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**THE WOOSTER GROUP'S LATEST MULTIMEDIA SHOW FULL
OF HEARTACHE, CORRUPTION, INTRIGUE—AND BADMINTON**

“Exhilarating...inspired.”— *New York Times*, on The Wooster Group’s *To You, The Birdie!*

“An astonishing invention and completely, utterly nuts. If it weren’t so nuts, it wouldn’t be so astonishing.”—*New York Observer*

Badminton rackets in tow, New York’s vanguard theater ensemble **The Wooster Group** returns to the Wexner Center for the third time to perform its latest theater production, the award-winning *To You, the Birdie! (Phèdre)*. This multimedia show, presented in the Performance Space **October 15–19**, radically and riotously retools Racine’s *Phèdre*, the classic tragedy of doomed love.

The *Birdie* in the title is The Wooster Group’s jumpcut allusion to courtly contests of badminton (*au courant* in the 17th century, when Racine’s play first debuted), which echo the wicked gamesmanship in love and politics that revolve around the helplessly forlorn Phèdre. With shuttlecocks flying and badminton rackets amplified like the thunder of the gods, the protagonists clash while the goddess Venus capriciously referees. *To You, The Birdie!* unfolds as a many-layered morality tale, full of hilarious ribald humor and sophisticated multimedia brilliance. The show, wrote *The Village Voice*, is “as much a valid reading of *Phèdre* as it is a resonant meditation on our time” and “the sharpest of theatrical instruments....an ideal scalpel for Racine’s surgical exploration into lust.” The Wooster Group recently won a prestigious Bessie Award (a New York Dance and Performance Award) in the creator-choreographer category for *Birdie!*, and Kate Valk, who portrays the romantically tortured queen, also took home a Bessie for her performance.

This marks the Woosters’ third trip to the Wexner Center. Their *House/Lights*, part of a Wexner Center Residency Award project, world-premiered at the Wexner Center in 1997, and the company returned in the fall 2000 to present *North Atlantic*.

news release

PREPERFORMANCE TALKS

The October 18 and 19 shows will include pre-performance talks by Alan Woods, director of Ohio State's Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute. He will discuss *To You, The Birdie! (Phèdre)*; The Wooster Group's work over the past 30 years; and other adaptations of Greek drama contemporaneous with Racine's.

THE WOOSTER GROUP

Formed in the early '70s and based in New York, The Wooster Group is known for its pivotal role in bringing sound, film, and video into the realm of contemporary theater. The Wooster Group has received many awards and grants over the years, with director Elizabeth LeCompte earning the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship and the NEA Distinguished Artists Fellowship for Lifetime Achievement in American Theater. The company's founding members include, among others, LeCompte, Kate Valk, Peyton Smith, Willem Dafoe, and Spalding Gray. Current associates include Steve Buscemi, Roy Faudree, John Lurie, Suzzy Roche, and Jennifer Tipton. These artists collaborate on the development and production of new theater works and interpretations of classics. The Wooster Group's permanent home and performance venue is The Performing Garage at 33 Wooster St. in Manhattan. For further information on The Wooster Group, check www.thewoostergroup.org.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

While in Columbus, The Wooster Group will discuss their works and creative process with students from OSU's Department of Theatre.

CALENDAR INFORMATION: THE WOOSTER GROUP / *To You, The Birdie! (Phèdre)*

Description: New York theater company The Wooster Group performs *To You, The Birdie! (Phèdre)*, a riotous, award-winning multimedia production based on Racine's tragedy.

Dates and times: Tuesday–Saturday, October 15–19 at 8 pm.

Location: Wexner Center Performance Space, 1871 N. High St. Limited seating.

Running time: 1 hour, 20 minutes. No intermission.

Pre-performance talks: October 18 and 19. Free.

Tickets: \$22 general public, \$18 Wexner Center members, and \$14 OSU students.

Ticket outlets: Wexner Center Ticket Office/Information Desk (614 292-3535) and Ticketmaster outlets (614 431-3600).

Public information: 614 292-3535 or www.wexarts.org/pa.

Images of *To You, The Birdie!* available upon request; call 614 292-9923.

SEASON AND EVENT SUPPORT

Major support for the Wexner Center's 2002–03 performing arts season is provided by **Bank One** and the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**.

Additional support provided by the **Ohio Arts Council**.

To You, The Birdie! funded in part by the **National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts**, with lead funding from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**. Additional funding provided by the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** and **Philip Morris Companies Inc.**

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THE WEXNER CENTER

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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