

**“THE RUDENS” -- PLAUTUS’ COMEDY TO BE
PRODUCED IN THE ORIGINAL BY NINE YOUNG
LADY STUDENTS OF THE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY -- THE IDENTITY OF THE LADIES A
SECRET.**

- *headline from St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 26, 1884*

In May 1884, nine female students at Washington University in St. Louis staged a performance of Plautus’ *Rudens* (“The Rope”) in Latin, also publishing their own English translation to coincide with the event. The Washington University Ladies’ Literary Society was one of the first groups in America to perform an ancient comedy in Latin, and their work made a splash at the university and in St. Louis.

What were the aims of the Ladies’ Literary Society in putting on the *Rudens*, how did the show look and sound, and in what social and academic context did these young women train for and execute their ambitious plan? At a virtual symposium hosted by the Washington University Classics and Performing Arts departments, and open to the public, four scholars will explore this historic event in lectures situating it in literary, academic, cultural, and St. Louis history. Following the lectures and discussion, a group of St. Louis classicists will give a virtual performance of the *Rudens* using the Society’s translation.

The **February 6th** symposium will begin at **9:00am Central Time** with four lectures by Timothy Moore of Washington University in St. Louis, Julia Beine of Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Judith Hallett of the University of Maryland, and Amanda Clark of the Missouri History Museum. The performance, directed by PhD student Henry Schott, will begin at **2:00pm Central Time**.

For a full schedule and information on registration for the Zoom event, visit [the info page on the Washington University Classics department website](#). For reflections on the appeal of the *Rudens* to the Ladies’ Literary Society, including publicity about the 1884 event, read [this story](#).

