The Nether

by Jennifer Haley

directed by Dr. Bobby Vrtis

March 1 - 8:00 P.M.
March 2 - 7:30 P.M.
March 3 - 7:30 P.M.
March 4 - 1:30 P.M.

The Nether” is presented by special arrangements with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.
Center Theatre Group/Kirk Douglas Theatre, Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director, produced the World Premiere of THE NETHER in Los Angeles, CA in 2013

Development of THE NETHER was supported by the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center during a residency at the National Playwrights Conference 2011, Preston Whiteway, Executive Director, Wendy Goldberg, Artistic Director

Developed at the Lark Play Development Center, NYC

UK premiere first co-produced by Headlong Theatre and the Royal Court Theatre on July 17, 2014 at the Royal Court and was subsequently transferred to the West End by Sonia Friedman Productions and Scott M Delman in association with Tulchin Bartner Productions, Lee Dean & Charles Diamond, 1001 Nights, JFL Theatricals/ GHF Productions, Scott & Brian Zeilinger / James Lefkowitz.

The West End premiere took place on February 24, 2015 at the Duke of York’s Theatre, London

New York Premiere at the MCC Theater February 24, 2015  
Artistic Directors: Robert LuPone, Bernard Telsey, & William Cantler  
Executive Director: Blake West
Cast

Morris: Emily Garst ‘17
Sims: Skye Newcom ‘17
Doyle: Erik Muetherthies ‘18
Iris: Emma Withers ‘18
Woodnut: Andrew Kane ‘19
Morris Understudy: Melissa Kirby ‘19
Iris Understudy: Miranda Poncelet ‘18
Sims, Doyle, Woodnut Understudy: Noah Tiegs ‘20

Production Staff

Director: Dr. Robert Vrtis
Lighting Designer: Jeff Dintaman
Scenic Designer: Jeff Dintaman
Assistant Scenic Designer: Matthew Espey ‘19
Costume Designer: Lisa Lantz
Projection Designer: Blake Klein ‘17
Technical Director: Tom Berger
Composer: Mitchell Stevens ‘17
Dramaturg: Ryan Pierce ‘17
Stage Manager: Elaena Hoekstra ‘17
Assistant Stage Manager: Anna Becker ‘19
Production Manager: Laila Sahir ‘18
Graphic Designer: Patrick Finnegan ‘18
Web Content Liaison: Elaena Hoekstra ‘17
House Manager: Gillian Constable ‘17

Tech Crew

Light Board Operator: Laila Sahir ‘18
Projectionist: Johnathan Kuehner ‘20
Annika Peterson ‘19
Stage Crew: Winter Hawley-Bourcier ‘20
Stephen Holkesvik ‘19
Wardrobe: Tanner Huppert ‘18

The Nether is approximately 90 minutes in length with no intermission.
A discussion will be held after the performance.
Emily Garst
is excited to be a part of this production of *The Nether*. She is a senior theatre major and music minor. Elsewhere on campus, Emily can be found participating in Nordic Choir and SPIN theatre productions. Emily would like to thank her family, friends, fellow cast mates, our dedicated production crew, and incredibly talented musicians for supporting her through this challenging and rewarding process.

Andrew Kane
is a sophomore majoring in political science and religion. Andrew has previously performed in *Love and Information* and plays viola in Philharmonia here at Luther. Andrew would like to thank the wonderful cast and crew of *The Nether* because they rock!

Melissa Kirby
is currently a sophomore, and her favorite performance credit is Inez in the current Luther College production of *The Gondoliers*. She would like to thank her roommate Hannah for always supporting her in all of her crazy endeavors.

Erik Mueterthies
is a theatre major in his junior year at Luther College. He was previously seen in Luther’s productions of *The Illusion, Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Metamorphoses*. He would like to thank his parents for their unconditional support and his sister Gina for being living proof of the power of miracles.
Skye Newcom
is a senior at Luther College where he is studying theatre and art. Last semester, Skye composed music for and played the role of Feste in the VPA's production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Skye is eager to act professionally after graduation and finish writing his first play, *The Chariot*. Skye would like to thank you all for supporting the arts and our cast with your physical presence.

Miranda Poncelet
is a junior music education major with a theatre minor. She is a member of the Nordic Choir, Beautiful Mess, Bella’s, ABY, and PALS. She has participated in various theatre productions, one of her favorites being *Sunday in the Park with George*. Miranda would like to thank all those who have supported her on her journey through the arts; she couldn’t have done it without you all. Enjoy the show!

Noah Tiegs
is a first year studying Spanish, theatre, and education. Noah is honored to be involved in his second production here at Luther College. He has enjoyed exploring this story and grappling with it in rehearsals and conversations across campus.

Emma Withers
is a junior at Luther studying elementary education, art, and theatre. In her time at Luther, she has also performed in *Metamorphoses*, *Sunday in the Park With George*, *The Illusion*, and *Twelfth Night*! If Emma doesn’t appear on stage in her first scene...call this number: 563-382-5690. You'll find her. Trust me. She wrote this.
Anna Becker
is a sophomore studying history, Africana Studies, and theatre. She appeared on the Luther stage earlier this year in *Twelfth Night*. Anna is a member of Just Action and Cantorei Choir and occasionally sings in Luther’s Gospel Choir. Thanks to friends and family for the endless love and support.

Morgan Fanning
is a first year theatre and music double major. Aside from being involved with Luther’s theatre department, Morgan plays viola in symphony and sings in Aurora. She has loved working with this cast and hopes you enjoy the show!

Elaena Hoekstra
is a senior theatre major with a management minor. *The Nether* is her seventh production at Luther College. Other Luther credits include *Twelfth Night* (stage manager), *Sunday in the Park with George* (stage manager), and Frauline Schneider in *Cabaret*. When not in the Center for the Arts, Elaena is working for Luther’s Web Content Department or singing in Nordic Choir. She would like to thank Dr. Bobby for his mentorship.
Set Construction Crew

Nathan Baldwin          Issac Logeman
Collin Boyle            Abby Mark
Emma Brashear           Sydney Northern
Jorge Chavez            Ryan Pierce
Gunnar Ehlers           Jenna Reimann
Morgan Fanning          Rebecca Rye
Meghan Gaffney          Emma Schlabach
Madeline Geier          Stephen Ster
Winter Hawley-Bourcier   Barbara Stier
Tanner Hupert           Andrew Tiede
Jonathan Kuehner        Josh Weisenburger

Costume Crew

Alice McNamara
Kelly Dawson
Andrew Tiede
Laura Schueler
Anna Becker
Evie Iralu
Elizabeth Bolthouse
Tanner Hupert
Emma Brashear
Tiwonge Chirwa
Emily Garst
Nathaniel Koch
Emmalee Kmoch
Eva Gemlo
Genevieve Heimer-Lang

Special Thanks

Luther Information Technology
Ahmed Muaz
Bob Erikson
Storm Bailey
Sören Steding
Director’s Note: [Virtual] Experience

It seems very appropriate to me that Jennifer Haley tells this story of virtual reality through one of the oldest forms of virtual reality we have: the theatre. Actors routinely fabricate an imagined reality to inhabit in order to tell a character’s story. They strive for ever richer detail in creating their imagined realities so that they may more fully express that story to an audience. The hope is that a vivid imaginative experience will induce an empathetic response in the actor so profound that the actor begins to feel as the character does and, in turn, share that experience with the audience. And so, most actors who have put this kind of effort into their work would agree that a virtual experience is no less real for being entirely artificial.

“Real Life” and Virtual Reality are not so distinct as we might believe.

The virtual reality of theatre, however, is more or less unidirectional. Actors tell a story for an audience. The virtual reality of The Nether, itself a reality not too hard to imagine as our technology advances toward ever more immersive virtual experiences, is a kind of shared storytelling.

And stories – their ideas – shape our world, virtual or not.

Even if they find the stories Sims tells abhorrent, some will agree with a vision of absolute freedom in our virtual realities. Concluding that there are no actual consequences, VR libertarians might say that these stories should be told with minimal (or no) constraint.

Haley’s play asks us to consider that premise though. If an immersive virtual experience has a reality of its own, can we really say that there is no consequence to these stories?

If there are consequences, can we really tell stories without constraint?
If we must constrain our stories, who makes those judgements? And how?

At its best science fiction tells us about our present while it dreams about our future. In a way, it can rehearse for the future too. The dream in *The Nether* is very close to our present already, so the play asks us to rehearse for a looming present in the hopes that we'll have answers at the ready even as the questions are forming.

-Dr. Robert Vrtis

**Dramaturg’s Note**

“People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion”—Albert Einstein

In the world of *The Nether*, Jennifer Haley paints two obvious realities that seem so distant that they truly belong in other worlds. The past is presented as the former glory of gothic structures, amazement in the invention of the phonograph, and much of what some may consider “simpler times.” Contrary to this, the future looks bleak, harsh, and so distasteful that the need to escape it on a daily basis is understandable.

Yet, the meeting of these two worlds on stage allows the ideas of the past and future to happen in the present. At a time when the future of virtual reality is within our grasp and the history of our past is beginning to fade, *The Nether* uses the mirage of theatre to ask us here and now what our future will look like and what kind of pixelated images we want to use to perceive it.

-Ryan Pierce ‘17
About PAVSA

The Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA) is dedicated to the elimination of sexual violence in Southern St. Louis County, Minnesota, through supporting victims, educating the community, and advocating for change. Their core values include free and accessible services that are victim-centered and victim-driven. They are committed to providing support services for victims of sexual violence, educating and building awareness in their community and advocating for social change in the many systems that interact with victims following a sexual assault.

Various reports throughout the last few years have expressed the need to work against trafficking and prostitution. Recognizing the dire need to create a common platform for the community, PAVSA and American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO) have collaborated on a grant to address this issue. With a three year grant from the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, PAVSA and AICHO hope to form a task force which will reframe the issue of trafficking and prostitution through the creation of focus groups; identification of service gaps; and development of protocol and curricula. Throughout the process, their aim will be to build and strengthen their relationship with the girls and women in the city of Duluth and nearby reservations so that their experiences become central in identifying the needs.

For more information or to learn how you can help, visit http://www.pavsa.org/.
Luther Theatre and Dance
2016-2017

*Stained Glass*
By P. M. Strain
October 1, 2016

*Twelfth Night*
By William Shakespeare
October 6-8, 2016

*Who Do You Trust?*
Conceived and Choreographed by Jane Hawley
November 17-19, 2016

*The Nether*
By Jennifer Haley
March 1-4, 2017

*Trust Me*
Devised by Andrea Vazquez-Aguirre
March 30-April 1, 2017

*Becky Shaw*
By Gina Gionfriddo
April 28-May 6, 2017

Faculty and Staff
- Tom Berger
- Lisa Lantz
- Jeff Dintaman
- Jane Hawley
- Andre Vazquez-Aguirre
- Paul Rude
- Dr. Bobby Vrtis

www.luther.edu/vpa