

Roe

by Lisa Loomer

World Premiere

Commissioned and Produced

by The Oregon Shakespeare

Festival

(Bill Rauch, Artistic Director;

Paul Nicholson, Executive

Director)

Meredith College Theatre

presents

Roe

by Lisa Loomer

Director

Lormarev Jones

Scenic &

Lighting Design

Jenni Mann Becker

Costume Design

Dr. Rebecca Bailey

Production Stage

Manager

Kelsey McCrary

Assistant Stage

Manager &

Prop Design

Emma K. Johnson

Sound Designer

Lizzy Andrews

Technical Director

Jock Brocki

Dramaturge's Note

Roe vs. Wade (1973) was a landmark Supreme Court decision which held that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees a “right to privacy”, including the right of an individual to determine whether or not to get an abortion. In 1969, Norma McCorvey was pregnant and had gone to adoption lawyer Henry McCluskey to see if he knew of any doctors that would give her an abortion. McCluskey had recently worked on a case with Linda Coffee, and he knew that she was in need of a plaintiff for a case that she was building against Texas’s anti-abortion laws. McCluskey told Coffee about McCorvey, and the two women—along with Sarah Weddington—met at Columbo’s pizzeria in Dallas to discuss McCorvey’s case.

Roe was argued in the Supreme Court in 1971, and again in 1972, with the decision being held in 1973. In 1971, the oral arguments were done by Sarah Weddington for Jane Roe—McCorvey’s pseudonym— and by Jay Floyd, a lawyer from Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade’s

Dramaturge's Note

office, for the defense. Weddington reargued the prosecution's case in 1972, and Robert Flowers replaced Floyd to argue for the defense. The case was decided in 1973 with a majority opinion written by Justice Harry A. Blackmun. Blackmun was not expected to rule in favor of Roe because, as an appointee of President Nixon, he typically ruled in favor of conservative ideologies. However, Blackmun strongly favored the constitutional "right to privacy", which was a major question in Roe.

After Roe, Sarah Weddington became the first woman to represent Travis County in the Texas House of Representatives, where she served three terms. Linda Coffee returned to bankruptcy law and owned a firm. Norma McCorvey became a public figure as an anti-abortion activist alongside Operation Rescue members, including Flip Benham and Ronda Mackey. With this, McCorvey was baptized as an Evangelical Protestant—and later converted to Catholicism—and began claiming

Dramaturge's Note

that her relationship with her long-term partner Connie Gonzalez was platonic. She published two books: *I am Roe* and *Won by Love* in 1994 and 1997, respectively. A handful of documentaries, films, and series about Roe v. Wade and McCorvey have been produced, including the 1989 film *Roe vs. Wade*, produced by Michael Manheim with actress Holly Hunter portraying McCorvey's character.

On June 24, 2022, Roe v. Wade was overturned by the Supreme Court in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision, which gave the individual states the power to determine their own abortion laws. As of September 2022, abortion is illegal in thirteen states.

To better understand the public's reaction when Roe v. Wade was decided, I interviewed Cathy Rodgers. Rodgers is an adjunct professor and former department head for Meredith Theatre.

Dramaturge's Note

Recounting her experience as a freshman at Meredith College in 1973 when Roe was decided, Rodgers reinforced the experience of many other women at the time, which was that everyone knew someone that had had an abortion. She was grateful that the ability to choose was now law. In her senior year at Meredith, Rodgers researched and participated in the effort to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, which is impacted by an equal right to bodily autonomy.

When asked about her immediate reaction to the Dobbs decision, Rodgers said that for her,

“It was quite unbelievable, to be honest, [because] we had supposedly come so far in my lifetime, even if the ERA had never been passed. I had no idea that the Supreme Court [would do this]—I know that they were right leaning—but I had no idea that this would actually get passed, or get reversed. Because to me, it’s a health issue. It’s not any kind of religious issue, it’s not any kind of moral issue. It is a woman’s right to their own health and if we don’t have that,

Dramaturge's Note

then we're not considered fully equal under the Fourteenth Amendment."

She often tells her students to vote most importantly, but to also remember this:

"You cannot take the strides, that seem now very few and far between, that we've made since World War 2 for granted. Because once you do, then this is what happens."

- Kylie Hunt (Dramaturg)

Cast

Sarah Weddington..... Kate Polaski
Norma McCorvey..... Emily Hodge
Connie Gonzalez..... Carolina Gao
Aileen and others..... Didi Foreman
Henry McCluskey, Robert Flowers, etc..... Sebastian Bell
Ronda, Judy, etc..... Sky Symonds
Harry Blackmun, Barbara, etc..... Bliss Wells
Helen and others..... Molly B. Auxter
Molly, Mary Gilmore, etc..... Mallory Kemple
Linda Coffee etc..... MacKenzie Kotc
Mary, Michael Manheim, etc..... Maddy Mockewich
Flip Benham, Jay Floyd, etc. Jesse R. Gephart
Melissa/Emily..... Martha-Ann Cates
Uma, Ofelia, etc..... Diana Aguilar
Roxy..... Camila Alvarez-Moncada

Cast Biographies

Diana Aguilar is exceptionally thrilled to be a part of such a beautiful production and have it be her first acting experience in Theater! She is a freshman at Meredith and is double-majoring in Spanish and Psychology as well as picking up a minor in Dance.

Camila Alvarez-Moncada feels so moved to be a part of such a meaningful show and have the opportunity to play such an emotive role for a live audience for the first time. She participated in acting in high school student films as well as writing her own short-film. She is a freshman at Meredith; double-majoring in English and Theater.

Molly B. Auxter is a freshman at Meredith College. She is studying Theatre with a concentration in Musical Theatre. She is so excited to be part of Roe and was warmly welcomed into the Meredith College Theatre Company family.

Cast Biographies

Sebastian Bell is a 19 year old aspiring actor who loves collecting records and partying hard, who is currently enrolled at Wake Tech Community College for an Associates in Arts. He is extremely excited to work with these amazing actors and such a visionary director. Sebastian hopes to return to Meredith College for future shows, to keep learning new things, and to add more to his resume.

Martha-Ann Cates is so excited to be apart of *Roe!* This is her first ever production at Meredith; she has loved joining such a welcoming community. She also participates in shows and as a teaching assistant at Raleigh Little Theatre. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Cast Biographies

Didi Foreman is in her second year at Meredith as a theater major, and performed in *Space Girl* (Denise) and *A Grand Night for Singing* last year. She was also a part of the Variety Show presented by ETC last spring. *Roe* has such an important message and she is so honored to be a part of it. She hopes people get something meaningful out of it.

Carolina Gao is a senior majoring in Theatre and Communications with a concentration in PR. She has been involved in many productions throughout her time at Meredith including *Company*, *Julius Caesar*, *Voices*, and *A Grand Night For Singing*. She wants to thank her friends and family for always offering her support and is excited for the run of the show!

Cast Biographies

Jesse Gephart is so happy to be back in a theatre again alongside an amazingly talented group of student artists and educators. His first show in Raleigh was in 1998 and he has acted in, directed, and/or produced nearly 100 productions over the last two decades and change. A big thank you to Lormarev for the opportunity to learn again and to be reminded of the joy that exists in a room with theatre folk. Love to Mom, Dad, and Eddie.

Emily Hodge is a sophomore at Meredith. She was in last season's production of *Everybody* (Somebody) as well as the ETC Variety Show. She loves her friends, family, and video games. She would like to thank the department for their support and hard work!

Cast Biographies

Mallory Kemple is a psychology major who first got involved with Meredith Theatre by joining ETC, which made her decide to minor in Theatre along with Child Development. This year she is a member of ETC's executive board. *Roe* is her first Meredith play. She has loved being a part of the theatre community!

MacKenzie Kotch is performing in her first show at Meredith College. She is a sophomore transfer student and is eager to be back on stage. This is her first time performing in over a year and she is so grateful to be a part of this amazing cast.

Maddy Mockewich is a bisexual freshman who enjoys cosplaying, acting, and reading.

Cast Biographies

Kate Polaski is a senior majoring in History and minoring in Theatre. She has performed previously at Meredith in *Everybody*, *Medea*, and the Radio Plays. This is her final show at Meredith before she starts student teaching in the spring, and she will miss this community dearly. She thanks her friends, family, and cast for their love and support and wants to remind you to vote this November!

Sky Symonds is a junior majoring in Theatre with a Musical Theatre Concentration. She is the vice president of Meredith's Extra Theatre Company, and her previous acting credits at Meredith include Somebody in *Everybody* and Ensemble in *A Grand Night For Singing*. She'd like to thank her wonderful family and friends.

Cast Biographies

Bliss Wells is a senior at MC and a Theatre Major pursuing a Theatre Arts K-12 licensure. Since she'll be student teaching next semester, *Roe* is her final production at Meredith. She'd like to thank her professors, family, and friends for being such a wonderful support system. Enjoy the show!

Production Team Biographies

Lizzy Andrews (Sound Designer) is delighted to feature her first Mainstage design here at Meredith. Lizzy studies English literature and Theatre Production, and is usually engrossed in a book, or two, or twelve. Her design and management work has appeared on stages across North Carolina, and she is grateful to be part of a welcoming community (and an excellent library).

Production Team Biographies

Dr. Rebecca Bailey (Costume Design)retired from Meredith College after many years working with Art Education licensure students, teaching studio art classes, and serving as Head of the Art Department and Dean of the School of the Arts. She is delighted to be back for this career encore as a costume designer in Theatre.

Jenni Mann Becker (Scenic/Lighting Design) is a professional lighting designer, scenic designer, and educator who has been working in the local theatre scene for 20 years. Her design work includes lighting design for *Men on Boats* at Justice Theatre Project; *August: Osage County*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe* and *Significant Other* at Theatre Raleigh; *Life is a Dream* and *Radio Golf* at Deep Dish Theater; and many productions at Meredith College. After a long hiatus, Ms. Becker is excited to return to Meredith College as an adjunct professor for the fall 2022 semester.

Production Team Biographies

Jock Brocki (Technical Director) is a theatre professional with a deep working knowledge of all aspects of the craft gained from both technical theater work and acting. He served as the full-time technical director at The Temple Theatre in Sanford, NC, from 2005 to 2012. He has worked as a freelance technical director and set builder for many other NC theaters, including Manbites Dog, The Carrboro ArtsCenter, St. David's School, Cape Fear Regional Theater, and Ft. Bragg Playhouse.

Emma K. Johnson (Assistant Stage Manager/Props Design) is an undergrad student at Meredith College. She has recently been in Raleigh Little Theatre's *Cinderella* (Henrietta), *A Grand Night for Singing* (Ensemble), and *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Black Stache).

Production Team Biographies

Lormarev Jones (Director) is a 2005 graduate of Meredith College, currently in her first year as Director of Theatre, now running the very program from which she received her undergraduate degree. Moms and Mentors have gotten her to this point: Props to Ma, Maggie, Reneé. Community Support has lifted her as well; Love to Laura Bess and CNW.

Kelsey McCrary (Production Stage Manager) is so grateful to have had the privilege to stage manage such a meaningful and relevant production. She has participated in many productions in the past, but this is her first show on the creative team. She would like to thank all members of the production team, but especially Lormarev, for their patience and encouragement throughout the process. Kelsey is a junior here at Meredith, majoring in Theatre with a Musical Theatre Concentration.

Production Crew

Costume Construction

Dr. Rebecca Bailey

Ava Baumgartner

Willa Harrington

Camera Operator

Caroline O'Daniel

Sound Board Operator

Noelle Smith

Dressers

Autumn Clark

Micaela Deadwyler

Kerry DeSimone

Scenic Construction and Painting

Camila Alvarez- Moncada

Autumn Clark

Megan Elliott

Carolina Gao

Emma Huffman

Kelsey McCrary

Annalee Nelson

Anna Prince

Noelle Smith

Bliss Wells

Molly B. Auxter

Jalyn Crafton

Didi Foreman

Emily Hodge

Carolyn Mann

Ainsley Mendel

Kate Polaski

Angelica Rosas

Sky Symonds

Special Thanks

Pam and Chuck Riley

Dr. Fran Page

Dr. Jo Allen

Carol Finley

Steven Roten

Chris Droessler, Eric Leary

Bill Brown and Meredith Events

A big thank you to all of the alums and friends who have donated vintage and contemporary clothing, shoes and accessories to the Theatre program. Your contributions are an immense help not only to style authenticity, but to our costume budget! To arrange to make a donation, contact Dr. Rebecca Bailey at baileyr@meredith.edu.

Upcoming Dance and Theatre Events

The Wolves

by Sarah DeLappe

November 9th - 13th

Studio Theatre

Directed by Steven Roten

**Meredith Dance Theatre
and MJTCo in Concert**

November 18th - 20th

Jones Auditorium