



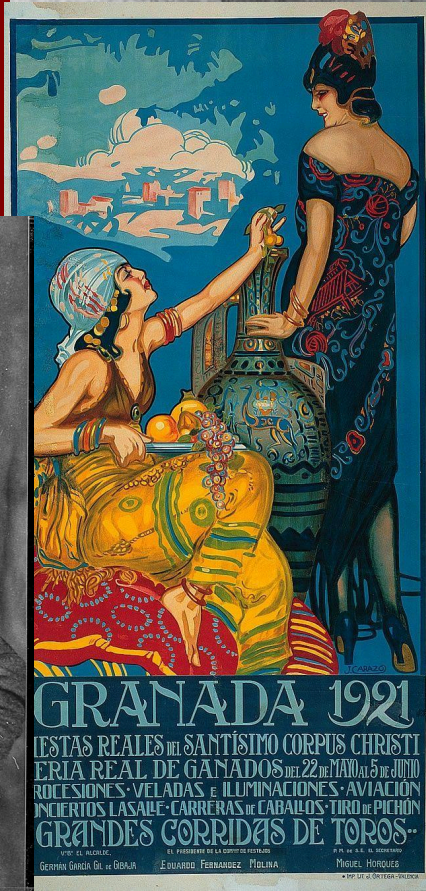
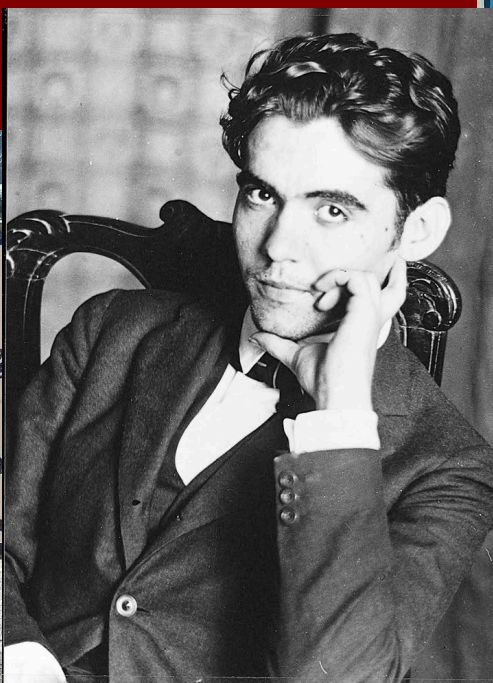
YERMA

Corpus Playroom Mainshow

Lent Term Week 5

24th – 28th February 2026

AUDITION PACK



Hello! I'm Dylan, a fourth year MMLer, and I will be directing my translation of Federico García Lorca's '**Yerma**' at Corpus Playroom in Week 5 next term. I'm very excited to be able to bring my vision for this classic Spanish play to the Playroom stage, after a successful run in Trinity College Cloisters two years ago. Having said that, I need a wonderful cast to bring it to life!

About the play

Yerma, first performed in 1934, is one of the last plays Lorca produced before his assassination two years later. Set in a small town in the rural landscape of Andalucía, it traditionally forms part of Lorca's 'Rural Trilogy', alongside *Blood Wedding* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. It tells the story of a young couple struggling with the pressures of having a child, stifled by the gossip of the townsfolk and the traditional social order that governs Spanish society at this time. Yerma, the young woman, becomes increasingly desperate in her longing for a child, while Juan, her husband, becomes more apathetic but frustrated by his and his wife's honour being called into question. Unable to cope, she resorts to ever more unconventional means in her pursuit of motherhood – an obsession that drives her mad and brings the downfall of her and her marriage.

Lorca, as well as being a celebrated poet and playwright, championed the musical arts, especially the flamenco tradition of his home region of Andalucía. As such, this is the spirit which runs through the play and is something I want to put front and centre of the production. My vision is to weave song, dance and flamenco guitar seamlessly into the drama, fully transporting the audience back to Spain of the early 20th century with an atmosphere as authentic as possible.

Another central aspect of my translation of this play is the choice I made to keep certain parts of it in the original Spanish. This is mostly interspersed in the more surreal, dream-like scenes of the play, and I believe that this even further contributes to a disarming, unnerving atmosphere. It is generally in sections where it doesn't really matter if that audience understands what is being said – rather, that actually helps! My idea is that the cast won't need to have any background at all with the Spanish language, and for the people it is relevant to I would teach them the very basics of Spanish pronunciation to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity.

Auditions

Auditions will be held on the **29th November** in the **Corpus Playroom Auditorium**. To book a slot, fill in the following Doodle poll and come with one of the following extracts prepared. No need to be off book, just familiarise yourself with the extracts.

If you would prefer, or if you are unable to make it on the 29th, feel free to send in self-tapes up to the **5th December**, at my email ds2032@cam.ac.uk.

Any other questions or concerns, please do get in touch!

<https://doodle.com/sign-up-sheet/participate/3003e4d9-e6ea-4829-89ab-a8ba0371e69f/select>

Due to demand, there will be another session of rehearsals on the 5th December at Corpus Playroom. Sign up with the link below!

<https://doodle.com/sign-up-sheet/participate/605a37ce-9c70-4725-a09e-1648cddc5f11/select>

Note on diversity and inclusion

I strongly encourage anyone of any racial/ethnic background and sexual or gender identity to audition for any of these roles. Feel free to audition for whichever role speaks to you and whichever you feel comfortable with, regardless of identity. Any questions with regard to this, please do get in touch with me.

Cast

YERMA (she/her)

Our protagonist, desperate to have a child. Yerma spends most of her days indoors, whilst her husband, Juan, dedicates his life to the fields rather than family. Their relationship is troubled, and so too becomes her state of mind as she turns to ever more unconventional means to have a child.

JUAN (he/him)

Juan is Yerma's husband, a work-focused, traditional man who is content with his lot, in contrast to Yerma's increasing desperation to have a child and start a family. Throughout the play, he grows more and more frustrated with Yerma's desire for freedom and rebellion against his wish for her to remain indoors, which drives the conflict at the heart of the drama.

MARIA (she/her)

Maria is another young woman in the village, recently married, who is a friend of Yerma and Juan. Despite marrying much more recently than Yerma, she has already been able to have a child and, to Yerma, represents the ideal wife and mother, which sparks Yerma's descent into despair at her own situation.

VICTOR (he/him)

Victor is a farmer in the village who is a friend of Yerma and Juan. He represents the ideal Spanish rural man. Hardworking and attractive, Victor and Yerma may have had a romance in the past, and there is certainly some tension as a result of this.

DOLORES (she/her)

A pagan figure in the village, Dolores is somewhat of an outcast, and Yerma turns to her and her beliefs later in the play as her desperation grows.

OLD WOMAN (she/her)

A wise woman of the village who has given birth to many children and provides advice to Yerma to no avail.

VILLAGERS

A group of multi-role performers who represent the village and the conservative order. These performers will also be drawn on to take on different characters which appear throughout the play. Inspired by the typical chorus in Greek tragedy, these characters act as a group in many cases and move in a co-ordinated manner to appear as an outside force upon Yerma.

Extract 1

YERMA: Juan, can you hear me? Juan!

JUAN: I'm coming!

YERMA: It's time.

JUAN: Have the oxen gone by?

YERMA: They've already gone.

JUAN: See you later. *(He goes to leave.)*

YERMA: Won't you have a glass of milk?

JUAN: What for?

YERMA: You work so hard, and your body isn't built for it.

JUAN: When men are left lean, they become strong as steel.

YERMA: But not you. When we got married you were different. Now your face is white like it's never seen the sun. I'd like you to go to the river and swim, and climb onto the roof when the rain is beating down. Twenty-four months we've been married, and you grow sadder and thinner, as if you were growing backwards.

JUAN: Are you done?

YERMA: *(Getting up)* Don't take it so poorly. If I were sick I would want you to look after me. "My wife is sick, I'm going to slaughter this lamb to make her a good meat stew." "My wife is sick, I'm going to keep this chicken fat to ease her chest, I'm going to bring her this sheepskin to keep the cold off of her feet." That's how I am. That's why I take care of you.

JUAN: And for that I'm grateful.

YERMA: But you don't let me, Juan.

JUAN: Because there's nothing wrong with me! These things are all in your head. I work hard. And every year I'll get older.

YERMA: Every year... you and I carry on here every year...

JUAN: *(Smiling)* Of course. And how well rested we are! Work is going well, and we don't have children to worry about.

YERMA: We don't have children... Juan!

JUAN: What is it?

YERMA: Don't I love you enough?

JUAN: Of course not. You love me plenty.

YERMA: I know girls who trembled and wept before getting into bed with their husbands. Did I weep the first time I slept with you? Wasn't I singing as I pulled back those fine linen sheets. And didn't I tell you: "How these sheets smell of apples!"?

JUAN: So you did.

YERMA: My mother cried because I wasn't sorry to leave her. And it was true! Nobody ever married with more joy. And yet...

JUAN: Shush. It's too much to always hear that...

YERMA: No. Don't tell me what they say. I see with my own eyes that this cannot be. The strength of the rain falling on the stone softens it and lets dandelions grow, which people say are useless. Dandelions may well be useless, and yet I see their yellow flowers move in the breeze.

JUAN: We have to hope.

YERMA: Yes, and love!

Extract 2

YERMA: Come in!

(MARIA enters, carrying a bundle of clothes.)

Where have you come from?

MARIA: From the shops.

YERMA: From the shops so early?

MARIA: I would've waited at the door until they opened – don't you know what I bought?

YERMA: You must have bought coffee for breakfast, sugar, bread...

MARIA: No. I've bought lace, three bobbins of thread, ribbons and coloured wool to make tassels. My husband had the money and he gave it to me himself.

YERMA: You're going to make a blouse?

MARIA: No, it's because... don't you know?

YERMA: What?

MARIA: Because it's arrived!

(She lowers her head. YERMA gets up and looks at her with admiration.)

YERMA: After only five months!

MARIA: Yes.

YERMA: And you can tell he's there?

MARIA: Of course!

YERMA: *(Curiously)* And how do you feel?

MARIA: I don't know. *(Pause)* Worried.

YERMA: Worried. *(She clings to her.)* But... when did he come? Tell me. Were you expecting him?

MARIA: No, not at all.

YERMA: Well, you must have been singing, right? I sing. You must tell me...

MARIA: Don't ask. Have you ever held a live bird in your hands?

YERMA: Yes.

MARIA: Well, it's the same... but you feel it in your veins.

YERMA: How beautiful! *(She looks at her, at a loss.)*

MARIA: I'm bewildered. I don't know anything about...

YERMA: About what?

MARIA: About what I have to do. I'll ask my mother.

YERMA: What for? She's old and will have forgotten these things by now. Listen to me. Don't walk much and when you breathe, do so as softly as if there were a rose between your teeth.

MARIA: You know, they say that later on he kicks you softly with his little legs.

YERMA: And that's when you love him best, when you can say "My child!".

MARIA: In the midst of this all I feel ashamed.

YERMA: What did your husband say?

MARIA: Nothing.

YERMA: Does he love you greatly?

MARIA: He doesn't say so, but when he's close to me his eyes quiver like two green leaves.

YERMA: Did he know that you...?

MARIA: Yes.

YERMA: And how did he know?

MARIA: I don't know. But the night we got married he told me constantly with his mouth pressed against my cheek, so much that my child seems to be a dove of light he set free through my ear.

YERMA: Oh, what joy!

MARIA: But you know more about these things than me.

YERMA: And what good it does me!

MARIA: True. But why is that? Of all the brides of your time you're the only one...

YERMA: That's how it is. But there's still time, of course. Elena took three years, others of my mother's time took much longer. But two years and twenty days – it's too much to wait. I don't think it's fair for me to waste away here. Some nights I go out into the garden barefoot just to step on the ground. I don't know why. If I go on like this, I'll end up going mad.

Extract 3

YERMA: Good morning.

OLD WOMAN: And to you, pretty girl. Where are you going?

YERMA: I've just taken my husband some lunch. He works in the olive grove.

OLD WOMAN: Have you been married for long?

YERMA: Three years.

OLD WOMAN: Do you have children?

YERMA: No.

OLD WOMAN: Bah! You will!

YERMA: (*Eagerly*) Do you think so?

OLD WOMAN: Why not? (*She sits down.*) I've just taken my husband some lunch, too. He's old, but still he works. I have nine sons, my nine shining sons, but since not one of them is a girl, here I am going from one side to the other.

YERMA: You live over the other side of the river?

OLD WOMAN: Yes. By the mills. Who is your family?

YERMA: I am the daughter of Enrique the shepherd.

OLD WOMAN: Ah! Enrique the shepherd. I knew him. Good folk, yours are. Rise, sweat, eat some bread, and die. No playing, no nothing. Fairs are for other people. Silent folk. I might have married an uncle of yours. But, then... I've been a woman with her skirts in the wind, I've flown like an arrow to melon slices, to parties, to sugarcakes. Many times at dawn I have rushed to the door, thinking that I heard guitar music coming and going, but it was just the air. (*She laughs.*) You're going to laugh at me. I have had two husbands, fourteen children – five of them dead – and yet, I'm not sad. I'd like to live for a long while yet. That's what I say! Fig trees, how they last! Houses, how they last! Just us, we damned women, who turn to dust over anything. (*She gets up.*)

YERMA: I'd like to ask you a question.

OLD WOMAN: Oh? (*She looks at her*) I already know what you're going to say. About these things there is nothing more to be said.

YERMA: (*Stopping her.*) But why? Hearing you talk has given me confidence. I've been wanting to talk to an older woman for some time, because I want to find out... yes. You'll tell me...

OLD WOMAN: What?

YERMA: (*Lowering her voice.*) What you know. Why am I barren? Must I spend the prime of my life tending chickens, or pleating curtains for my windows? No. You must tell me what I have to do. I'll do anything, even if you tell me to stick needles in the most delicate parts of my eyes.

OLD WOMAN: Me? I know nothing. I laid down, face up, and began to sing. Children come like water. Oh! Who can say that this body of ours isn't beautiful. You walk, and at the end of the street the horse neighs. Leave me, girl, don't make me talk. I have many thoughts I don't wish to say.

YERMA: Why? I don't speak to my husband about anything else!

OLD WOMAN: Listen. Do you like your husband?

YERMA: What?

OLD WOMAN: Do you love him? Do you want to be with him?

YERMA: I don't know...

OLD WOMAN: Don't you tremble when he comes near you? Doesn't it hit you like a dream when he approaches your lips?

YERMA: No. I've never felt that.

OLD WOMAN: Never? Not even when you danced?

YERMA: (*Remembering*) Maybe... One time... Victor...

OLD WOMAN: Go on.

YERMA: He took me by the waist and I couldn't say anything to him because I couldn't speak. Another time this same Victor, at just fourteen—he was a strapping lad—took me in his arms to cross a ditch and a shiver came over me such that my teeth chattered. But it's because I was ashamed.

OLD WOMAN: And with your husband?

YERMA: That's something else. My father gave him to me and I accepted. Happily. That's the honest truth. From the first day I was his bride I thought about... children. And I saw myself in his eyes. Yes, but it was like seeing myself young, manageable, as though I were my own daughter.

OLD WOMAN: Quite the opposite with me. Perhaps that's why you haven't yet had a child. Men must appeal to us, girl! They need to undo our braids and let us drink from their mouths. That's the way the world works.