



SOUTH COAST REPERTORY
presents

Pedro Calderón de la Barca's



translated and adapted by Nilo Cruz
directed by Kate Whoriskey

SEGERSTROM STAGE
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PLAYGOER'S GUIDE

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JEAN AND TIM WEISS AND AMERICAN AIRLINES
Honorary Producers

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PART I: THE PLAY

REDREAMING A MASTERPIECE

BY JOHN GLORE

Imagine that you've spent the first twenty years of your life — from earliest infancy — in a small prison cell under the most abject conditions. Your only human contact has been with your jailor, who is also your tutor. He teaches you what it means to be a civilized human being — concepts of compassion, morality and honor — but you are given no opportunity for direct experience. Instead you peer out your tiny window to observe the animals that traverse the desolate mountain landscape outside your cell, and wonder why they have been granted more freedom than you.

Then something extraordinary happens: One day you awake from a drug-induced sleep to find yourself sitting on a throne. You are told by the man who was your jailor that you are in fact the ruler of this realm. Your father had you imprisoned, he explains, so as to circumvent astrological omens that foretold your becoming a horrible tyrant and bringing ruin to your country; but now father has had a change of heart and decided to let you prove your ability to defy the stars and assume your sovereign rights and responsibilities.

So what do you do? Segismundo, the man who has been subjected to this bizarre, inhumane treatment, responds as might be expected. His righteous outrage, given free rein by sudden and absolute power, almost instantly leads him to violence. He threatens the life of his former jailor, Clotaldo, and when a servant tries to intervene, he throws the meddler from the castle wall to his death. Then he moves to make good on his threat against Clotaldo, who warns Segismundo that if he persists in his brutal behavior he may awake to find that his brief sojourn on the throne has only been a dream.

That is, in fact, the fallback plan, pre-arranged by Segismundo's father, Basilio, with his co-conspirator, Clotaldo. When Basilio learns that Segismundo's actions are confirming the original astrological forecast, he has his son drugged again and returned to his mountain prison. Segismundo awakes this time to hear Clotaldo aver that the entire palace episode has been a dream and nothing more, whereupon the young man curses his fate but resigns himself to a life of imprisonment.

The only problem with Basilio's plan is that he has failed to take into account the will of his people. Having learned that there is a rightful heir to the throne, they don't wish to see him languish in a prison cell. Their uprising seems to promise salvation for Segismundo; but the once and future king, no longer certain what is dream and what is reality, must now decide what to do with his second chance at freedom and power.

This is the main story of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's classic, *Life Is a Dream*. Braided with it are two other plotlines: the story of Rosaura, a young woman who has come to this land disguised as a man, to redress a wrong done to her honor by one of its noblemen; and that of Estrella and Astolfo, niece and nephew of Basilio, who will vie for his throne if his plan for Segismundo doesn't work out. These four characters form a constellation that will take on a surprising shape by the play's conclusion.

SCR has commissioned playwright Nilo Cruz (author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anna in the Tropics*) to create a new translation for director Kate Whoriskey's production of *Life Is a Dream*. Eschewing the rhyming verse of the original, Cruz brings his modern sense of spare poetry to Calderón's play, for a rendition that is both classical and contemporary, faithful and free, literate and imminently actable. Whoriskey's production removes the play from its original setting in Poland and transplants it to a mythic place and time, allowing its story, characters and themes to resonate more immediately with events and concerns of our own time.

Calderón wrote *Life Is a Dream* in 1635 and it soon claimed a place as one of the masterpieces of the Spanish Golden Age. With a story and philosophical content that hearken back to the ancient Greeks, and themes of leadership, honor, humanity and brutality that speak urgently to our contemporary world, *Life Is a Dream*, like most great classics, is a play of timeless truths. That it also offers SCR's inventive director opportunities for strokes of bold theatricality and dazzling dramatic impact make it a theatregoer's dream.

CHARACTERS

ROSAURA, a noble lady

CLARÍN, a servant

SEGISMUNDO, a prince

CLOTALDO, a jailer

ASTOLFO, a prince

ESTRELLA, a princess

BASILIO, a king

GUARDS, SOLDIERS, MUSICIANS, SERVANTS

SYNOPSIS

Segismundo's birth took place under a bad star. Prophecies foretold a monstrous being and a tragedy ending with the murder of his father, King Basilio. The father banished his newborn son to a tower. Many years later, Basilio wants to discover whether courage and intelligence can overcome the mandate of the stars. Overnight, Segismundo is made Prince to rule on a trial basis, in hopes that he will be capable of defeating his stars and lifting the curse forever. But intoxicated by his new power, and angered by his long, brutal imprisonment, Segismundo throws a servant from the balcony and insults both court and people. He speaks of love, yet behaves violently and launches a furious attack against his own father. Basilio and his court are unforgiving. Segismundo is imprisoned for a second time and his life as a prince is explained away by his jailers as having been just an episode, a mere vision, a dream. But the townspeople, discovering that they have a prince, organize a revolt to free Segismundo from the tower. When the two encounter each other face-to-face after the prince's troops are victorious, Segismundo unexpectedly prostrates himself before his father and in return, the King grants him the throne.

THE LIGHT OF REASON: CRITICS COMMENT ON *LIFE IS A DREAM*

Life Is a Dream is not so much the story of a prince who recovers his throne as of a man who discovers both himself and the true nature of life, who emerged from the darkness of ignorance and animal-passion into the light of reason and understanding. In doing so, moreover, he embodies one of the play's central themes that man's will is free and that his destiny lies ultimately in his own hands, not in the hands of others or the caprices of fate. And he learns too, in the process of discovering and mastering himself, that those things in life which are the objects of men's desire — power, wealth, pleasure — are fleeting and insubstantial in comparison to the permanence of spiritual values.

— Gwynne Edwards

The ambiguous creature wearing animal pelts and lying chained in the tower is the prince of mankind. This is how Segismundo begins. Thereafter we are obliged to judge the moral and psychological distance he traverses in the course of the play in order to become consciously human. He must go from the lowest form of human life, the equivalent of the cave man, to the highest — the human being who learns to be civilized by responding to everything around him while doubting it all and believing in nothing.... Others may say life is a dream; Segismundo must find out whether this is true or not by living his own life.

— Edwin Honig

Life Is a Dream is Calderón's best-known play, and also the most universally celebrated in the history of the Spanish theatre. Its main theme, the transience of human life, ancient as man himself, is still proverbial in the schoolchildren's round which ends, "Life is but a dream." Fascinated scholars have traced the theme to earliest Oriental philosophy and religion, to the Taoist ethic and Buddhist thought, to appropriate passages in Job, Isaiah, and Ecclesiastes, to Heraclitus, Plato, and Roman Stoicism, and finally to Christian ethics and apologetics — the tradition closest to Calderón's thinking as a deeply religious seventeenth-century man in a militant Catholic country whose empire had begun to dissolve.

— Edwin Honig

Love, dishonor, vengeance. Kingship, loyalty, rebellion. Knowledge, control, choice. Dreams, illusion, reality. These are the themes that haunt *Life Is a Dream* and make it the peer of such plays as *Oedipus* and *Hamlet*.

— Michael Kidd

The detestable play *Life is a Dream*, so unjustly esteemed by some, is written in such a bombastic style that from its first line it turned my stomach. The subject and plan are the most improbable absurdity that can be imagined. There are no characters, no customs, no passions or tragic dignity, no comic charm. The doctrine of fate which it represents is that of Moslems and a few gentiles. In short this detestable play is a monstrosity.

— Cándido María Trigueros (1788)

What is the role of the stars in this picture? Far from being an arcane theological matter, the thrust of this question is one that, in slightly different terms, continues to spark fierce debate today and whose definitive answer continues to elude us — at least as of yet. Simply put, the issue is this: to what extent is human choice mediated — by genetics, by environmental factors, or, yes, even by the stars (the widespread existence of astrology columns in the twenty-first century necessitates inclusion of the latter term)? In short, to what extent is free will free?

— Michael Kidd

As seen at work in Spanish drama, the honor code represents certain prepossessions and obligations. First, there is pride in one's class, family, good name, blood, or heritage. Secondly there is the safeguarding against sexual assault of female members of the family — wife, sister, and daughter. There is the articulation and defense of the principle of the freedom of individual conscience. Then there is the obligation to redress an offense of insult, usually involving a woman, by secretly murdering the wrongdoer and dispatching the implicated woman to a convent for the rest of her life or killing her on the spot. Finally there is the need to be vindicated for such actions by the highest prevailing authority, usually the paternalistic king.

— Edwin Honig

When we have a dream, we just accept it at the time. Amazing things happen, and we just let ourselves be amazed. It's only afterwards that, if we choose, we can think about what happened in our dream and sometimes find ways of relating it to what is happening in our lives.

It is the same with this play: the weirdest things happen. There's a father so afraid of the power of his son that he locks him up in a tower the minute he is born. There's a man who falls asleep in a prison and wakes up in a palace. He doesn't know whether he's awake or still dreaming and throws someone out of a window to try to find out. There's a woman who's so angry with her lover for cheating on her that she dresses as a man and rides [from one country to another] just to try to get even with him....

And all these extraordinary events add up to something that's funny, exciting, moving and strange... and when we think about them afterwards maybe we'll find that they have something to say about the way parents treat their children, or the way men and women relate together, or the extent to which we are really able to control the events of our lives....

Basilio is a king who tries to foretell and influence events. As I write, presidents and prime ministers gather for yet another world summit: with their bodyguards and their limousines they present an imposing spectacle. But the spectacle of power is an illusion, a dream.

— John Clifford

A SUPERPOWER IN DECLINE

When Calderón was born in 1600, Spain was the most powerful country in the world, but the seeds had already been planted of a decline that would take it, by the time of his death in 1681, to the humiliating status of a second-tier power. The story of Spain's rise and fall is the sobering tale of a country that collapsed under the burden of its own achievements.... I will begin with three salient general features of early modern Spanish society: religious intensity, inequality before the law, and a deep sense of national pride that suffered serious blows throughout the seventeenth century....

"In most people's minds, the year 1492 is associated with Columbus's maiden voyage to the Indies. Although Columbus... died insisting he had reached India, it soon became apparent that he had come upon two great continents previously unknown to Europeans. Spain's primary claim to those continents and to whatever riches and natural resources they contained catapulted it almost immediately from its traditional, Mediterranean sphere of influence onto the center stage of European politics, forever changing the course of its history.... Columbus's voyage, together with other momentous events of 1492 and several that soon followed, cemented in Spaniards' identity a proud nationalism bound to a profound sense of manifest destiny. By the seventeenth century, however, national pride was coming under increasing strain. An ominous portent was the catastrophic defeat of the Invincible Armada by the English Navy in 1588. More important, the shiploads of gold and silver that flooded into the country from the New World, much to the envy of Spain's European enemies.... were not nearly enough to finance the staggering military expenditures of the Spanish crown against those same European enemies on the continent....

"By Calderón's time, Spanish literature had assumed a set of characteristics that later critics, borrowing from art history, termed Baroque. Formally speaking, the Spanish Baroque in all literary genres employed elaborate or highly stylized syntax... and a heavy dependence on greatly exaggerated metaphors and wordplay.... Thematically, Baroque writers came to terms with their disappointment over Spain's political decline by emphasizing the deception and uncertainty of earthly existence, harking back to the biblical view of life as a walk through 'the valley of the shadow of death'; such a life was a mere illusion that could be shattered only through the liberating embrace of death. To emphasize the illusory nature of this existence, the Spanish Baroque relied on three central metaphors: life as art, life as theatre, and, most important for Calderón, life as a dream."

— Michael Kidd, Hispanic Studies, Macalester College

VERITIES & REALITIES

How can you prove whether at this moment we are sleeping, and all our thoughts are a dream; or whether we are awake, and talking to one another in the waking state?

— Plato

Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.

— Carl Jung

Obviously one must hold oneself responsible for the evil impulses of one's dreams. In what other way can one deal with them? Unless the content of the dream rightly understood is inspired by alien spirits, it is part of my own being.

— Sigmund Freud

Listen to the Exhortation of the Dawn!
Look to this Day!

For it is Life, the very Life of Life.
In its brief course lie all the
Verities and Realities of your Existence.
The Bliss of Growth,
The Glory of Action,
The Splendor of Beauty;
For Yesterday is but a Dream,
And Tomorrow is only a Vision;
But Today well lived makes
Every Yesterday a Dream of Happiness,
And every Tomorrow a Vision of Hope.
Look well therefore to this Day!
Such is the Salutation of the Dawn!

— Kalidasa

Judge of your natural character by what you do in your dreams.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Yet it is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top.

— Virginia Woolf

I've dreamt in my life dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas: they've gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the color of my mind.

— Emily Brontë

For once you have tasted flight you will walk the earth with your eyes turned skywards, for there you have been and there you will long to return.

— Leonardo da Vinci

We are not hypocrites in our sleep.

— William Hazlitt

People's dreams are made out of what they do all day. The same way a dog that runs after rabbits will dream of rabbits. It's what you do that makes your soul, not the other way around.

— Barbara Kingsolver

Those who have compared our life to a dream were perhaps more right than they thought. When we dream, our soul lives, acts, exercises all her faculties, neither more nor less than when she is awake ... Sleeping we are awake, and waking asleep ... Since our reason and our soul accept the fancies and opinions which arise in it while sleeping, and authorize the actions of our dreams with the same approbation as they do those of the day, why do we not consider the possibility that our thinking, our acting, may be another sort of dreaming, and our waking another kind of sleep?

— Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, 1580

What if nothing exists and we're all in somebody's dream? Or what's worse, what if only that fat guy in the third row exists?

— Woody Allen

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! For the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

— Mathew Arnold, *Dover Beach*

The world, indeed, is like a dream and the treasures of the world are an alluring mirage! Like the apparent distances in a picture, things have no reality in themselves, but they are like heat haze.

— Buddha

He was part of my dream, of course — but then I was part of his dream too.

— Lewis Carroll

If a man could pass through Paradise in a dream, and have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his soul had really been there, and if he found that flower in his hand when he awake — Aye, what then?

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge

If an artisan were sure to dream every night for twelve hours' duration that he was a king, I believe he would be almost as happy as a king, who should dream every night for twelve hours on end that he was an artisan.

— Pascal

I had a dream that I was awake and I woke up to find myself asleep.

— Stan Laurel

All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream.

— Edgar Allan Poe

When the reasoning and human and ruling power is asleep; then the wild beast within us, gorged with meat or drink, starts up and having shaken off sleep, goes forth to satisfy his desires... The point which I desire to note is that in all of us, even in good men, there is a lawless wild-beast nature, which peers out in sleep.

— Plato

Our revels now are ended. These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air,
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, that great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

— Shakespeare's *Tempest*

Our life is twofold: Sleep hath its own world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own world,
And a wide realm of wild reality.

— Byron

We are placed in this world, as in a great theatre, where the true springs and causes of every event are entirely concealed from us; nor have we either sufficient wisdom to foresee, or power to prevent, those ills with which we are continually threatened. We hang in perpetual suspense between life and death, health and sickness, plenty and want, which are distributed amongst the human species by secret and unknown causes, whose operation is oft unexpected, and always unaccountable.

— Hume

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.

— Traditional

PART II: THE PRODUCTION

CRUZ RETURNS TO SCR

In 2003, Cuban-American playwright Nilo Cruz became the first Latino to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, honoring his play *Anna in the Tropics*. By the time he accepted the award, the play had already been introduced to local audiences and theatre representatives from across the country through a reading in SCR's Pacific Playwrights Festival. The reading (followed later that year by a full production) marked a return to SCR for Cruz, already a longstanding member of our artistic family.

We first met Cruz in 1998 when he came here for a NewSCRipts reading of his play, *Two Sisters and a Piano*, and became better acquainted with him when he returned the following year for a full production of the play. Set in Havana in 1991, just after the fall of the Soviet Union, the drama centers on writer Maria and her piano-playing younger sister, Sofia, who are living under house arrest because of Maria's controversial writing and their shared political activities.

In 2000, SCR presented Cruz's *Hortensia and the Museum of Dreams* in the Hispanic Playwrights Project. Another drama centering on a pair of siblings, the play follows Americans Luca and Luciana back to their native Cuba where their complicated past relationship, long suppressed, comes back to haunt them.

In 2002 Cruz again contributed a play to the Hispanic Playwrights Project. Commissioned by SCR, *The Beauty of the Father* details a young woman's reunion with her artist father, who is haunted by the ghost of Federico García Lorca. (The Spanish poet and playwright also figures in another of Cruz's plays, *Lorca in a Green Dress*.) Like his two previous SCR offerings, *The Beauty of the Father* finds rich dramatic material in the complexities of family relationships, in the highly charged, wholly unpredictable dance of reconciliation and recrimination that can take place when blood ties are at stake.

Cruz's work is characterized by his unique lyricism, a rich linguistic music all the more remarkable given that English is not his native tongue. (He came to America at the age of nine and still speaks with the trace of an accent.)

His characters converse in a manner both psychologically nuanced and gracefully poetic. Nowhere is that more apparent than in his lovely *Anna in the Tropics*, in which a group of early 20th-century workers in a Tampa cigar factory find their lives turned upside down by the arrival of a handsome lector — a man hired by the factory owner to read to the cigar-makers as they work. The lector chooses *Anna Karenina* as his first offering, and gradually the characters and story-line of Tolstoy's masterpiece insinuate themselves into the lives of the factory workers, until tragedy becomes inevitable.

From Tolstoy to García Lorca, Cruz's interest in his literary forebears is an important influence in his own writing. He counts Calderón's *Life Is a Dream* among his favorite plays, and his poetic voice lends itself to the challenging task of translating Calderón's verse dialogue.

"I've always adored the poetic language of *Life is a Dream* and its mythical landscape," Cruz explains. "The whole text seems like a dream. The play takes us into a labyrinth, in which the strangest things happen. For a moment we seem to be lost in one of those mirrors that belong to the world of Jorge Luis Borges, in which we question whether the dreamer dreams the world or the world dreams him. The play is full of questions, and I think Calderón's greatness as a playwright lies in the rich humanity of his characters, and the questions they pose."

TRANSLATING CALDERON

BY JOHN GLORE

Although *Life Is a Dream* is acknowledged as one of the crowning achievements of the Spanish Golden Age, it isn't often produced in the contemporary American theatre. One reason is the difficulty of finding a translation that remains true to the spirit of the original without unduly taxing the patience of today's theatre-goers.

Conventions of the theatre in Calderón's day (1600-1681) were vastly different from our own. Partly influenced by film and television, we like our dialogue quick-paced, and snappy. Calderón (and presumably his audiences) favored long speeches overflowing with complicated imagery, and seemed to believe that anything worth saying once was worth repeating several times with variations. "Tellingly," writes critic Michael Kidd, "playwrights of Calderón's period were known as poets rather than dramatists; consequently, all poetic figures, including many of the excesses of Baroque poetry, were incorporated into drama ... Furthermore, audiences were accomplished listeners and spoke of going to 'hear a play' rather than to see it, demonstrating the great gulf that separates them from present-day patrons of theater."

Here's how one of Rosaura's speeches begins, as rendered in a more-or-less literal translation: "Generous Segismundo, whose heroic majesty rises from a night of shadows into a day of deeds and dawns like the sun which, in the arms of Aurora, returns shining to plants and roses, over mountains and seas. Crowned with flashing rays of light, it shines forth, bathing the hilltops with brilliance, painting the edges of the foam. So may you, O radiant sun of Poland, dawn on the world as on this unhappy woman, who today throws herself at your feet." Following that opening salvo, Rosaura's speech goes on uninterrupted for a full three-and-a-half densely packed pages.

Fortunately for SCR audiences, Nilo Cruz begins the same speech with much greater economy but still mindful of its poetry: "Noble Prince Segismundo, who emerges from his dark night like the sun, and in the arms of dawn restores light upon hills, trees and roses: May you protect an unhappy woman who kneels before you." His version of the rest of the speech dispatches its purpose with similar concision and eloquence.

In *Life Is a Dream* Calderón employs six typical measures: silva, decima, romance, quintilla, redondilla, octava. The silva is made up of rhymed couplets with alternating lines of seven and eleven syllables; the tone is lyric and the measure can be used for dialogue... The decima, as the term implies, is a ten-line stanzaic form in irregularly rhymed patterns; it is reserved for speeches involving complaints or arguments, and is used here only for significant soliloquies by Segismundo. Romance, the commonest measure, used mainly for narration, is based on an eight-syl-

lable line with assonantal rhymes of alternating vowels.... The quintilla, like the decima, is framed on set line-units; its five lines are octosyllabic but only two lines may rhyme, and no three consecutively. The measure is used for complimentary dialogues. The redondilla is a quatrain form of octosyllabic lines rhyming abba and employed to incorporate fast-moving dramatic action. Octavas are eight-line octosyllabic units, used to mark off portentous events or speeches; the lines rhyme abababcc, like a little sonnet.

— Edwin Honig

Nowadays we like our dramas to begin dramatically — that is to say, without a lot of set-up and with something exciting already in progress (the technical term is *in media res* —“in the middle of things”). Calderón, on the other hand, knew that his audiences expected to be given a long preamble consisting of information about the characters and their past lives prior to the beginning of the conflict. Cruz has set out to handle all necessary exposition as concisely as possible, moving each scene quickly to the onset of its action.

The art of translation might seem a simple matter of finding word-for-word equivalents between two languages and untangling the occasional idiomatic expression. But a good translation must inevitably become an act of creative adaptation, making comprehensible a story, characters and ideas from one culture for another whose politics, religion and social mores may be radically different. For example, the word “honor” is the same in both Spanish and English; but the concept of honor in Calderón’s Spain was precisely circumscribed and enormously important in a way that most contemporary Americans simply could not appreciate. To translate a cultural precept so that it becomes graspable for audiences of an altogether different culture is part of the translator’s challenge.

Complicating the task faced by a translator of this particular play is the fact that it was originally rendered in a complicated pattern of rhyming verse (see accompanying box). Even if a translator were able to find an English equivalent to that rhyme scheme, it simply wouldn’t have the same effect on our ears — it would inevitably lose its intended musicality. Cruz has chosen to abandon any attempt at rhyme, opting instead for a kind of free verse that has an easy, active flow while retaining imagistic richness. The goal is to make the verse speakable (and actable) by the performers and pleasing to listeners.

The result in this case is a play that has taken the stage for centuries but that SCR theatre-goers will be hearing for the first time on any stage in this particular form — a form that we believe Calderón, were he around today, would have found satisfying.

CREATIVE ENSEMBLE

CAST LIST

Rosaura, noble lady	<i>Lucia Brawley</i>
Clarín, servant	<i>Matt D’Amico</i>
Segismundo, Prince	<i>Daniel Breaker</i>
Clotaldo, jailer	<i>Richard Doyle</i>
Basilio, King	<i>John de Lancie</i>
Astolfo, Duke	<i>Jason Manuel Olazábal</i>
Estrella, Princess	<i>Jennifer Chu</i>
Revolutionary Leader/Lead Servant	<i>Luis Vega</i>
Ensemble	<i>Michael Irish, Ary Katz, Ceilidh Lamont, Lovelie Liquigan, Tara Louise, Andrew Scott, Luis Vega</i>

CREATIVE TEAM

Original Music/Sound Design	<i>Rob Milburn, Michael Bodeen</i>
Scenic Design	<i>Walt Spangler</i>
Costume Design	<i>Ilona Somogyi</i>
Lighting Design	<i>Scott Zielinski</i>
Choreography	<i>Warren Adams</i>
Dramaturg	<i>John Glone</i>
Stage Manager	<i>Erin Nelson</i>

Read the artists bios in the program. <http://www.scr.org/season/06-07season/programs/dreamprog.pdf>

PART III: RESOURCES

TOP SCIENTIST ASKS: IS LIFE ALL JUST A DREAM?

Professor Sir Martin Rees is to suggest that “life, the universe and everything” may be no more than a giant computer simulation with humans reduced to bits of software.

Rees, Royal Society professor of astronomy at Cambridge University, will say that it is now possible to conceive of computers so powerful that they could build an entire virtual universe....

In a television documentary, “What We Still Don’t Know,” to be screened on Channel 4 next month, [Rees] will say: “Over a few decades, computers have evolved from being able to simulate only very simple patterns to being able to create virtual worlds with a lot of detail. “If that trend were to continue, then we can imagine computers which will be able to simulate worlds perhaps even as complicated as the one we think we’re living in.

“This raises the philosophical question: could we ourselves be in such a simulation and could what we think is the universe be some sort of vault of heaven rather than the real thing? In a sense we could be ourselves the creations within this simulation.”

The idea that life, the universe and everything in it could be an illusion dates back more than 2,000 years. Chuang Tzu, the Chinese philosopher, who died in 295 BC, wondered whether his entire life might be no more than a dream.

René Descartes, the 17th-century French philosopher, raised similar questions. But he famously came down in favour of existence, saying: “I think, therefore I am.”

The idea was resurrected last century, notably by Bertrand Russell, who suggested that humans could simply be “brains in a jar” being stimulated by chemicals or electrical currents — an idea that was quickly taken up and developed by science fiction writers such as Isaac Asimov.

However, some academics pour cold water on the notion of a machine-created universe. Seth Lloyd, professor of quantum mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said such a computer would have to be unimaginably large...

Excerpted from an article by Jonathan Leake, *The Sunday Times of London*, November 14, 2004

STUDY QUESTIONS

ACT I:

1. What is Segismundo’s plight?
2. Why is Rosaura dressed as a man?
3. Explain the family intrigue surrounding the King: what is Astolfo’s motivation regarding Estrella?
4. What is the King’s plan for Segismundo?
5. Trace the ways the characters seek to deceive each other.
6. What picture of fatherhood does Calderón portray in the attitudes and actions of Basilio and Clotaldo?
7. What is the role of Clarin in the play?

ACT II:

1. How does the King’s plan unfold?
2. What does he mean by “Everyone who lives is dreaming”?
3. How does Segismundo behave when he awakens and learns he is a prince? How does he test his new “reality”?
4. Why does Rosaura now dress as a woman?
5. What happens when Segismundo wakes up the second time? What has he learned about life and dreaming?
6. What connection does Rosaura’s story have to the Segismundo dream plot?
7. Explain the significance of Segismundo’s final speech in Act Two:

ACT III:

1. What happens to make Segismundo question once again whether he is waking or sleeping?
2. How does he behave differently this time? What does he resolve to do?
3. Why does Clotaldo refuse to help Segismundo?
4. How is Clotaldo torn between duty to his king and duty to his family?
5. How does Rosaura appear to Segismundo a third time and what are her reasons? Why does Segismundo turn away from her?

6. How is Clarin's death linked to the King's fate?
7. The play ends with a double betrothal. What transformation in Segismundo makes this possible? What has he learned and what lessons does he impart at the end?
8. Discuss the connection between theatre and dream. What connections does the play draw between them? In what ways does the play seem to be aware that it IS a play? What kind of experience does this create for the audience?

(These questions are excerpted from the syllabus of an interdisciplinary course entitled "Sleep and Dream: Theory, Representation, Imagination," taught by Dr. Carolyn Fay at Franklin & Marshall College. The following link provides a wealth of informational resources for exploring the relationship between sleep and the creative imagination.)
<http://www.carolynfay.com/courses/2003/spring/Mss141/>

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WEB SITES

Act-by-act synopsis of play and photograph of bronze memorial to Calderón in Madrid
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_vida_es_sue%C3%B1o

Brief Guide to Internet Resources in Theatre and Performance Studies
http://www.stetson.edu/csata/custom/thr_guid.html

Classic Authors - <http://barca.classicauthors.net/LifeIsADream/LifeIsADream1.html>

Drama in the Golden Age - <http://www.bris.ac.uk/hispanic/current/undergrad/courses/golden.html#drama>

The Dream Debate: Is what we perceive around us really there, or is it just virtual reality-a dream world?
<http://www.upd8.org.uk/activity/70/Is-life-a-dream.html>

"A Dream Revisited: Director and Translator see relevance in the masterpiece of a Spanish playwright" by Paul Hodgins in *The Orange County Register*, Sunday, January 28, 2007
http://www.ocregister.com/ocregister/entertainment/arts/abox/article_1556255.php

Fitzgerald translation - <http://www.bartleby.com/26/1/>

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History of Spanish Literature - <http://www.spanisharts.com/books/literature/literature.htm>

MacCarthy translation alongside Spanish text
<http://aaswebsv.aas.duke.edu/celestina/CALDERON-BP/VIDA-SUENO/ACTO-01.HTM>

Spanish Arts - <http://www.spanisharts.com/books/masters/calderon.htm>

Synopsis of play, including links to information about Calderón and Spanish drama
<http://www.theatrehistory.com/spanish/calderon002.html>

Teatro mundo/Theatre of the World - <http://www.teatrodomundo.com/plays/lid.html>

Theatre Database - http://www.theatredatabase.com/17th_century/calderon_and_lope_de_vega.html