

Warning: Due to language and violence, this production is intended for mature audiences only.

When awful  
things get  
even worse...



# GAGARIN WAY

A Play by Gregory Burke

Johns Auditorium 8 PM  
April 21, 22, and 28, 29

Free and open to the Public

Presented by the Hampden-Sydney College Department of Fine Arts  
For more information please call (434) 223-6362 or go to [www.hsc.edu](http://www.hsc.edu)

# GAGARIN WAY

**By Gregory Burke**

Presented by the Hampden-Sydney College Department of Fine Arts and produced by special arrangements with Alan Brodie Representation LTD.

**Cast in order of appearance**

Eddie.....James Jordan  
Tom.....Scott McGuire  
Gary.....Eric Lewis  
Frank.....Alex Mayberry

**Production Staff**

Director.....Matthew R. Dubroff  
Assistant Director.....David Sherman  
Designer.....Matthew R. Dubroff  
Stage Manager.....Joshua Young  
Assistant Stage Manager.....Dominique Ervin  
Dramaturge.....Bob Blackman  
Technical Director.....Brad Stoller  
Fight Director.....Aaron Anderson

**Director's Note**

I saw the premiere production of Gregory Burke's play, *Gagarin Way*, in August of 2001 at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. The immediate impact of this performance resonated with me for some time. It accurately captured so many levels of existence, from the personal to the political, and many points in between. At each point I felt it explored a facet of experience with shocking clarity.

The list of world events since that August has unfortunately proved *Gagarin Way* devastatingly prophetic, and I have thought back to it frequently as a sad harbinger to our times. Where the play might have then been a cautionary tale, it can now serve as a gauge of the world in which we are living. The characters in *Gagarin Way* invite us to wonder, as they do, "What would you do if you were me?"

This is why I am so excited about producing this play here. The questions of identity, nationalism, security, and humanity that the current generation of students faces are all present in the events of this play. Perhaps through just asking the questions that *Gagarin Way* challenges us to consider, some hope for the future can be found.

**Dramaturge's Note**

On 31 March 1990 rioting broke out in Trafalgar Square. Around the monument to Britain's great naval victory, 200,000 Brits gathered to demand that Margaret Thatcher drop the controversial new Poll Tax, a tax that appeared designed to benefit the rich at the expense of the working poor. Police drove the protesters out of the square with great violence and in the chaos shops were looted and buildings damaged. Thatcher couldn't blame the rioting on organized labor. She'd crushed the unions in 1984. She couldn't blame international communism, which had collapsed in 1989. So she blamed "anarchists."

In the popular imagination, anarchists are a violent lot. Nineteenth century anarchists such as Mikhail Bakunin endorsed "propaganda of the deed." This principle encouraged individuals to kill and destroy those people and things that stood as monuments to western culture. Let the Capitalists tremble! Let the workers see how easy it would be to rise up! Instead of slogans, let there be violence! Writing in the 1860s, the Russian radical Sergei Nechayev had argued that any means were acceptable in the struggle against an immoral and repressive society. Violent destruction would release creative energy and a better society would spontaneously arise. In February 1894, Emile Henry tossed a bomb into a Paris café killing and wounding dozens. When tried for the attack, Henry declared that those he had killed were complicit with a criminal regime. After all, as he noted just before going to the guillotine, among the rich "there are no innocents." Later that year an anarchist killed the president of France. In 1901, an anarchist killed U.S President William McKinley.

But anarchist terror did not cause society to collapse. In the early twentieth century, Anarcho-syndicalists turned to a new tactic. They sought to use the trade union movement to destroy the intertwined system of state and Capital. When the right time came, workers would overthrow the government and form decentralized, voluntary worker-governed cities and factories. An opportunity came in Spain in the 1930s, when a weak monarchy collapsed and a center-left republic was declared. Anything seemed possible. Capitalists trembled. A civil war erupted in 1936, and the far right Nationalists sought military support from Hitler and Mussolini. Abandoned by the liberal republics in France and the U.S., the Spanish Republic sought help from Stalin. But in 1939, Stalin arranged for the local Communists to attack the anarchists, rather than let a rival version of socialism survive. The Nationalists prevailed, and anarcho-syndicalism vanished.

But anarchism survived. In the late 1950s a loose confederation of avant-garde artists formed the Situationist International, a group dedicated to the overturning of society, be it Capitalist or Stalinist, through art. It was to be propaganda by the deed, but the deed consisted of advertising slogans and bizarre pranks designed to make people see through the façade of authoritarian



pseudo-socialism in the East and of vapid commercial society in the West. The Situationists sought to create revolutionary situations in which humans could free themselves from categories dreamt up by advertising men and faceless bureaucrats. Their moment arrived in May 1968. Facing overcrowded schools, French students took over their universities and demanded better conditions. Clumsy attempts by the police to retake the campuses led to a spontaneous walkout by millions of workers. Everyone was caught by surprise. Anything seemed possible. The Situationists flooded France with art. Let the Capitalists tremble! Let the workers see how easy it is to rise up! Facing the most improbable of revolutions, Charles de Gaulle readied the army to defend his government. The French Communist Party ordered its members and their allied unions to support him. The revolutionary moment passed. No political party supported the students or the workers in their quest for a meaningful future in a free society. Capitalist or communist, the state seemed to exist only to keep its people adequately managed and controlled. Faced with a bleak and sterile future, what could the students and workers do?

## Who's Who in the Cast and Crew



**Aaron Anderson (Fight Director)** is an assistant professor of theatre at Virginia Commonwealth University and holds an MFA in Acting and Asian Theatre from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and an Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama from Northwestern University. He has worked professionally as an actor and stuntman in Honolulu and Chicago; performed on stage, film and sound studios across the United States and Europe; and taught movement, voice, and acting at numerous theatres and universities around the world: including the Banff Center for the Performing Arts, London's City Literary Institute, the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the Italia Conti School for Performing Arts (London), Northwestern University, the University of Illinois and the University of Hawaii. He holds international certifications as a fight director with the Society of American Fight Directors, the British Academy of Stage and Screen Combat (of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London), and Dueling Arts International.

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**Bob Blackman (Dramaturge)** is an assistant professor at Hampden-Sydney College, where he teaches history and western culture. He received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Irvine in European history, with special emphasis on early modern and modern France and the French Revolution of 1787-1815. He has long been interested in the history of radical politics and in the history and culture of Scotland, and he is glad to finally put these interests to some use. This is the first time that Dr. Blackman has acted as a dramaturge.



**Matthew R. Dubroff (Director, Set Design)** has been teaching theatre at Hampden-Sydney College since 1999. He has designed numerous productions here and this will be his fourth directing project. Most recently he directed *Rashomon*. Dubroff is also a teacher of the Alexander Technique and the Wu Style of Tai Ji. With a specialty in Asian Theatre, Dubroff is a founding member of Theatre Nohgaku, a theatre troupe dedicated to performing Noh plays in English. In the fall of 2006 he will be participating in their East Coast tour of *Pine Barrens*, which will be performed at H-SC in September. Dubroff would like to thank all of the students, faculty, and community members for their involvement in and support of this exciting project and theatre at H-SC.



**Dominique Ervin (Assistant Stage Manager)** is a freshman here at Hampden-Sydney College. *Gagarin Way* is his first backstage experience with the theatre. He remarks, "I really enjoy going to plays here and I am glad that I have the chance to be a part of this production."



**James Jordan (Eddie)** a senior philosophy major from Virginia Beach, is enjoying his eighth and final appearance on the Hampden-Sydney stage. James would like to thank Professors Matt Dubroff and Shirley Kagan for their excellent teaching and invaluable assistance over the last four years. James would also like to thank his family and friends for all of their support. Finally, James would like to thank the rest of the cast and the crew for their phenomenal work. James has greatly enjoyed his four years in Hampden-Sydney theatre and hopes that the audience will continue to love the theatre as much as he has.



**Eric Boehling Lewis (Gary)** a sophomore at the College, has experience in acting, directing, producing, set design, and improv comedy. He is currently pursuing a double major in fine arts (theatre) and philosophy, with a concentration in rhetoric, and he plans to spend next year studying abroad at Trinity College, Dublin. He loves his parents very much.



**Alex Mayberry (Frank)** is a sophomore member of the Jongleurs club returning for his sixth production at H-SC. Former productions include *Macbeth*, *Music from a Sparkling Planet*, *Noises Off*, and the one-act plays *The Hardy Boys* and *the Mystery of Where Babies Come From*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Babels in Arms*. Alex is also involved in intramural soccer, basketball, and dodgeball. He is double-majoring in fine arts (theatre) and classical studies.



**Scott McGuire (Tom)** is a Junior majoring in English and religion. *Gagarin Way* marks his fifth performance while at H-SC. He first appeared as Hoagie in *Music from a Sparkling Planet* and went on to portray the roles of Cleopatra in *While Shakespeare Slept*, Tim in *Noises Off*, and Bill in *Sure Thing*. He admits that he usually likes to perform in comedies, but this play's dark humour has been an exciting change of pace. Scott would like to thank the cast and crew for making *Gagarin Way* a great experience.



**David Sherman (Assistant Director)** is a freshman from Walnut Cove, North Carolina, and graduated from South Stokes High School. He loves the outdoors and is actively involved in the Boy Scouts of America, where he earned the rank of Eagle. He plans to major in history or political science and attend law school after he graduates. This is David's first experience in theatre at H-SC. He would like to thank the entire cast and crew, especially Professor Dubroff, for their encouragement and support. God bless and enjoy the show!



**Brad Stoller (Technical Director)** is adding *Gagarin Way* and *Noises Off* to his list of sets this year. He is returning to H-SC where he designed and built the sets for *Volpone* and *Waiting For Godot* in the 2003-4 academic year. He also taught playwriting and theatre 101 at H-SC. Presently he teaches the Alexander Technique and Aikido in Charlottesville.



**Joshua Young (Stage Manager)** is a freshman majoring in psychology and fine arts (theatre). This is his second time being part of the College's play production and his first time stage managing a play in college. "Even though I have a lot to learn, my high school experience proceeds me. I've been doing theatre and tech work since the 8th grade and I've come to love it. Thank you to all that supported me."