

Salvete, spectatores! Student Productions of Plautus

Each of the three presenters in this workshop is a classicist who has experience with student productions of plays by Plautus. The presenters represent a range of performance experience from using college students for productions for an adult audience to using college students for performances aimed at high schoolers to using high school students for a production emerging out of a summer Latin workshop. This workshop will begin with a 15-minute presentation by each of them, describing the methods they use and the challenges they face in making ancient Roman comedy entertaining for a modern audience. All three talks will be illustrated with clips from performances.

During the last half the 90-minute workshop the presenters will work with audience members to prepare short scenes by Plautus for staging, using whatever techniques they think will be theatrically effective. There should be time to perform the scenes, in Latin and/or English, before the session ends, and to reflect on what the necessary ingredients are for a successful production. This of course will depend on whether the spectators are children, teens, adults, senior citizens, or attendees of a CAMWS Annual Meeting!

It is the goal of the workshop to demonstrate that staging Roman comedy is not so hard as teachers may fear, and that it can be a valuable learning exercise in Latin as well as a fun way to stretch students' imaginations. For older students it can also be an opportunity for serious discussions of the disturbing elements in the plays: their social prejudices and their nonchalant attitude toward cruel and violent behavior.

If the workshop leads to an increase in the number of student production of ancient Roman comedy around the country, the presenters will be pleased. The plays offer students of

language, literature, history, theater, art, and music the chance to pool their talents and demonstrate the vitality of classical studies in the 21st century.