

MISANTHROPE was developed by Central Works and first performed at the Berkeley City Club. The premiere production opened on November 2, 2002, with the following team:

Darren Bridgett*.....Alan
Roberto Robinson*.....Phil
Deborah Fink*.....Celia

Gary Graves: director
Jan Zvaifler: production/stage manager
Gregory Scharpen: sound design
Lauren Kaplan: costume design
Mike Curtis: lighting design

*member Actors Equity Association

A NOTE ABOUT THE PLAY

When we sat down at our first workshop meeting on this project, the group began by reading through Richard Wilbur's translation of Moliere's original play, *The Misanthrope*, written in 1666. Before beginning workshops, Central Works decided to do a contemporary updating of the play, that it would be a comedy, and that we would reduce the action to a three-character play, two men and one woman: the Misanthrope (Alan), his best friend (Phil), and the wealthy widow (Celia), with whom the Misanthrope is deeply in love. After assembling the collaborative team and reading the original play, as a group, we proceeded by asking what thematic issues are present in the original, and how might we translate those issues into contemporary terms? As workshops progressed, we brainstormed about ways in which we might play out these thematic issues in the on-stage interaction of just our three central characters. In some cases, we have "distilled" certain aspects of Moliere's original scenario, in other cases we have adapted various components, and in still other cases we have altogether invented circumstances with a particular view toward the original. Our play, in these diverse ways, resonates with Moliere's, and in some instances, I hope, even represents a kind of "dialog" between the two. In the end, we have retained the basic premise put forth by Moliere in the first scene of his play, which is articulated by the Misanthrope—"If it were up to me," says Alceste (Alan), "we would all speak from the heart or say nothing at all"—and we have tried to follow that premise to its logical conclusion, given certain newly invented circumstances. What we have here is a new play, but one which is clearly based on, or "inspired" by, Moliere's comedy—both of which, I think, ask what limits, if any, honesty might have in the course of human affairs?—particularly in affairs of the heart.—Gary Graves