

NOVEMBER 15 - DECEMBER 18, 2016 | QUADRACCI POWERHOUSE



Play
Guide

FOREIGNER

THE



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **Anthony Petullo Foundation** | ASSOCIATE PRODUCER **Four-Four Foundation, Inc.**
THE PERFORMANCE OF LINDA STEPHENS IS SPONSORED BY **Anthony and Donna Meyer**



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Written by **Larry Shue** | Directed by **Laura Gordon**

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SYNOPSIS

When Staff Sergeant Froggy LeSueur brings his fellow Englishman, Charlie Baker, to a lodge in rural Georgia, Charlie is a lost man on a beaten path. Devalued at home and redundant at work, Charlie realizes he is boring and dreams of acquiring a personality. With the uncertainty of his wife's health coupled with the certainty of her unfaithfulness, Charlie concludes Georgia is the last place he should be. He is initially paralyzed with the fear of having to talk to the other residents of the lodge, so Froggy concocts a plan to assure no one will talk to Charlie: he tells the lodge's owner, Betty, that Charlie doesn't know a word of English. At first, Charlie is appalled by the plan and doesn't think he will be able to go through with it, but as he overhears "private" conversations and befriends the enthralled residents, pretending to not know English becomes a tool for him to right wrongs and become what he always wanted to be—interesting.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

The first production of *The Foreigner* premiered at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater on January 13, 1983. The local audience came in with high expectations, having become familiar with Larry Shue's work as a playwright and an actor at The Rep, and the new play did not disappoint.

The play then moved to the Astor Place Theatre, an Off-Broadway venue in New York City, on November 1, 1984. Directed by Jerry Zaks and featuring Anthony Heald as Charlie Baker and Shue, himself, as Froggy LeSueur, the production oversaw 686 curtain calls. Heald was widely acclaimed in the title role, even by critics who disliked the play. Towards the end of production, Heald took a leave of absence, transitioning Shue into the lead role of Charlie. The play won two Obie Awards and two Outer Critics Circle Awards, forging *The Foreigner* as the Best Off-Broadway Production and Best New American Play in 1985.



Milwaukee Repertory Theater's 1983 production of *The Foreigner*. From left: Alan Brook's as Charlie and William Leach as Owen. Photo Credit: Avery Mark Photography, UW-Milwaukee Libraries.



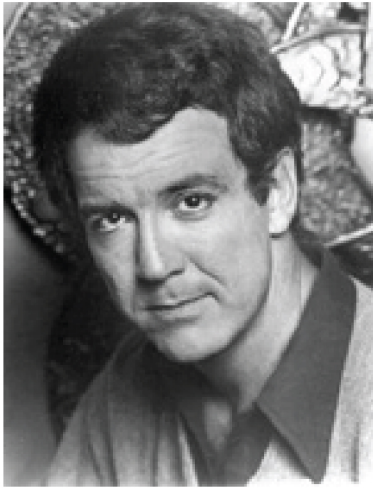
Milwaukee Repertory Theater's 1993 Production. From left: Brad Heberlee as Ellard, Gregory Steres as David, and James Pickering as Charlie. Photo Credit: Avery Mark Photography, UW-Milwaukee Libraries

Milwaukee Repertory Theater went on to produce *The Foreigner* in 1993, marking the best-selling production in the history of the Quadracci Powerhouse, and once again in 2003 with Milwaukee favorite Lee Ernst as Charlie during The Rep's 50th season. Tony Award-winning actor, Matthew Broderick (infamous for his role as Ferris in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*), also starred as Charlie in a ten-week 2004 production at the Laura Pels Theatre in New York City.



Mark Corkins and Lee E. Ernst in Milwaukee Repertory Theater's 2003/04 Quadracci Powerhouse Theater production of *The Foreigner*. Photo by Jay Westhauser.

LARRY SHUE BIOGRAPHY



Larry Shue. Photo Credit: Wikipedia.org

Larry Shue was born July 23, 1946 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He grew up in Kansas and Illinois, where he showed an early love for theater. In adolescence, Shue performed plays in his family's garage for the admission price of one penny. He received a degree in theater from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1968, where he wrote two plays that were produced by the university. Shue served in the Army until 1972, gaining invaluable insight for characters like Froggy LeSueur, whom he later scribed and portrayed on stage. He joined the Harlequin Dinner Theaters, acting in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia, the latter in which he received two acting awards in 1977. Later that year, Shue began his professional theater career as an actor at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater. In 1979, he took the advice of the Artistic Director, John Dillon, and focused his efforts on playwriting. He quickly was named the Playwright in Residence at the Milwaukee Rep after his one-act play, *Grandma Duck is Dead*, successfully premiered. From there, he wrote

several full-length plays, including his two most well-known works, *The Nerd* and *The Foreigner*. Outside of his acting work on stage, Shue also acted on the television soap opera *One Life to Live*.

On September 23, 1985, Larry Shue tragically died in a plane crash at the burgeoning age of 39. At the stage of his untimely death, Shue was preparing for his first lead Broadway role as Reverend Crisparkle in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* while *The Foreigner* sold out shows in New York and *The Nerd* toured London. Shue was also working on a comedy script for CBS and adapting a screenplay of *The Foreigner* for Disney. It is mystifying to contemplate the unwritten works he planned to share. Shue left behind a limited published body of work, but what he did inscribe remains a crowd-pleasing and knee-slapping staple in community repertories across the world, much like he provided during and after his time at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

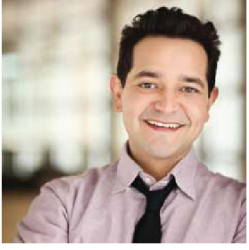
Roundabout Theatre Company's Poster. Photo credit: leetergesen.com



“Right before Larry Shue wrote *The Foreigner*, he traveled to Southern rural Japan (similar to Charlie visiting the United States’ Southern rural Georgia) to learn the Suzuki method of acting. He resided in an isolated mountain town where few spoke English and most had never seen a Caucasian man before, so he truly was the foreigner. He could find anything that is amusing in any situation.”

- JAMES PICKERING (ACTOR/DIRECTOR AND CLOSE FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE FOR EIGHT YEARS)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

**MATT ZAMBRANO**

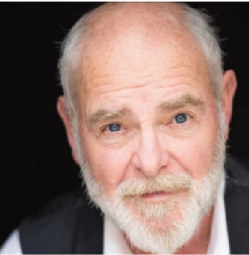
Charlie Baker [Froggy LeSueur's friend]

Charlie is a redundant science-fiction copy editor with an unfaithful wife, social anxiety, no personality that he can think of, and an innate need for peace and quiet. He dreams of one day acquiring a personality and becoming interesting.

**BRENDAN MEYER**

Ellard Sims [Catherine Simms' younger brother]

Ellard is a dynamic sponge who first appears to be dimwitted and slow until he receives confidence in teaching Charlie English, revealing his true potential. He is due to inherit a share of the Simms' family fortune.

**JAMES PICKERING**

Sgt. Froggy LeSueur [Charlie Baker's friend]

Froggy is a British military demolitions expert who devises the scheme that protects Charlie from having to interact with the other guests at the lodge in his frequent absence.

**MARCUS TRUSCHINSKI**

Rev. David Marshall Lee [Catherine Simms' fiancé]

David is a two-faced character. On one side, he is a young pious reverend in love with Catherine. The other side is revealed throughout the course of the play. . .

**LINDA STEPHENS**

Betty Meeks [Froggy LeSueur's friend]

As the owner of the lodge, Betty is an elderly widow who wishes she could have seen the world. She is a good-hearted, generous, somewhat naïve, "down-home" Southerner who speaks the hardy local dialect.

**ERIC PARKS**

Owen Musser [Reverend David Marshall Lee's friend]

As the local property inspector and absolute stereotype of an ill-bred southern Klansman, Owen plots to condemn Betty's lodge so that it can be purchased inexpensively for nefarious purposes.

**CRISTINA PANFILIO**

Catherine Simms [Ellard Simms' sister and David's fiancé]

Catherine is a former debutante who discovers she is pregnant and unsure of life. She has a ready wit and a sharp tongue. In David's absence, she enjoys confiding to the incomprehensive Charlie.

CREATIVE TEAM



Laura Gordon
Director

Bill Clarke, *Scenic Designer*
Rachel Laritz, *Costume Designer*
Jason Fassl, *Lighting Designer*
Joe Cerqua, *Sound Designer*
Jamie Cheatham, *Fight Choreographer*
JC Clementz, *Casting Director*

Stephanie Kallper Casting, *New York Casting*
Marina Bergenstock, *Assistant Director*
Sarah Deming-Henes, *Stage Manager*
Audra Kuchling, *Assistant Stage Manager*
Kyle Winklemann, *Stage Management Resident*

Laura Gordon & James Pickering on *The Foreigner*



Visiting with The Rep's Laura Gordon and James Pickering, the roles of director and actor are often interchangeable. In this production of *The Foreigner*, Gordon commands from the front row while Pickering changes backstage into character. In a past production of *The Nerd*, also penned by Larry Shue, Pickering played director while Gordon graced the stage. When asked about the dynamic, Gordon eloquently simplified the process:

"I love to be in a room with smart people, and we figure out how to do a play together."

While the two actor/directors find themselves in the same theater, their paths could not be more different. Pickering has been active in theater since he was ten years old. As a self-described theater junkie, he proclaims, "The relationship you have with the audience is intoxicating." In contrast, Gordon declared five majors in college before finding the lure of the stage. In her pursuit, Gordon advises anyone interested in becoming successful in theater to

"Live your life. Go and see and read a lot of plays, and keep your eyes open to the world."

Based on his own climb up the ranks, Pickering suggests to "work in all aspects of the theater" to gain perspective and an integrated understanding of everyone's role in producing a play.

The cast of *The Foreigner* did not take long to mesh. Everyone in the cast has previously worked together except for one newcomer, Matt Zambrano, who ironically plays the foreigner himself, Charlie Baker. This is not The Rep's first production of *The Foreigner* either.

From its inception in 1983, The Rep also produced the play in 1993 and 2003. Pickering played Charlie in the 1993 production and now gets the chance to be his friend, Sergeant Froggy LeSueur, who is the "straight man" in contrast to Charlie's capricious antics. Pickering savors this opportunity to feed the laughter rather than deliver it, while also embracing the Cockney dialect that Froggy employs. *The Foreigner* remains true to the original script, but what has changed in the thirty-three years is the political climate of the world in which it lives. The story's themes of bigotry and xenophobia (fear of people from other countries) are increasingly relevant today. The Berlin Wall may have fallen six years after the play's premiere, but new walls—both metaphorical and real—are forming across the globe and in our own communities. Gordon professes,

"We live in a time where we are talking about building walls, deporting people, and not letting refugees into our country. The message of the play is stronger now more than ever: once you get to know someone as a human being, then the barriers can fall."

Director Laura Gordon believes strongly in the relatable, hilarious comedy in 1982, the issues of immigration in the world today. The percentage of total immigrants in the context of refugees. The US is currently facing an ideological conversation of what it means

Foreigners in Current Events

Foreigner: person belonging to or owing allegiance to a foreign country.

In *The Foreigner*, Charlie is viewed like an exotic animal from a distant land. The comedic and sociological twist is he is in fact from England, a country exceedingly comparable to America. For instance, both areas share the same predominant ethnicity, religion, and language, and yet what makes Charlie so alien is the mystery that surrounds him. The intrigue forms a mental makeup that eventually becomes tangible, and the people of the lodge see Charlie as someone entirely different than themselves. However, some people are more resistant to change and see Charlie's unconventional behavior as a threat to their own culture. It is important to recognize the isolation of rural Georgia and the generational impacts of cyclical teaching. To embrace Charlie's perspective, consider a time where you have traveled out of your comfort zone, whether navigating a foreign country or simply trying a new entree at your favorite restaurant. Why do these new experiences elicit such visceral reactions? Whether fear, excitement, repulsion, surprise, or shock, novelty tends to create powerful reactions. Do you embrace or shun the unknown?

“His tongue is named Floppy, and he lives in the air!”
– David referring to Charlie (Act II, Scene I)

IMMIGRATION OVERVIEW

Statistics based on surveyed information by the Census Bureau in 2009

- **38,517,234:** U.S. immigrant population (1/8 of the total U.S. population)

COUNTRY	MEXICO	THE PHILIPPINES	INDIA	CHINA	VIETNAM	EL SALVADOR	KOREA	CUBA	CANADA
% of FBP	29.8	4.5	4.3	3.7	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.1

FBP stands for foreign-born people residing in the United States of America

- **The top five U.S. states by the number of immigrants were California (9,947,000), New York (4,178,00), Texas (3,985,000), Florida (3,484,000), and New Jersey (1,759,000).**
- There were about **16.9 million children age 17 and under with at least one immigrant parent**, accounting for 23.8% of the 70.9 million children age 17 and under in the United States.
- The **14.6 million second-generation children**—those born in the United States to at least one foreign-born parent—accounted for 86.2% of all children with immigrant parents. The remaining 13.8% (2.3 million) were children born outside the United States to foreign-born parents.

EDUCATION AND FOREIGNERS

The U.S. enrolled a record-breaking number of international students in 2013, welcoming 886,052 undergraduate and graduate students (of the total 4.5 million international students) to colleges and universities throughout the country, well more than any other country in the world.

Since 2000, the overall number of international students in the U.S. has grown by 72%.

Students from China, India and South Korea represent about half of all international students in the U.S. Kuwait, Brazil and Saudi Arabia, the three countries that saw the most growth in international students in the U.S., all have invested in scholarship programs for overseas study.

levance of *The Foreigner* in our current political climate. Though written as a refugees, and entire concept of a “foreigner” has dramatically changed in our in the United States has grown by approximately 10%, without taking into ntity crisis, and *The Foreigner* provides a lighthearted vehicle into the deeper s to be a foreigner, and what it means to be a community.

“We—all of us, we’re becoming—we’re making one another complete, and alive, and—oh, I can’t explain. But—I shall miss them.”
–Charlie, *The Foreigner*

The Effect of the Cultural Climate on the Relevance of *The Foreigner*



UNITED STATES IN 1982

VS.

UNITED STATES NOW

IMMIGRATION

Percent of Immigrants in Country Legally: **6.2%**
Percent of Immigrants in Country Illegally: **0.9%**

RECESSION

In 1982, the United States experienced its worst recession since the Depression. By November, unemployment reached nine million (10.8%), 17,000 businesses failed, many farmers lost their land, and many sick, elderly and poor families became homeless.

The primary cause of the downturn was the disinflationary monetary policy adopted by the Federal Reserve. The country lived through the recession for a full year before President Reagan publicly admitted that the economy was in trouble. The budget cuts, which crippled the poor, and the tax cuts, which often favored the rich, spawned some to believe Reagan was insensitive to his people's needs.

IMMIGRATION

Percent of Immigrants in Country Legally: **13.3%**
Percent of Immigrants in Country Illegally (2014): **3.5%**

RECESSION

In 2008, the United States faced the worst recession since the 1930s. Coined the "Great Recession," it began with the fallout of the eight trillion-dollar housing market and global credit crisis which led to a doubled unemployment rate, sharp cutbacks in consumer spending, and financial market chaos.

In the post-World War II recessions, it took an average of ten months for the economy to regain the jobs lost during the recession; in the 1990s recession, it took nearly two years; and, our most recent recession, in 2008, took nearly three-and-a-half years.

Ku Klux Klan History

The Foreigner, though a “side-splitting comedy,” has a dark subplot involving the American Extremists: the Ku Klux Klan, recognized for their violent tactic targeted at minorities. The Ku Klux Klan terrifies Betty, Catherine and Ellard when The Klan invade their home after Owen Musser decides to visit. Instantly identifiable as the alien of the group, the KKK become antagonistic to Charlie for opposing their “white and Christian values.” Without any concrete evidence, the KKK alienates Charlie simply because he is different than the rest of them.

The KKK began in 1866, when a group comprised of ex-Confederates and everyday working class people founded the first branch of the Ku Klux Klan in Pulaski, Tennessee. Nicknamed the “Invisible Empire,” the Ku Klux Klan devoted itself to an underground campaign of violence against black and white Republican leaders and voters to reverse the policies of Radical Reconstruction and restore white supremacy in the South.

In the summer of 1867, local branches of the Klan established an “Invisible Empire of the South.” The KKK held rallies, marches, and riots across the country, donning their symbol of a burning cross.

By 1870, the KKK had branches in nearly every southern state. Fighting back, the Republican state governments in the South turned to Congress for help, resulting in the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, which was created to protect African-Americans from violence by the Klan.

In areas where KKK activity was high, local law enforcement either belonged to the Klan or refused to take legal action against the Klan. Those that arrested members of the Klan rarely could find witnesses willing to stand up and testify against the Klan.

In the 1920s, Klan membership exceeded four million people nationwide, including a myriad of working classes: farmers, laborers, lawyers, merchants, physicians, and ministers. The Great Depression depleted the majority of the Klan’s membership ranks, and the organization temporarily disbanded in 1944.

Klan activity rose in the south in the 1960’s civil rights movement. The KKK was responsible for the bombings, beatings and shootings of black and white activists. These actions led to oppositional support, indirectly helping the civil rights cause. The Ku Klux Klan is currently estimated to have between 6,000 and 10,000 active members, mostly living in the South and Midwest.

**“Are you prepared this night to stand before the
holy tribunal of the Invisible Empire?”**

– OWEN (ACT II, SCENE II)

“The Holy Tribunal of the Invisible Empire”:
The Invisible Empire was a term given to the
Ku Klux Klan, inspired by their anonymous
influence over federal and state politicians.

GEORGIA



1732

Established in 1732, Georgia became the thirteenth colony to be founded and the only territory ruled by a Board of Trustees, which was based in London, England. The state had no governor or governing body within the colony for the first two decades of its existence.



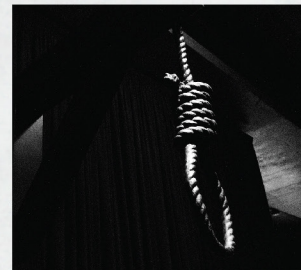
1751

Georgia was the only colony where slavery, rum, lawyers, and Catholics were all banned. After the Trustees lifted the ban on slavery in 1751, Georgians promptly established a coastal plantation economy based on rice and cotton.



1908

In 1908, an amendment to the state constitution prevented the votes of blacks and poor whites by imposing a literacy test. This amendment, along with the legally-mandated racial segregation of public facilities, was definitive of the Jim Crow era, which lasted in the South for more than half a century.



1889



1920s

More than 400,000 residents, almost all black, migrated to other parts of the country. Between 1910 and 1930, nearly half the state's agricultural workers abandoned farming.



1954

A, USA



Eli Whitney's cotton gin led to the development of the "Black Belt region," which included central and southwestern Georgia. The invention sparked both the demand of cotton and the use of slaves.

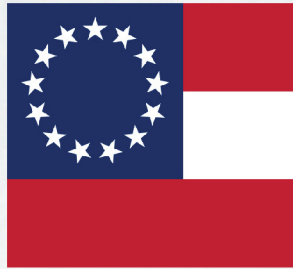
1793



Cherokees in the northwestern area of Georgia were forced into exile, even after assimilating to American culture. This removal became known as the "Trail of Tears."

1838

Between 1889-1918, more lynching took place in Georgia than anywhere else in the U.S.



Georgia played a crucial role during the secession and formation of the Confederacy. It had the largest number of both slaves and slaveholders of any Deep South state. More than 460,00 slaves were freed in Georgia during and after the war, leading to political and racial tension.

1865

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled the "separate but equal" law, decreeing the segregation of public education in Georgia and other southern states were unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*.



Gov. Vandiver closed the University of Georgia after the courts ordered the admission of two black students, who were later admitted despite protests. Atlanta was a crucial city for the civil rights movement, serving as the base of Martin Luther King Jr. and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

1961

English as Second Language

ESL, English as a Second Language, is the teaching of English to people who speak a different language in a country where English is the predominant language spoken.

In *The Foreigner*, Ellard becomes the ESL teacher for Charlie, slowly teaching him English by pronouncing each syllable of an object he presents to Charlie (fork = “faw...werk” and lamp = “layump”).

The Internet has opened up new doorways for those seeking to learn a foreign language. Through on-line sites and applications, students can learn vocabulary words, hear audio pronunciations, watch videos that demonstrate meanings of slang words, and have mobile access to methods that teach the practical meanings of the English language. ESL websites also provide a plethora of opportunities for the student to practice their newly found skills. Whether playing games, watching videos, or using audio to practice inflection and pronunciation, people learning English as a second language will find the Internet provides numerous free resources for those working to sharpen their comprehension and skills.

Charlie's Kin'a Talk

As Charlie “learns English” from Ellard, he attempts to demonstrate a new found understanding of the language by mimicking the “harder” sounds of the language. For help understanding Charlie's version of learned English, see to the right!

'Ere > Here | D'yer > Did you | Yer > You | Innit > Isn't it | 'Ow > How | 'Elp > Help | 'Er > Her | 'E > He | 'Ave > Have | 'Ad > Had | 'At's > That's | Sump'm > Something | 'Un > One | 'N' > And | Perty > Pretty | S'pose > Suppose | M' > My | 'Im > Him

Glossary

RECKON	To think or suppose (something). To believe that (something) is true or possible.
KLAATU, BARADA, NIKTO	A phrase originating in the 1951 science fiction film, <i>The Day the Earth Stood Still</i> .
PORTABLE DETONATION	To explode or to cause (something, such as a bomb) to explode.
BOMB SQUAD	A group of people who prevent bombs from causing damage or injury.
ROBERT E. LEE	The leading Confederate General during the U.S. Civil War.
CONDEMNED PROPERTY	Occurs when the government seizes private property and compensates the owner.
KU KLUX KLAN	An American Post-Civil War secret society advocating white supremacy.
HOMINY GRITS	A type of ground corn that is eaten especially in the southern U.S.
RACONTEUR	Someone who is good at telling stories.
OTHER CHEEK	A phrase in Christian doctrine that refers to responding to injury without revenge.

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Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. The Quadracci Powerhouse is located on the second level and can be accessed via the escalator or elevator.



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