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Dramatic Publishing

A Play
by
JOHN OSBORNE

LUTHER



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(LUTHER)

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CAST

KNIGHT

PRIOR

MARTIN

HANS

LUCAS

WEINAND

TETZEL

STAUPITZ

CAJETAN

MILTITZ

LEO

ECK

KATHERINE

HANS, THE YOUNGER

AUGUSTINIANS, DOMINICANS,

HERALD, HUNTSMEN,

PEASANTS, NOBLEMEN, EMPEROR, ETC.

The world premiere of LUTHER took place at the Paris Festival of 1961 under the direction of Tony Richardson, with decor by Jocelyn Herbert, and starring Albert Finney. It opened at the Royal Court in London, then played at the Edinburgh Festival and returned to London's Phoenix Theatre.

On September 25, 1963, LUTHER opened at the St. James Theatre in New York, produced by the David Merrick Foundation, directed by Tony Richardson, with the original sets and costumes, and Albert Finney, John Moffatt and Peter Bull from the original cast. The production subsequently moved to the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre and in April commenced a twelve-week tour. The following season brought an extensive coast-to-coast tour with the original sets and staging, and Alan Bergmann as Luther.

This edition is based on the New York production, taking into account slight changes and adjustments made to accommodate various theatres and touring situations. Two falcons and three Russian wolfhounds were replaced by a hawk and two Irish wolfhounds. Two children in the original company appeared in the Tetzl retinue and later as pages in the Diet of Worms. The opening line of ten monks and the allocation of business in the first act is based on the touring production, as is the Diet of Worms entrance. Both sequences and the "Eine Feste Burg" can be enlarged according to the available cast. In New York, a broad flight of stairs into the orchestra pit was used for the entrance of the principals in the opening of Act III.

When casting is limited, principals from Acts II and III can double as monks in Act I with attention to wig and makeup change and the assignment of the least conspicuous business. Principal roles in such combination as Lucas and Eck or the Prior and Cajetan can and have been double cast. Caution should be used in combining certain rhetorical roles such as Tetzl and Leo.

Mitchell Erickson,
Production Stage Manager

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: *The Convent of the Augustinian Order of Eremites at Erfurt. 1506.*

SCENE TWO: *The same. A year later.*

SCENE THREE: *Two hours later.*

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE: *The Market Place. Jütebog. 1517.*

SCENE TWO: *The garden of the Eremite Cloister. Wittenberg. 1517.*

SCENE THREE: *The Castle Church. Wittenberg. Eve of All Saints. 1517.*

SCENE FOUR: *The Fugger Palace. Augsburg. October 1518.*

SCENE FIVE: *A hunting lodge, Magliana, Italy. 1519.*

SCENE SIX: *Wittenberg. 1520.*

ACT THREE

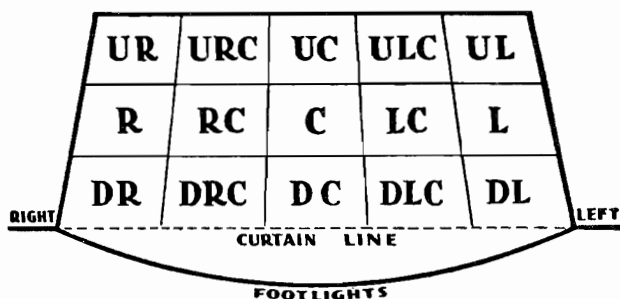
SCENE ONE: *The Diet of Worms. 1521.*

SCENE TWO: *Wittenberg. 1525.*

SCENE THREE: *The Eremite Cloister, Wittenberg. 1530.*

NOTE: At the opening of most scenes, the Knight appears with helmet, gloves and banner, announces the time and place, then retires.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

ACT TWO

Scene Five

SCENE: *Hunting horns are heard as though from different parts of a forest. Lights build to reveal a large, ornately framed panel stage R which contains a tapestry-like hunting scene. At the top of the panel are suspended the arms, the brass balls, of the Medici. In front of the panel is a carved folding chair with tooled leather seat and back. The KNIGHT sweeps downstage and circles L, banner flying.*

KNIGHT. A Hunting Lodge, Magliana, Northern Italy.

[*Amid offstage cries and shouts, the Pope's retinue enters briskly from D L, led by two attendants with prancing wolfhounds, one moving U R, the other taking position left of the chair. Another huntsman carrying a carved T-shaped perch with two hooded falcons crosses to D R, and a fourth carrying a crossbow, quiver with arrows, and the Pope's black leather gauntlets takes position at the right of the chair. MILTITZ enters from U R and takes position right of the KNIGHT, who surveys the scene from C.*]

KNIGHT. Karl von Miltitz, Chamberlain of the Pope's household. [*The KNIGHT steps smartly downstage and faces L.*]
Pope Leo the Tenth.

[*The KNIGHT exits U L as the POPE sweeps in, richly dressed in hunting clothes, long boots, plumed hat, and cape. He is followed by his secretary, a Dominican, who carries a writing board which contains ink and quill and a jeweled reading glass. The Pope is indolent, cultured, intelligent, extremely restless, and well able to assimilate the essence of anything before anyone else. While he is listening, he is able*

to play with the birds or dogs, or take practice aims with the crossbow. As he reaches center stage, MILTITZ meets him, kneeling to kiss the Pope's ring, and then bends to the toe. The horns fade.]

LEO. I should forget it. I've got my boots on. [*Crossing to chair and sitting.*] Well! Get on with it. We're missing the good weather. [*MILTITZ has a letter in his belt, which he reads.*]

MILTITZ. "To the most blessed father Leo the Tenth, sovereign bishop, Martin Luther, Augustine friar, wishes eternal salvation. I am told that there are vicious reports circulating about me, and that my name is in bad odor with your holiness. I am called a heretic, apostate, traitor and many other insulting names. I cannot understand all this hostility, and I am alarmed by it. But the only basis of my tranquility remains, as always, a pure and peaceful conscience. [*LEO snorts abstractedly.*] Deign to listen to me, most holy father, to me who is like a child.

[*LEO rises impatiently, snaps fingers for crossbow which he cocks, then extends hand for arrow which he fixes in place, and stands scanning horizon D L.*]

"There have always been, as long as I can remember, complaints and grumbling in the taverns about the avarice of the priests and attacks on the power of the keys. And this has been happening throughout Germany. When I listened to these things my zeal was aroused for the glory of Christ, so I warned not one, but several princes of the Church. [*LEO starts across R.*] But, either they laughed in my face or ignored me. The terror of your name was too much for everyone. [*LEO stops at this, then proceeds U R, scanning for game and taking aim.*] It was then I published my disputation, nailing it on the door of the Castle Church here in Wittenberg. And now, most holy father, the whole world has gone up in flames. Tell me what I should do? I cannot retract—[*LEO whips around. MILTITZ, occupied with the letter, reads on.*—]—but this thing has drawn down hatred on me

from all sides, and I don't know where to turn to but to you. I am far too insignificant to appear before the world in a matter as great as this.

[LEO snaps his fingers to glance at this passage in the letter. The secretary crosses to LEO, hands him a jeweled reading glass, and clears U C. LEO reads, and returns letter to MILTITZ, who continues reading. LEO moves D C.]

"But in order to quiet my enemies and satisfy my friends, I am now addressing myself to you, most holy father, and speak my mind in the greater safety of the shadow of your wings. [LEO crosses to bird D R and strokes feathers.] All this respect I show to the power of the keys. If I had not behaved properly, it would have been impossible for the most serene Lord Frederick, Duke and Elector of Saxony, who shines in your apostolic favor, to have endured me in his University of Wittenberg. Not if I am as dangerous as is made out by my enemies. [LEO crosses back to dog U R and stands patting till end of letter.] For this reason, most holy father, I fall at the feet of your holiness, and submit myself to you, with all I have and all that I am. Declare me right or wrong. Take my life, or give it back to me, as you please. Written the day of the Holy Trinity in the year 1518, Martin Luther, Augustine Friar."

[They wait for LEO to finish his playing and give them his full attention. He crosses D C thoughtfully, concealing his feelings until he speaks.]

LEO. Double-faced German bastard! Why can't he say what he means? [Handing glass back to secretary.] What else? [Crossing to sit.]

MILTITZ. He's said he's willing to be judged by any of the universities of Germany, except Leipzig, Erfurt and Frankfurt, which he says are not impartial. He says it's impossible for him to appear in Rome in person.

LEO. I'm sure.

MILTITZ. Because his health wouldn't stand up to the rigors of the journey.

LEO. Cunning! Cunning German bastard! What does Staupitz say for him?

MILTITZ. "The reverend father, Martin Luther, is the noblest and most distinguished member of our university. For years, we have watched his talents——"

LEO. Yes, well, we know all about that. Write to Cajetan. Take this down. We charge you to summon before you once more, Martin Luther. This time, invoke for this purpose, the aid of our very dear son in Christ, Maximilian, and all the other princes in Germany, together with all communities, universities, potentates ecclesiastic and secular. Once you get possession of him, keep him in safe custody, so that he may be brought before us. [*Rises, snaps for gauntlets, which he puts on.*] If, however, he should return to his duty of his own accord and begs forgiveness, we give you the power to receive him into the perfect unity of our Holy Mother the Church. [*Crossing R.*] But, should he persist in his obstinacy and you cannot secure him, we authorize you to outlaw him in every part of Germany. To banish and excommunicate him. [*MILTITZ, appalled, starts to interject, but LEO whirls on him with pointed emphasis.*] Together with all persons of rank who do not assist in apprehending him. [*LEO continues cross R to bird. Taking tether ring in left hand and bird on right wrist.*] As for the laymen, if they do not immediately obey your orders, declare them infamous, deprived of Christian burial and stripped of anything they may hold either from the apostolic see or from any lord whatsoever. There's a wild pig in our vineyard, and it must be hunted down and shot. Given under the seal of the Fisherman's Ring, et cetera. That is all! [*Makes a sweeping exit U R. The hunting horns flare up as lights fade to blackout.*]

ACT TWO

Scene Six

SCENE: *The ominous tolling of a great bell mingles with the fading hunting horns. The bell continues as lights come up on a large replica of the decorative cover page of the Papal Bull suspended U C. The pulpit is now D R with the steps swiveled to face the audience. MARTIN hurtles on stage, bull in hand, ascending the pulpit as the bell fades.]*

MARTIN. I have been served with a piece of paper. Let me tell you about it. It has come from a latrine called Rome. It is called the papal bull and it claims to excommunicate me, Dr. Martin Luther. These lies they rise up from this screeled like fumes from the bog of Europe; because papal decretals are the devil's excretals. I'll hold it up for you to see properly. You see the signature? Signed beneath the seal of the Fisherman's Ring by one certain midden cock called Leo, an overindulged jakes' attendant to Satan himself, a glittering worm in excrement, known to you as his holiness the Pope. You may know him as the head of the Church. Which he may still be: Like a fish is the head of a cat's dinner, eyes without sight clutched to a stick of sucked bones. God has told me: there can be no dealings between this cat's dinner and me. And, as for this bull, it's going to roast, it's going to roast and so are the balls of the Medici! [MARTIN thrusts the bull overhead and rips it in half. There is thunder and an outburst of dissonant chords from an offstage choir. MARTIN gasps, whirls in the pulpit as though struck, and half falls, half stumbles from the pulpit, swinging from the rail as he drops to the floor and crouches at the side of the steps. The lights on the bull and pulpit fade as lights from D L and D R illuminate the kneeling MARTIN, casting great shad-

ows on the side walls.] Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, thou my God, my God, help me against the reason and wisdom of the world. You must—there's only you—to do it. This cause is not mine but yours. For myself, I've no business to be dealing with the great lords of this world. I want to be still, in peace, and alone. My God, my God, do you hear me? Are you dead? Are you dead? No, you can't die, you can only hide yourself, can't you? Lord, I'm afraid. Breathe into me, in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, who shall be my protector and defender, yes, my mighty fortress. Give me life, O Lord. Give me life.

CURTAIN