



Wednesday, March 3, 2004

## Actress honors Aphra Behn in one-person show

She was the first woman in England to earn her living as a writer, and her story comes to life this month at Oakland University.

Aphra Behn (1640-1689) was a noted dramatist, poet and novelist, who wrote more than 20 plays, including "The Rover," and two novels. Her success was remarkable, given the times when women were not encouraged to work outside the home.

Actress/playwright Karen Eterovich will perform her one-person show, "Love Arm'd, Aphra Behn & Her Pen," on Tuesday, March 9, at 4 p.m. in Varner Recital Hall. Admission is free and open to the public.

"It is my hope," Eterovich says, "to enlighten, encourage and inspire other women and men with the exuberance and spirit with which Aphra Behn lived her life."

Not much is known about Behn's private life, but it was apparently filled with vivid experiences. As a child, she traveled to Surinam (then a British colony), where her father was promised a post as deputy governor. This journey informs Behn's celebrated novel, "Oroonoko." Returning to London, she was enlisted by King Charles II to serve as a spy in the Netherlands. After a stint in debtors' prison, she began her literary career.

Eterovich's relationship with Behn began when she was cast as Angellica, the courtesan with a heart of gold in a production of "The Rover" at Cornell University. Since then, she has researched, written, revised and produced her theatrical version of Behn's life. This year marks the 10th anniversary of "Love Arm'd, Aphra Behn & Her Pen," which is a multimedia production, featuring slides and music.

The play, which has been performed Off-Off-Broadway as well as at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, offers Eterovich's interpretation of the available facts about Behn's career as a spy and her travels and observations on slavery as well as her challenges and achievements as a writer.

One critic calls Love Arm'd "a polished jewel," while another writes that "On the stage Karen Eterovich can convey more of the wit and vivacity of [Behn] than can be found on any page. I urge one and all to pay attention to what she's doing: it's thrilling."

Novelist Virginia Woolf paid tribute to Aphra Behn early last century in her book, "A Room of One's Own:" "All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn, which is, most scandalously but rather appropriately, in Westminster Abbey, for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds."

During her visit to Oakland University, Eterovich will offer a free workshop on "Women in the Theatre" on Wednesday, March 10, at 2:30 p.m. in Rooms 128-30 of the Oakland Center. She also will visit The Honors College for a Friday Form on Tuesday, March 9, at noon and will discuss her work with two eighteenth-century literature classes and with the Women's Studies methodology class.

The performance and Eterovich's visit are being coordinated and sponsored by the Department of English, cosponsored with The Honors College, the Women's Studies Program, Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance, and the Distinguished Programs Fund of the College of Arts and Sciences. The event is being held in conjunction with OU's **Women's History Month** activities.

For more information, call the **Department of English** at (248) 370-2250.

### SUMMARY

Aphra Behn (1640-1689) was a noted dramatist, poet and novelist, who wrote more than 20 plays, including "The Rover," and two novels. Her success was remarkable, given the times when women were not encouraged to work outside the home. Actress/playwright Karen Eterovich will perform her one-person show, "Love Arm'd, Aphra Behn & Her Pen," on Tuesday, March 9, at 4 p.m. in Varner Recital Hall.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, March 3, 2004  
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, March 3, 2004  
Article Start Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2004