



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Loyola University presents a staged reading of Urania by Jyl Bonaguro. A tragicomedy of the life of Emilie du Châtelet, female mathematician, scientist and lover of Voltaire.

Chicago - The life of a female intellectual largely forgotten by history emerges in a new play based upon the book, *Emilie Du Châtelet: Daring Genius of the Enlightenment* by Professor Emerita Judith Zinsser. *Urania* plunges us back into 18th-century France, where courtly manners were strict and scientific reasoning was the new vogue. It portrays how, after falling in love with Voltaire, *Du Châtelet* transformed from a social dilettante into one of Europe's leading scientific minds.

Considered scandalous by many, she still managed to publish works on physics, mathematics and even the subject of happiness. Her crowning achievement was a translation of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* with an original commentary. Completed just 6 days prior to her untimely death at age 43, it is still the only complete French translation of Newton available today.

Brushed aside by history, Du Châtelet is only recently being recognized as contributing to famous formulas like $E=mc^2$. Unlike the generally more light-hearted dramatic adaptations of her story to date, *Urania* takes a modern approach that balances her unsung achievements with the nuances of her relationships and the constraints of 18th century attitudes towards women.

The location of the reading, within the former women's College of Mundelein, now part of Loyola University, is an apt setting for Du Châtelet who was barred from attending university because of her sex. After the reading, a brief Q&A panel will explore the gender roles of women in science and math and how such a mind could have lapsed into anonymity.

"During the past 40 years, study after study has addressed why more women do not become scientists. The question is most apt for physics.... Zinsser debunks legends about the life and loves of the vivacious and unorthodox 18th-century French noblewoman Marquise du Châtelet and analyzes her contribution to physics."

~ Scientific American

Free & Open to the Public: Sunday, January 19, 2014 from 2-4:30pm
Studio 409, Mundelein Center for the Fine & Performing Arts
1020 W. Sheridan Road Chicago, IL

CONTACT

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