

Someone Must Wash the Dishes: An Anti-Suffrage Satire

Performance and discussion by Michèle LaRue
Wednesday, March 27, 2019, at 2:00 pm



Many women fought *against* getting the vote in the early 1900s, but none with more charm, prettier clothes—and less logic—than the fictional speaker in this satiric monologue written by pro-suffragist Marie Jenney Howe, back in 1912. “Woman suffrage is the reform against nature,” declares Howe’s unlikely, but irresistibly likeable, heroine.

“Ladies, get what you want. Pound pillows. Make a scene. Make home a hell on earth—but do it in a *womanly* way! That is so much more dignified and refined than walking up to a ballot box and dropping in a piece of paper!”

Reviewers have called this production “wicked” in its wit, and have labeled Michèle LaRue’s performance “side-splitting.” An Illinois native, now based in New Jersey, LaRue is a professional actress who tours nationally with a repertoire of programs by turn-of-the-previous-century American writers.



Pro-Suffragist Marie Jenney Howe wrote **Someone Must Wash the Dishes** in 1912. Titled “An Anti-Suffrage Monologue,” it was published in 1913, by the National American Woman Suffrage Association (precursor of the League of Women Voters). This production was directed by Warren Kliever for New Jersey’s The East Lynne Company—which he founded in 1980 to revive American plays and literature of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. **Dishes** premiered in March 1994, at New York City’s fourth-annual “Womenkind Festival.” More than 250 Presenters in 16 states range from Chicago’s Newberry Library to New York’s Mohonk Mountain House, and include universities and colleges, museums and historical societies, women’s clubs, theatre companies, corporations, and conferences.

