without bicycles?

YEZHOV. Soviet justice is based on principles, not bicycles, Comrade!

VYSHINSKY. Yes...quite so. That is...it's easy to say that. And that brings me to another issue I am compelled to address—

KRYLENKO. No one's compelling you.

VYSHINSKY. Principles we have aplenty, but—

KRYLENKO. Don't start, Vyshinsky.

VYSHINSKY. The Justice Commissar and I are bound to disagree on this subject, but I still say you can't have a court of law without a prosecutor and a defender.

1. Title of an article written by Vyshinsky in *Sovetskaia iustitsiia* in 1935.

KRYLENKO. And spend all day debating the issue? If the judge doesn't know what side he's on before he hears the case, what good is he?

VYSHINSKY. And how about a few witnesses? Let's get them in there, I say! Can't have a trial without a witness! At the very least the *accused* should be there.

KRYLENKO. Nonsense! Once he's signed his confession, why drag him hither and yon?

VYSHINSKY. It is not by accident that the martial law statute of Peter the Great built its system of evidence precisely on the personal confession of the accused.²

KRYLENKO. Just what are you implying, Comrade Procurator?

VYSHINSKY. That your nihilistic attitude toward our legal system has led only to backwardness.

KRYLENKO. Read your Marx, Comrade.

VYSHINSKY. I've read Marx, Comrade. And Lenin. Nowhere in their writings do I find the tendency toward fascism that sits at this very table! (*These are strong words. A pause as KRYLENKO and VYSHINSKY stare each other down.*)

YAGODA. For now, let's just agree to disagree. The Commissar of the Interior was telling us about the persecution—or rather, the *prosecution* of the merchant class.

YEZHOV. Capitalist filth! At least some good has come of them. Since we made it a crime to own gold, people have been turning in their neighbors right and left. We've confiscated millions of rubles from business owners and the like. (*Quickly.*) Not that money is the

2. From an article written by Vyshinsky in 1936.

important issue. (*Quick agreement from around the table.*)

MOLOTOV. The issue is counterrevolution, Comrades. (*All attention turns to MOLOTOV.*) As Comrade Yezhov has just pointed out, the seeds of bourgeois capitalism are deeply planted in our new nation.

YEZHOV (*shaking his head sadly*). Deeply planted. (*MOLOTOV glares at him.*)

YEZHOV (*mumbling*). Sorry.

MOLOTOV (*resuming*). Counterrevolutionaries abound! Comrade Stalin has just informed me that they are *absolutely everywhere*. It's a fact, Comrades! Spies, saboteurs, wreckers, dangerous elements...they're all around us. If the good Soviet people only knew the threat they live under, they'd be racing to the NKVD to turn each other in. We must purge our infant nation of poison, Comrades. We can't do it alone. The proletariat must band together in this crusade against counterrevolution. Millions of counterrevolutionaries are walking the streets, Comrades. Imagine them, walking along, happily scheming the destruction of the Party!

YAGODA. How many did you say?

MOLOTOV. Millions.

YAGODA. But our prisons can't accommodate—

KRYLENKO. Could shoot them.

VYSHINSKY. What'll we do with them all?

MOLOTOV. Funny you should ask.

(Immediately the lights in the room go down, a screen drops, and a slide show begins. The first slide is a map of the Soviet Union. MOLOTOV uses a ridiculously long pointer to indicate different areas on the map.)

MOLOTOV. What better place for counterrevolutionaries to begin their reeducation than in Far Eastern Siberia. I'm thinking here... *(Points to Kolyma on the map.)* Kolyma Region. Nobody lives there besides a few native tribal types—they'll be happy enough to leave. Plenty of space. Nice and remote. The ideal location for Enemies of the People to learn the error of their ways. Not that they'll be sitting around dwelling on it, mind you.

(New slide. An exaggerated, cartoonish graph showing the amount of gold in Kolyma compared to the gold anywhere else in the world.)

MOLOTOV. Why not open up a few mines? If they're there anyway, let's put them to work. *(Indicating the chart.)* And look at that! Comrade Stalin has just informed me that there's more gold in Kolyma than *anywhere else in the world*. No point letting it sit in the ground. And since nobody else is going to go into that godforsaken, frozen wasteland, why not let some prisoners have a go at it? Think of the good that would come to the Party and to the proletariat! We've already proven that prison labor can build roads...

(Slide showing road construction.)

MOLOTOV. Canals...

(Slide.)

MOLOTOV. Railroads.

(Slide.)

MOLOTOV. Think what else we could do with such a work force.

(Slide showing a question mark.)

YEZHOV. Prison labor.

VYSHINSKY. Cheap.

MOLOTOV. Not that money is the important issue here. *(Quick agreement from around the table.)* Comrade Stalin is ever vigilant in stamping out sedition, treason, and counterrevolutionary activities. Are we as vigilant? Are the Soviet people as vigilant? Have they been taught that there are Enemies of the People among them? At work.

(Slide.)

MOLOTOV. At school.

(Slide.)

MOLOTOV. In their neighborhoods.

(Slide.)

MOLOTOV. In their very homes.

(Slide.)

MOLOTOV. Have they been taught to be on the alert for counterrevolutionaries, spies, and other dangerous ele-

ments? If the Soviet people only knew their duty to report and denounce these Enemies of the People, we could have millions of them off the streets and where they belong.

KRYLENKO. In prison.

YEZHOV. In Kolyma.

VYSHINSKY. In the mines.

MOLOTOV. Exactly so.

VYSHINSKY. Brilliant.

MOLOTOV. Just serving the people, Comrades. That's what we're all here for. That's what makes it all worth it
(Nods and sighs from around the table.)

YEZHOV *(standing in salute)*. Comrades, it's a great day for socialism.

(Lights out on the conference.)

THE CAMPAIGN OF VIGILANCE

(A strobe light makes the following action look like an old newsreel. A group of CHILDREN play with a ball. A voice comes over the action.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). Kids, Comrade Stalin is your friend. He loves each of you and wants you to be builders of the nation.

(STALIN joins the CHILDREN in their ball-tossing game.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). Each of you can be a hero like the Collective Farmers and the Factory Workers.

(A young PEASANT COUPLE strike a pose with sickles and sheaves of wheat. A small group of dirty, but happy FACTORY WORKERS wipe their faces and hold aloft their hammers.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). Sign up now to be a Young Pioneer. *(CHILDREN stand in a line at attention and receive pins.)* You'll be on your way to a place in the great Communist Party that is bringing our country into the light of socialism! *(A large group of ADULTS and CHILDREN cheer and celebrate.)* And remember, kids, to be good Young Pioneers. Comrade Stalin loves you. The Communist Party loves you and needs your loyalty! *(STALIN hugs the CHILDREN.)* Remember Pavlik Morozov. He was a Young Pioneer like you.

(PAVLIK strikes a valiant pose.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). Little Pavlik was loyal to the Party; he knew right from wrong. He knew how much Comrade Stalin was depending on him. When Pavlik's father opposed Comrade Stalin's call to the Collective Farms, Pavlik knew his duty and he didn't hesitate.

(PAVLIK's FATHER shakes his fist, ranting and raving wildly.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). He reported his father to the NKVD.

(A smiling NKVD OFFICER shakes PAVLIK's hand.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). Pavlik lost one father...

(The NKVD OFFICER forces the father to his knees and shoots him in the head.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). But he gained another.

(PAVLIK rushes to STALIN, who lifts him up and spins him around.)

ANNOUNCER (V/O). Remember, kids, life can be confusing. You'll always be right if you're loyal and true to the Party and to Comrade Stalin, who loves each one of you!

(STALIN and PAVLIK strike a tender pose. Lights go to black.)

THE NURSING MOTHER

(Lights up on the FEMALE ENSEMBLE.)

FEMALE ENSEMBLE.

She was the wife of a government official.

(The MOTHER stands alone and desperate.)

FEMALE ENSEMBLE.

A good man. They had two children. A boy and a baby girl.

After his arrest, she was thrown out on the street.

Who would house the family of an Enemy of the People?

She had to find work.