

THE GRINNELL COLLEGE DEPARTMENT
OF THEATRE & DANCE PRESENTS

Red Velvet

By Lolita Chakrabarti

Directed by Lesley Delmenico



Ira Aldridge as Othello by James Northcote, 1826

Thursday - Sunday, March 5-8, 2020

7:30 P.M. - Sunday at 2:00 P.M.

Flanagan Studio Theatre, Bucksbaum Center for the Arts



GRINNELL COLLEGE

There will be one ten minute intermission.

Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.
No texting or photography permitted during performance.

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RED VELVET

Lolita Chakrabarti

"Red Velvet" is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company.

Directed by Lesley Delmenico

Lighting Designer	Jessica Neill
Scenic Designer	Michelle Lilly
Costume Designer	Erin Howell-Gritsch
Technical Director	Erik Sanning '89
Assistant Technical Director	Kate Baumgartner '15
Stage Manager	Mayo Sueta '20

Red Velvet received its world premiere at the Tricycle Theatre, London on 11 October 2012.

The production was revived and opened at the Tricycle Theatre, London, on 23 January 2014 before making its American Premiere at St. Ann's Warehouse, New York on 25 March 2014.



Cast in order of appearance

Casimir	David Taylor '20
Halina Wozniak	Kate Guiney '23
Terence	EJ Schwartz '23
Ira Aldridge	Elijah Griffin '21
Connie	Anushka Kulshreshtha '21
Betty Lovell	Marnie Monogue '21
Henry Forester	Frank Madsen '23
Bernard Warde	Isaac Thronson '23
Charles Kean	Zander Otavka '20
Ellen Tree	Lucy Polyak '23
Pierre LaPorte	Spencer Clark '23
Margaret Aldridge	Elle Lewis-Eme '23

Special thanks

Sig Barber
Kate Baumgartner '15
Grinnell Newburg High School
Jan Gross
Mike Hunter '02
Cass Westover and Chicago Shakespeare Theater
for assistance with props.

Leland Plays RMC, Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqKkkJhPnVQ_6Balhbwtm2A/featured
email: lelandplaysrmc@gmail.com)



Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden.
COMPLETE SUCCESS!!!

THE NEW SERIO-COMIC LEGENDARY FAIRY TALE, called
The ELFIN SPRITE,
AND
The Grim Grey Woman,

was received on its 2d representation with roars of laughter and applause.—The **SPLENDID SCENERY** and **MACHINERY** were honored throughout with enthusiastic approbation. This **HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL NOVELTY** will therefore be repeated

Every Evening until further notice.

This present **WEDNESDAY, April 10, 1833,**

Will be performed SHAKESPEARE'S Tragedy of

O T H E L L O.

The Duke of Venice, Mr. RANSFORD,
 Brabantio, Mr. DIDDEAR, Gratiano, Mr. TURNOUR,
 Lodovico, Mr. PAYNE, Montano, Mr. HAINES,
 Othello by Mr. ALDRIDGE,

(A NATIVE OF SENEGAL.)

Known by the appellation of the AFRICAN ROSCIUS.

who has been received with great applause at the Theatres Royal, *Dublin*,
Edinburgh, *Bath*, and most of the principal provincial Theatres.

His First Appearance on this Stage.

Cassio, Mr. ABBOTT,
 Iago, - Mr. WARDE,
 Roderigo, Mr. FORESTER, Antonio, Mr. IRWIN, Julio, Mr. Matthews
 Giovanni, Mr. J. COOPER, Luca, Mr. BRADY, Lorenzo Mr. Bender
 Messenger Mr MEARS, Marco Mr Collet, Cosmo Mr Heath, Paolo Mr Stanley
 Desdemona, - Miss E. TREE,
 Emilia, Mrs. LOVELL.



As a director, I have been wanting to stage this play ever since I saw it premiere at London's Tricycle Theatre in 2012. I admired its power and the deftness of Lolita Chakrabarti's writing. Also notable was that *Red Velvet* tells a story that few people know. Ira Aldridge, an ambitious young black actor from New York who loved playing Shakespeare, emigrated to be able to act in more roles than those available to him in the U.S. His 1833 performance of *Othello*, at London's famed Covent Garden Theatre, broke the tradition of white actors playing the Moor in blackface and was an important moment in theatre history. It raised issues of representation that we're still grappling with in 2020.

Aldridge's performance is framed against two historical developments. In the U.S., the beginnings of the minstrel show placed comic interludes within longer straight plays. These songs and dances featured caricatures of "slave culture" and the blacking up of white actors. Black actors also sometimes blacked up, participating in these distorted stereotypes. In the U.K., Aldridge's debut also took place against a background of unrest that led to the passage of the 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act. Although slaves had been unable to be transported out of England since 1772, slavery in the Caribbean still allowed the existence of sugar plantations, one of the foundations of the triangular trade. Recent slave revolts, and their brutal succession in the 1831 Jamaican "Baptist War," created popular British support for ending slavery in the colonies. (William Wilberforce, writer of "Amazing Grace," was a key abolitionist engaged in this effort.)

Walking onstage in *Othello*, with the support of his theatre manager friend, Pierre LaPorte, Aldridge faced multiple issues. He was black, in a time that this was considered



a mark of binary otherness. (Sarah Baartmann, the South African Khoisan “Venus Hottentot,” had been displayed for paid gazing at her physique in the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly Circus twenty years earlier.) Aldridge was walking not only into the ferment about these dehumanizing practices, but also became embroiled in professional issues. He was hired into a renowned theatre acting family hierarchy. Aldridge replaced the most eminent British actor of the day, Edmund Kean, on very short notice, against the wishes of Kean’s son, Charles, to play opposite his fiancé, Ellen Tree. And Aldridge was something of a revolutionary in acting technique, embracing what the actor felt rather than the elegant description of emotion, which also caused friction.

This play is Lolita Chakrabarti’s reconstruction of what happened next. We hope that you enjoy it—and that you leave with questions about the unresolved issues of representation and inclusion that the play brings up.

L. D.



Spencer Clark '23 (Pierre), is from Bettendorf, Iowa, and is thrilled to be making his first appearance on the Grinnell College stage. Though this is his first show at Grinnell, he was involved with theater in high school, playing roles such as Man in Chair in *The Drowsy Chaperone* and Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me, Kate*. In addition to acting, Spencer is also a member of the Grinnell Men's Swim and Dive team. Go Dawgs!

Elijah Griffin '21 (Ira) is an English major from Pasadena, California. During his time in Grinnell, he has played Wynton in *The Royale* and Patroncito in *Las Dos Caras Del Patroncito* at the One Act Festival. Outside of theatre, he is a member of the English SEPC.

Kate Guiney '23 (Halina) is from Granville, Ohio, and is excited to be making her debut on the Grinnell College mainstage. She has been participating in theater productions on and offstage for the past ten years, from acting to costume design to assistant directing. She is an intended sociology major and enjoys participating in various music ensembles. Her most recent favorite roles have been Miss Hannigan in *Annie* (Granville High School), the Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland* (Granville High School), and Paulette in *Legally Blonde* (Community Theater). She also acted in the One Act Festival at Grinnell College last semester.

Anushka Kulshreshtha '21 (Connie) is a Computer Science and Linguistics major from India and Oman. She was previously seen in *East, West* in May 2019. Besides rehearsals, she spends her time dabbling with languages and making productivity spreadsheets.

Elle Lewis-Eme '23 (Margaret) was born and raised in Livermore, California. This is her third Grinnell College production. She is currently planning her independent major. Recent roles include Chorus Member/Messenger (The *Burial*



at *Thebes*) and Doctor (*The Music-Cure*). She also acted as Assistant Director for *The Burial at Thebes* and Detective Partner in *Hero Villain*. She would also like to thank all of her incredibly supportive friends for being amazing people!

Frank Madsen '23 (Henry) was born in Lake Elmo, MN. He grew up playing hockey, baseball, soccer, and the violin. Frank intends to major in History and English. The Minnesotan enjoys Pub Quiz, Film Club, and hitting the books. He's notably played Gaston, Simba, and Thénardier in previous shows. *Red Velvet* is his third show at Grinnell.

Marnie Monogue '21 (Betty) is an English major and European Studies concentrator from Jefferson, WI. She has participated in theatre since childhood. At Grinnell, she previously appeared in *Spring Awakening* and *Twelfth Night* and served as stage manager for *Ideation*. She is an editor at the *B&S* and is thinking of changing her major to Watching *Succession* with a concentration in Drinking Iced Chai.

Zander Otavka '20 (Charles) is a Computer Science major from the San Francisco Bay Area, California. Since there were no super-villain openings in real life, he plays the villain on stage instead. This will be his final mainstage appearance at Grinnell, following his roles in *Burial at Thebes* as light-board operator, *East-West: "The Courter"* as Courter, *Twelfth Night* as Antonio, One Acts Festival: *Naomi in the Living Room* as John, and The Neverland Players.

Lucy Polyak '23 (Ellen) is from Iowa City, IA and is very excited to return to the Grinnell stage this semester! Her most recent roles onstage have been in Grinnell's 2019 One Act Festival, the Choral Leader in *The Burial at Thebes*, and Mrs. Lovett in Iowa City West High School's *Sweeney Todd*. As always, she thanks her friends for putting up with her wild schedule and her family for being simply the best.



E.J. Schwartz '23 (Terence), a denizen of the Western suburbs of Connecticut, is acting in his second Grinnell College mainstage production. Although he has been onstage frequently over the past four years as a stand-up comedian, he hasn't acted in many shows, instead favoring audio dramas. In live theater, he has played Talthybius in *The Trojan Women*, Haemon in *The Burial at Thebes*, and George Gibbs in *Our Town*. Audio-dramatic roles include Dracula in *Dracula*, as well as voicing narrators in a wide variety of productions. Offstage, he has competed in national political debate competitions and wrestled on his high school varsity team. He currently majors in English, with an intended double-major in Psychology.

David Taylor '20 (Casimir, Dramaturg) is an Economics and Theatre and Dance major with a minor in Global Development Studies. He is from Mount Vernon, IA, and this is his first time acting in a stage production at Grinnell. Outside of theatre, he has been part of the varsity football team, student government, Pioneer Capital Investments, GreenFund, Student Athletes Leading Social Change, and GDS SEPC.

Isaac Thronson '23 (Bernard) is an intended Physics or Math major from New Hampton, IA. He was involved in theatre in high school, having played the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*. Outside of theatre, he was part of band, chorus, and large group and individual speech. He would like to thank his parents, siblings, and grandparents, and hopes you enjoy the show!



Yonu Cha '20 (Light Board Operator) is a Theatre and Dance major. She has performed a series of roles at Grinnell College, both on and off the stage. She was most recently seen in Grinnell Community Theatre's summer show *Little Shop of Horrors*, and she is glad to be back and contributing to the college stage.

Carissa Lehning '22 (Costume Crew) is a Chemistry and Theatre and Dance double major from Elk Grove Village, Illinois. She has previously performed in *soft lights for sleepless nights* (Cast Member), *A Bowl of Soup* (Rob), Dance Ensemble's *Salt Marsh Suite* (Ensemble), and *The Burial at Thebes* (Guard, Chorus). This past fall she directed the one-act play *Reflex Action*.

Addison Marsh '22 (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Theatre and Dance major from Los Angeles, California. He's been doing theatre since middle school and was a part of *Love and Information* and *Twelfth Night* at Grinnell, and directed a one act play in the fall. This is his first time as an assistant stage manager, and he's very excited.

Sophie Noyes '23 (Sound Designer) is from Evanston, Illinois and is an intended Spanish and Psychology double major. Sophie was active in high school and local theatre at home, and is grateful to be active in the Grinnell Theatre and Dance department now! Performances at Evanston Township High School include *It's A Wonderful Life* (Mr. Potter), *Legally Blonde* (Paulette). For Mudlark Theater she has played Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, and Touchstone in *As You Like It*. At Grinnell College Sophie performed Antigone in *The Burial at Thebes*. Special thanks to the production team for all of their help.



Caulden Parkel '22 (Sound Board Operator) is an intended Theatre and Dance major from Verona, WI. He has been involved in numerous productions with the department, including acting in *The Burial at Thebes* and *Twelfth Night*, as well as running sound for *Spring Awakening*.

Nesibe Derin Sivrioglu '23 (Costume Crew) is from Istanbul, Turkey. She is an intended Physics major. In her first semester (Fall 2019), she took part in *Hey Lilith!* as a dancer. This is her first time as a member of the costume crew. Nesibe plans to perform for the spring drag show this semester. She is a dancer and plays the cello.

Conner Stanfield '21 (Assistant Director) is a Theatre and Dance and Sociology major from Albuquerque, New Mexico. He has previously performed in several student-directed productions at Grinnell, including *Next to Normal*, *Spring Awakening*, and *True West*, and directed *The Fall Man* as part of the 2018 One Act Festival. Conner is so grateful to have worked with such a talented and dedicated cast, crew, and director, and hopes you enjoy the show.

Mayo Sueta '20 (Stage Manager) is an English major from Tokyo, Japan. She has been involved in multiple theatre productions at Grinnell including as Assistant Stage manager for Dance Ensemble, Run Crew for *Nice Fish*, Light Board Operator for *Next to Normal*, a cast member for *Love and Information*, and a director for *Downtown* in the One Act Festival. She wants to thank everyone who was involved in bringing *Red Velvet* to life on the stage and hopes you enjoy the performance!



Yi-Chia Wang '20 (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Studio Art major with Environmental Studies concentration from Taipei, Taiwan. Besides art, she has been in Grinnell Singers for four years. She has been involved in the productions and performances of several shows with Riverbed Theatre in Taiwan since 2017, including *Night Magic*, *Ventriloquism*, *Dream Maker* and *blur*. This is her first time working as an assistant stage manager and she enjoys working with everyone in the production. She appreciates everyone's effort and hopes you will like the show.

Nai'ya Willis-Hogan '20 (Mics) is a Theatre and Dance Major with a concentration in Peace and Conflict studies from Washington, DC. They have participated in many shows at Grinnell, and are excited to be the microphone manager for *Red Velvet*. Good luck to the cast and crew!



Kate Baumgartner '15 (Assistant Technical Director) has been building, designing, and tech directing with various performance groups in the Grinnell area since 2005.

Lesley Delmenico (Director) is an associate professor of theatre and performance studies. Her teaching, directing, and writing focus on theatre's political roles in contemporary society, particularly the intersections of performance with urban spaces, the natural environment, immigration, law and gender. Her London theatre practice concentrates on the speaking spaces created by marginalized women and postcolonial migrants. *No Bad Women*, her adaptation of a landmark trial transcript, was performed in London in November 2019 and is currently in the option process for British television. Lesley has directed collegiate, community and professional productions in Grinnell, London, and Mumbai. A former Chicago actor, her M.A. and Ph.D. are in Theatre and Performance Studies from Northwestern University.

Erin Howell-Gritsch (Costume Designer) has designed all mainstage costumes at Grinnell College since 1999, where she is the resident costume designer. As a Lecturer for the College, she has taught Costume Design, Costume Construction, and Introduction to Technical Theatre. She was previously an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Cornell College. Other design credits include the University of Iowa (Theatre, Dance, Playwright's Festival, Black Action Theatre), Riverside Theatre, RT Shakespeare Festival, RT Young People's Company, Graffiti Theatre, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Ballet Iowa, and Hurley Dancers. Erin holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design from the University of Iowa and a Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University.



Michelle Lilly (Scenic Designer) is a Chicago-based designer who recently finished coursework for her MFA in Stage Design at Northwestern University. Michelle has designed for Milwaukee Repertory, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Timeline Theatre, Jedlicka Performing Arts Center, New Leaf Theatre, TUTA, Emerald City Theatre, Lifeline Theatre, A Red Orchid (Youth Ensemble), the side project, Theatre Seven, Profiles, Northwestern University, Wheaton College, Oakton Community College, The Springfield Muni, and Springfield Theatre Center. Michelle is a co-founder of Brass Ink Studio. www.michellelillydesigns.com, www.brassinkstudio.com

Jessica Neill (Lighting Designer) is excited to be returning to Grinnell College where she has previously designed *Love and Information*. In Chicago, she has designed *Bunny's Book Club* (Lifeline Theatre); *Hans Christian Anderson* (Northwestern University); *Admissions* (Theater Wit); and *Master Class* (TimeLine Theatre). Chicago area assisting credits include *The Ghost in Gadsden's Garden* (Actor's Gymnasium); *graveyard shift* (Goodman Theatre); *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* and *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Lookingglass Theatre); *The Children* (Steppenwolf Theatre); and *Mamma Mia* (Drury Lane Theatre). Jessica received her MFA in lighting and costume design from Northwestern in 2018. Learn more about her work at jessicaneill.com.

Erik Sanning '89 (Technical Director) is a graduate of Grinnell College. He spent the first two years after graduation working as the Technical Director/Lighting Designer for Ballet Iowa. In the summer of '91 Erik was able to return to Grinnell as the Technical Director. In



addition, he is also one of the founding members of Grinnell Productions, a semi-professional theatre company that was based in Grinnell. Erik has also been a member of IATSE, the professional stagehands union, since 1990.



Assistant Director	Conner Stanfield '21
Assistant Stage Managers	Addison Marsh '22 Yi-Chia Wang '20
Sound Designer	Sophie Noyes '23
Light Board Operator	Yonu Cha '20
Sound Board Operator	Caulden Parkel '22
Mic Operator	Nai'ya Willis-Hogan '20
Scenic Painter	Lucie Greene '23
Costume Crew	Carissa Lehning '22 Nesibe Derin Sivrioglu '23
Poster & Program Design	Joyce Bergan



ADMINISTRATION

Production Stage Manager	Lily Fitzsimmons '20
Assistant Production Stage Manager	Anjali Jain '21
Assistant to Dept Chair	Katherine Kopp '21

FRONT OF HOUSE

Front of House Staff

Obuchi Adikema '21	Jacob Leder '21
Audrey Boyle '21	Ilana Luther '20
Kira Duff '20	Ryland Rich '22
Francess Dunbar '20	Anna Wilson '22
Ahon Gooptu '21	

COSTUME STUDIO

Costume Storage Coordinator	Olga Shevelkina '22
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Stitchers

Yonu Cha '20	Olga Shevelkina '22
Claire Davis '22	Connor Stanfield '21
Jamie Friedman '20	Nai'Ya Willis Hogan '20
Autumn McMillan '20	

SCENE SHOP

Properties Storage Coordinator	Katherine Kopp '21
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Scene Shop Staff

Obuchi Adikema '21	Robbie Shore '22
Yonu Cha '20	Sam Stein-De Turck '22
Lily Fitzsimmons '20	Judith Tong '20
Nathan Gifford '20	Carlos Ventura '20
Jacob Leder '21	Anna Wilson '22
Ethan Pannell '21	David Yawata '22
Leila Payer '21	



Dance Nation

Director: Dr. Irma Mayorga

Roberts Theatre

Thursday-Saturday, April 16-18, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 19, 2:00 p.m.

Two Feet and Ready to Explore

Dance Ensemble/ACTivate

Artistic Director: Kathleen Hurley

Guest Performers: Hurley and Dancers

Flanagan Studio Theatre

Friday-Saturday, May 1-2, 2020

THD 117: Scenes from Intro to Acting

Students of Professor Sandy Moffett

The Wall Theatre

May 2-3, 2020

MAP Performance : *The Flick*

Director: Jacob Leder

The Loft at Grinnell Arts Center

Friday-Saturday, May 1-2, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 3, 2:00 p.m.

MAP Performance : *Machinal*

Director: Maddy Smith

Roberts Theatre

Thursday-Saturday, May 7-9, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 10, 2:00 p.m.