

# Oxygen, the Play by Hoffman and Djerassi (Outreach to University Community)

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"Oxygen", a play by Carl Djerassi and Raoul Hoffmann about the discovery of oxygen was performed several times at Ohio State, sponsored by our Theater Dept and College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. The play describes possible personal and scientific conflicts among Lavoisier, Priestly and Schiele as to who should get the credit for identifying O<sub>2</sub>, who did what, the role of their wives and whether the Nobel Committee of today should award a posthumous prize. There is a lot on how these people wrote papers, went to meetings all very much like today. Lavoisier had the best lab. He used solar energy with magnifying glasses. I was on the panel of a big public discussion on the play and all the issues it brought up. We had at least 400 people from all around the University from very different areas. This doesn't happen much around here. It was also great fun. NSF should give money so theater people could write plays. It would be good for connecting with children and outreach in general.

