



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:**

Christina Hallowell, Marketing Associate  
Theater at Monmouth | 207.933.2952  
[christina@theateratmonmouth.org](mailto:christina@theateratmonmouth.org)

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**Preposterously Pretentious Pretenders Parodied in Moliere's *The Learned Ladies* at TAM**

**Monmouth, Maine** – Theater at Monmouth's 2017 Season features *The Learned Ladies*, by Moliere. The show opens on Thursday, July 6th, at 7:30 p.m. *The Learned Ladies* will run throughout the season including weekday and weekend performances.

Two young people, Henriette and Clitandre, are in love, but in order to marry, they must overcome an obstacle: the attitude of Henriette's family. Her sensible father and uncle are in favor of the marriage; but unfortunately her father is under the thumb of his wife, Philaminte. And Philaminte, supported by Henriette's aunt and sister, wishes her to marry Trissotin, a "scholar" and mediocre poet with lofty aspirations, who has these three women completely in his thrall.

*Les Femmes Savantes* (*The Learned Ladies*), Moliere's penultimate comedy, is a satire on academic pretention, the education of women, and self-aware pretentiousness; and perhaps not so ironically one of his most popular plays. It premiered at the Theatre du Palais Royal on March 11, 1672 and was never again performed in Moliere's lifetime. It was brought back into prominence in 1970 through Richard Wilbur's English language translation.

For a play written in 1672, the themes are quite modern. In the opening scene, Armande and Henriette argue about marriage. Armande thinks her sister should have higher goals than taking care of a family and running a household; that Henriette should study to improve her mind. Henriette is perfectly satisfied with the role of housewife—and all its physical demands. Molière mocks his "Learned Ladies," not because he thinks women shouldn't be educated but because their excesses make them ridiculous.

"Moliere's satirical point in *The Learned Ladies* remains a timely one: he attacks his ladies not for their efforts to achieve intellectual emancipation from men, but because they affect erudition mindlessly – spewing about their pedantic, half-baked "knowledge" for the purpose of social-climbing, as if book learning were the latest fashion in clothes. And, lest one fear that there's an anachronistically sexist slant to Moliere's message, it must be remembered that the most fatuous "learned" character in the play, the poet Trissotin, is a man." –Frank Rich from the *NY Times Review*, 1982

Director Sally Wood believes, "'Being right' never goes out of fashion." In *The Learned Ladies*, Wood says "Moliere masterfully creates worlds where the tap of self-righteousness runs free, and ladies and gentlemen, the bar is open!"

*The Learned Ladies* features Kelsey Burke as Armande; Maggie Thompson as Henriette; Wardell Julius Clark as Clitandre; Mark S. Cartier as Belise; Josh Carpenter as Ariste; Ryan Vincent Anderson as Chrysale; Meghan Leathers as Martine; Lucy Lavelly as Philaminte; James Noel Hoban as Trissotin; Emery Lawrence as Lepine; J.P. Guimont as Vadius; Ben Shaw as Julien; Mackenzie Shaw as Ensemble; CJ Stewart as Ensemble. Set design by Meg Anderson, costume design by Jonna Klaiber, lighting design by Gregg Carville, sound design by Rew Tippin.

Performance Calendar: OPENING 7/6 at 7:30 p.m.; additional performance dates 7/7, 7/15, 8/9, 8/11, 8/19 at 7:30 p.m, 7/8, 8/3, 8/16, 8/20 at 1:00 p.m, and 7/23 at 7:00 p.m with a Post-Show discussion.

#### Tickets, Subscriptions, and Ways to Save

TAM Season Passes offer up to 25% off the single ticket price and exclusive benefits such as priority seating and free ticket exchanges. Gold, Flex, General, or Senior Passes are available for purchase, so whether you want a ticket for each show or five tickets to one show, there's an option for you. Single tickets for the Summer Repertory and Fall Show are \$32 for adults, \$28 for senior citizens, and \$20 for students (18 and under). Groups of 10 or more can enjoy TAM shows at up to a 22% discount. Groups may also schedule pre or post show discussions with tours of historic Cumston Hall. Contact the Box Office for more information and to book your group's event.

Opening Nights are Educator Nights. Educators receive 20% off the single ticket price with a photo ID at the Box Office.

Under 30 Rush Tickets: For patrons under 30, twenty \$10 Rush Tickets are available at each performance in the season. Sign up by contacting the Box Office, either by emailing [boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org](mailto:boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org) or calling 207.933.9999 the morning of the performance. Tickets will be released to the first 20 people on the list ten minutes before curtain.

For calendar and reservations, please contact the TAM Box Office at 207.933.9999 or visit [www.theateratmonmouth.org](http://www.theateratmonmouth.org).

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Theater at Monmouth, founded in 1970, was named the Shakespearean Theater of Maine by the State Legislature in 1975. The theatre's mission is to present innovative approaches to Shakespeare and other classic plays through professional productions that enrich the lives of people throughout Maine. Since its founding, TAM has produced expertly crafted, engaging productions in its three-month Summer Repertory Season entertaining audiences from 36 states and through Education Tours annually reaching more than 15,000 students statewide.

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