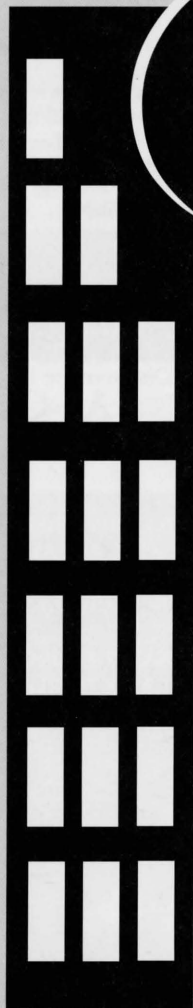
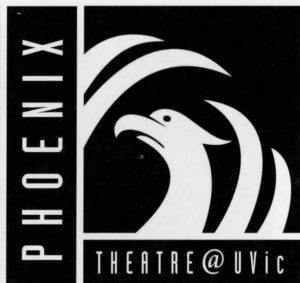


# TOP Girls

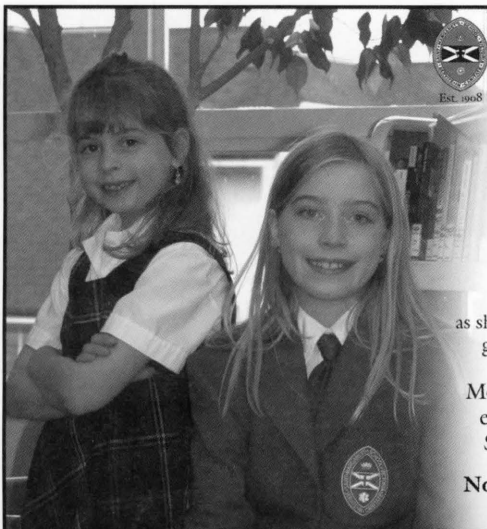
*by Caryl Churchill*



February 9 – 18, 2006



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# Top Girls

by Caryl Churchill

part of the Festival of Innovative and New Drama (FIND 2006)

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director	<b>Yasmine Kandil</b>
Set Designer	<b>Carla Orosz</b>
Costume Designer	<b>Matt Jackson</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Tim Herron</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Nicole Lamb</b>
Dialect Coach	<b>Ned Vukovic</b>
Musical Director	<b>Victor Dolhai</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Meredith Grantier</b>
Assistant to the Set Designer	<b>Jordan Meyer</b>
Assistant to the Costume Designer	<b>Sabrina Miller</b>
Assistant to the Lighting Designer	<b>Ashley Rees</b>
Faculty Supervisor (Directing)	<b>Linda Hardy</b>
Faculty Supervisors (Design)	<b>Mary Kerr and Allan Stichbury</b>

## CAST

(in order of appearance)

<b>Kate Richard</b>	Marlene
<b>Ingrid Hansen</b>	Waitress, Kit, Shona
<b>Laura Harris</b>	Isabella Bird, Win
<b>Ming Hudson</b>	Lady Nijo, Jeanine, Mrs. Kidd
<b>Devon Taylor</b>	Dull Gret, Angie
<b>Anne-Marie de la Giroday</b>	Pope Joan, Joyce, Louise
<b>Danielle Janess</b>	Patient Griselda, Nell

## Act I

Scene 1	A Restaurant
Scene 2	'Top Girls' Employment Agency, London
Scene 3	Joyce's backyard in Suffolk

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

## Act II

<b>Scene 1</b>	'Top Girls' Employment Agency
<b>Scene 2</b>	A Year Earlier. Joyce's kitchen

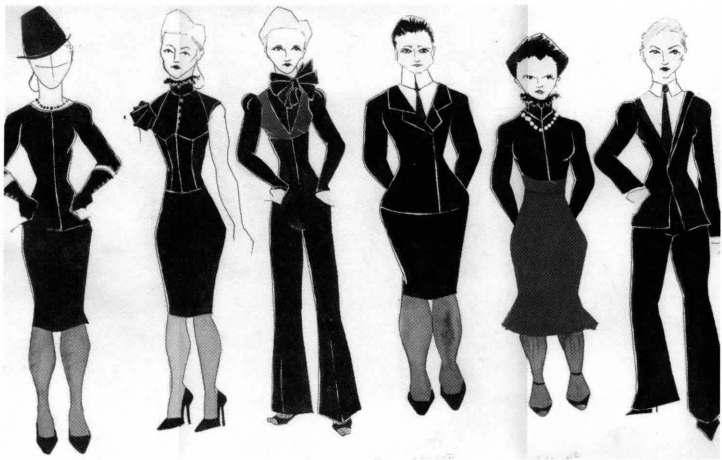
Time: 1980s

Place: England

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Costume designs by Matt Jackson

"In order to change the face of the world, it is first necessary to be firmly anchored in it, but the women who are firmly rooted in society are those who are in subjection to it; unless designated for action by divine authority...the ambitious woman and the heroine are strange monsters."

Simone de Beauvoir  
The Second Sex - 1961

## About *Caryl Churchill*

Caryl Churchill was born in London in 1938 and grew up partly in the UK and in Montreal, Canada. She studied English at Oxford University and her first play, *Downstairs*, was written and staged in 1958 while she was still at university.

Churchill's early work was produced on radio and television. She moved to theatre in the early 1970s, where she collaborated with such collective companies as Joint Stock, Monstrous Regiment and the Royal Court Theatre to write *Cloud Nine* and *Fen*, among others.

Caryl Churchill is recognized as Britain's leading female dramatist. Her plays are politically radical with strong views on feminism, sexual politics, money and exploitation. Her own life experience as a middle class wife and mother has put her in an ideal position to write about feminism and the impact of it on women like her.

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## Play Synopsis

*Top Girls* takes place during the era of Margaret Thatcher's England. The first act is set in a restaurant. Marlene, an up-and-coming executive with the Top Girls Employment Agency, has just been promoted. She is hosting a dinner party and the guests are all women from history, art and fiction. They relate their life stories and stress the sacrifices they have made in the patriarchal world. The rest of the play traces Marlene's journey to success and her own sacrifice in pursuit of her career goals.

### The Dinner Party *Guests:*

Born in 1831, **Isabella Bird** became a world-wide traveller to help alleviate the symptoms of ill-health. She travelled to and wrote about Canada, the US, and the Far East, and was the first woman to be elected to the Royal Geographic Society in 1892.

**Lady Nijo**, born in 1258, was a concubine to the Japanese Emperor GoFukakusa and wrote an autobiographical account of her life, *The Confessions of Lady Nijo*. Banished from the court, she became a Buddhist nun and spent 20 years travelling throughout Japan.

**Dull Gret** is the central image in Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel's painting Dulle Griet. She is a peasant depicted wearing armour and an apron, roaming the countryside chasing devils. While many experts agree that the painting is allegorical, its exact meaning remains a mystery.

The character of **Pope Joan** was invented by a 13th-century monk and is based on the apocryphal tale of a woman in the mid-800's who, having disguised herself as a boy, rapidly advances in the Church. Eventually she is elected as Pope but gets pregnant and blows her cover by going into labour during a procession.

**Patient Griselda** is a fictional character who appears in Chaucer's *The Clerk's Tale*. A poor and therefore powerless girl, her qualities are patience and honesty in the face of deception and abuse on the part of her husband, The Marquis.



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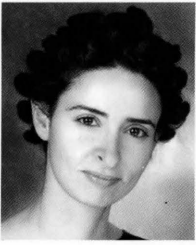
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**Yasmine Kandil** *Director*

Yasmine is nearing the completion of her Master in Fine Arts degree in the Department of Theatre. She is intrigued by the complexity of characters and interwoven plot lines found in Churchill's plays such as *Top Girls* and *Fen*, having also directed the latter last year at the Phoenix. Yasmine has been inspired by Churchill's depiction of complex social issues and the playwright's challenge to the audience to do something about them. Upon completion of her degree, Yasmine wants to continue using theatre to reach out to and help impoverished and marginalized communities in developing countries as she did in her native Egypt prior to attending UVic.



**Carla Orosz** *Set Designer*

Carla is graduating from UVic's MFA Theatre Design program this spring. Previous designs at the Phoenix include costumes for *Fen* as well as set and costumes for *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. Other design credits include *Mad Forest* (Greystone Theatre), *Sherlock's Last Case* (Gateway Theatre) and *Don Pasquale* (Saskatoon Opera Association). Carla will be returning to Saskatoon for the summer where she will be designing for the Shakespeare on The Saskatchewan Festival.



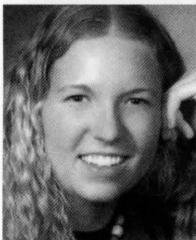
**Matt Jackson** *Costume Designer*

Matt has been studying under Professor Mary Kerr for the past four years, focussing on culture, design and body modification. Past design credits include Ecce Homo's *Woyzeck Songspiel* for the Victoria Fringe Festival, *Alice In Wonderland* for ITSAZOO, Peter Barnes' *Laughter!* and Buchner's *Woyzeck* for SATCO, and *Electra* for the Phoenix Mainstage. His work was included in UVic's multi-disciplinary Subject Matter exhibition in 2003 and in the digital gallery of the 2005 World Stage Design Exhibition in Toronto. Future interests include experimental theatre and opera design, video production, film and installation work, and cultural commentary.



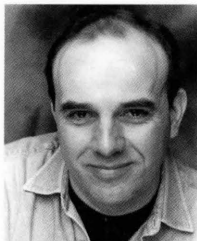
**Tim Herron** *Lighting Designer*

At the Phoenix, Tim has been the lighting designer for *Fen* and *The Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, assistant lighting designer for the FIND 2004 Studio Series and the electrician for *Guys and Dolls*. Tim is a Graduate student studying both Education and Theatre. He is the Technical Director of The Winspear Centre in Sidney and an IATSE member.



**Nicole Lamb** *Sound Designer*

Nicole is in her fourth year at the Phoenix. She may be back again next year, but the option of graduating is tempting. Some past Phoenix productions include *Metamorphoses* (Assistant Lighting Designer), *Fen* (Assistant Stage Manager/ Musician), *Hippies and Bolsheviks* (Stage Manager) and *Amigo's Blue Guitar* (Costume Designer). She is happy to have branched out beyond the Phoenix this past year as Assistant Stage Manager for Kaleidoscope's *Anne of Green Gables*. Currently, she is Stage Manager for Kaleidoscope's *Lawyers on Broadway: Scrambled Feet* and is writing *In Through the Living Room Window*, to be produced at the end of April.



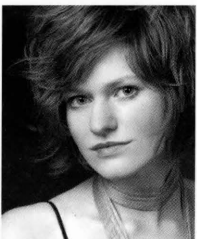
**Ned Vukovic** *Dialect Coach*

Before joining UVic's Theatre faculty Ned was one of Toronto's most in-demand coaches and acting teachers. As an actor he is a former member of both the Royal Shakespeare Company and Royal National Theatres. He was artistic director of Solar Stage Theatre in Toronto for three years and producer/director with his own company Lovers and Madmen with which he created numerous projects including the Dora Mavor Moore Award-winning *Molly Wood* at Toronto's Bathurst St. Theatre. He has appeared in over 75 films. He is one of Canada's leading dialect coaches teaching various dialects to hundreds of actors including seven Academy Award winners. At the Phoenix, Ned was the director of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and the dialect coach for *Guys and Dolls* and *Fen*.



**Victor Dolhai** *Musical Director*

Victor is a third year acting student. He is relatively new to the world of musical directing having debuted last year with the mainstage production of *Metamorphoses*, in which he also performed. In addition to musical direction, Victor is a regular choirmaster and organist, and has performed and received awards in several piano, violin and voice festivals, orchestras and recitals. He is excited to continue honing his musical directing abilities on the Phoenix stage.



**Meredith Grantier** *Stage Manager*

A graduate of Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology, Meredith is in her third year in the Department of Theatre. She has been involved in many Phoenix mainstage productions including *Hippies and Bolsheviks* and *Guys and Dolls* (as Assistant Stage Manager). While at the Phoenix, Meredith has also stage managed SATCO's *Death of a Clown* and *Dog Eat Man*, and the graduating project *Getting it Straight*, to name a few. In addition, she has recently been seen performing in ITSAZOO's production of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Sex at the Mall* as well as *Love is the Best Medicine*, a Russian feature film to be released this spring.

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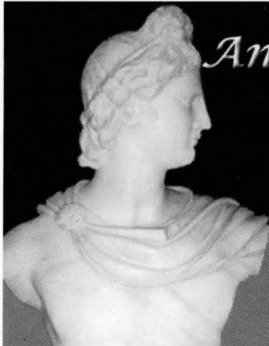
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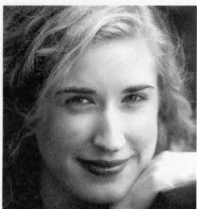
### Anne-Marie de la Giroday

This is Anne-Marie's final production at UVic. Phoenix credits include *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Fen*, *Guys and Dolls*, *HE Who Gets Slapped* and SATCo's *Death of a Clown* and *Laughter!*. Other credits include Babette in White Rock Playhouse's *Bathroom Humour* and the Queen of Hearts in ITSAZOO's *Alice in Wonderland*.



### Ingrid Hansen

Ingrid's previous mainstage roles at the Phoenix include Eurydice/Lucina in *Metamorphoses* and Wendy/Sophie in *That Elusive Spark*. Last summer Ingrid performed music and mime as a busker in the streets of Denmark. She has also enjoyed playing the characters Lulu in *Cabaret*, Anybodys in *West Side Story*, and Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*.



### Laura Harris

Inspired by her grandmothers, Laura's performance in *Top Girls* marks her Phoenix mainstage debut. Previously at the Department of Theatre, she played Grace in *I Thee Wed* for the FIND 2005 Studio Series. In Victoria, she also performs with the 30 Cent Players sketch comedy group.



### Ming Hudson

Ming is a third year acting student. *Top Girls* marks her second mainstage show at the Phoenix following her recent performance in *Metamorphoses*. Other credits include *A Twist of Murder* at the 2005 Edmonton Fringe Festival and the original production of *Tortoise Boy* at the 2004 Belfry Theatre Festival.



### Danielle Janess

A third year acting student, Danielle makes her mainstage debut with this production. She was last seen as Abe in SATCo's *Five Red Balloons*. Danielle is also at work on a second degree in Writing and is the editor of *This Side of West*, the UVic Writing students' literary journal. Her work has appeared in *Monday Magazine* (winner of the Summer Fiction Contest 2004) and *In Fine Form: The Canadian Anthology of Form Poetry*.

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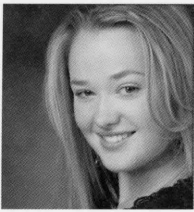
DIRECTED BY:  
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### Kate Richard

Kate is a fourth year acting student and *Top Girls* is her final production at the Phoenix. She appeared as Alcyone in *Metamorphoses*, Angela in *Fen*, a Hot Box Doll in *Guys and Dolls*, and Consuella in *HE Who Gets Slapped*. Last summer, she played Alice in ITSAZOO's *Alice in Wonderland* and Queen Victoria at the B.C. Parliament Buildings, where she will return this summer.



### Devon Taylor

This is Devon's fourth and final mainstage production in her fourth and final year at the Phoenix. Previous Phoenix credits include *Metamorphoses*, *That Elusive Spark* and *HE Who Gets Slapped* as well as *Karla and Grif* for SATCO and the play reading *Medea Lived*. Other noteworthy acting credits are Tereus in *Love of the Nightingale* and Hannah in *Little Women*.

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## Set Designer's Notes

The text you see on the floor of the set is the poem that Pope Joan recites in Act I entitled *On the Nature of Things* by the Roman philosopher Lucretius.

The poem describes the challenges that we face in the world and the choices we make. It explains the inner struggle to make ourselves better than those around us and to hide our past and our weaknesses. Throughout the play we see the characters walk all over the words, not aware of their meaning.

Carla Orosz

### *On the Nature of Things*

How sweet it is, when whirlwinds roil great ocean,  
To watch, from land, the danger on another,  
Not that to see some other person suffer  
Brings great enjoyment, but the sweetness lies  
In watching evils you yourself are free from.  
How sweet, again, to see the clash of battle  
Across the plains, yourself immune to danger.  
But nothing is more sweet than full possession  
Of those calm heights, well built, well fortified  
By wise men's teaching, to look down from here  
As others wandering below, men lost,  
Confused, in hectic search for the right road.

The strife of wits, the war for precedence  
The everlasting struggle, night and day,  
To win towards heights of wealth and power.  
O wretched.  
O wretched minds of men! O hearts in darkness

Under what shadows and among what dangers  
Your lives are spent, such as they are. But look-  
Your nature snarls, yaps, barks for nothing, really  
Except that pain be absent from the body  
And mind enjoy delight . . .

And does all this frighten religious terror  
In panic from your heart? does the great fear  
Of death depart, and leave you comforted?  
What vanity, what nonsense! If men's fears,  
Anxieties, pursuing horrors, move,  
Indifferent to any clash of arms  
Untroubled among lords and monarchs, bow  
Before no gleam of gold, no crimson robe,  
Why do you hesitate, why doubt that reason  
Alone has absolute power?  
As children tremble and fear everything  
In their dark shadows, we in the full light,  
Fear things that really are not one bit more awful  
Than what poor babies shudder at in darkness,  
The horrors they imagine to be coming.  
Our terrors and our darkness of mind  
Must be dispelled, then, not by sunshine's rays  
But by insight into nature, and a scheme  
of systematic contemplation.

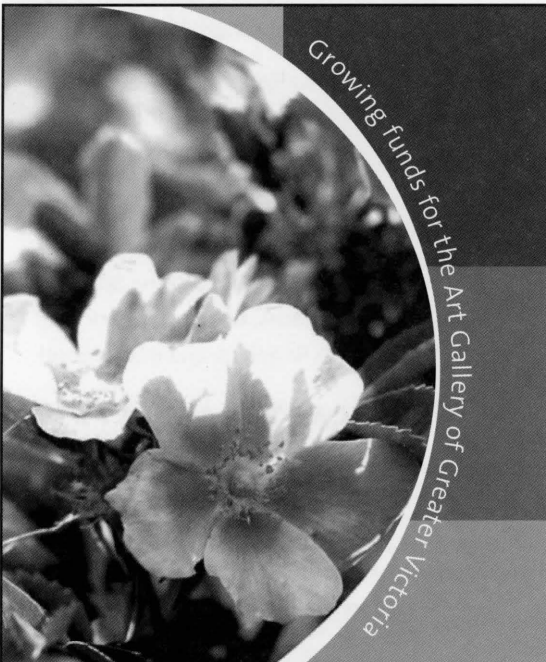
## Costume Designer's Notes

My costume design for *Top Girls* creates three worlds. The dream world of the restaurant, which is composed of feminine power, passion and emotional memory, is realized as layered volumes in silhouettes drawn from the collective unconscious, in blood red. The corporate world, which focuses on the contrast between masculine and feminine, is predominantly black, highlighting verticality and severity. The rural world of Marlene's past is bleak yet hopeful, with soft, deconstructed shapes in white and grey.

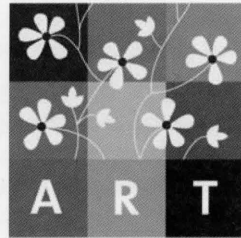
Matt Jackson



Costume designs by Matt Jackson



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The music in *Top Girls*, performed by musicians Nicole Lamb (flutist) and Kaeridwyn Newman (violinist), is based on Rebecca Clarke's *Morpheus*.

The Department of Theatre would like to thank the following individuals and companies for their support of *Top Girls*:

Alison Greene, Dr. Cedric Littlewood, Greek and Roman Studies Department, University of Victoria, Kyoko Kaneko, Fairmont Empress Hotel, Licrifice For Hair/ Rhino Gaudet, Pacific Opera Victoria& Queen Mother Waterside Cafe

## Phoenix Phacts

*Congratulations to our former students on their success!*

**Zachary Stephenson** won one of 20 coveted roles out of 600 audition hopefuls for the upcoming musical *Hair* at Toronto's CanStage...Stratford Festival star **Sara Topham** recently gave a Shakespeare workshop at Victoria's Langham Court Theatre. She returns to Stratford this summer to star as Laura Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie*, Donna Elvira in *Don Juan* and Grace Harkaway in *London Assurance*...Also at Stratford, **Tamara Marie Kucheran** will design the sets and costumes for the world premiere of Peter Hinton's *Fanny Kemble*... **Peter Outerbridge** was nominated for a Gemini Award for Best Actor in *ReGenesis*'... **Britt Small, Celine Stubel, Cam Culham** and the Atomic Vaudeville gang invited "Old Trout" **Peter Balkwill** to join them for their latest show at the Victoria Event Centre when he was here performing *Famous Puppet Death Scenes*... **Paul Terry** has just returned from Limerick, Ireland where he performed **Janet Munsil's** one-man play *The Ugly Duchess*, which he also performed in Prague last summer. This summer he will play the role of Henry Higgins in Chemainus Theatre Festival's *My Fair Lady*. A multi-talented artist, Paul was the contractor/designer for Langham Court's renovations in October... **Emma Claire Miller** will be playing Costanza in *Enchanted April* at the Chemainus Theatre Festival this spring... Dora Mavor Moore Award winner **Carolyn Cave** starred in the Vancouver Playhouse season-opener, *The Syringa Tree*, and **Meg Roe** is appearing in the current Playhouse production, *Vincent in Brixton*...in October the tireless **Clayton Jevne** directed Theatre Inconnu's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and presented two benefit performances to support a youth drama program for refugee and immigrant youth, *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man* and *Kasperle* and *Faust*...in November **Dalal Badr** received praise for her performance in *Tideline* at Toronto's Factory Theatre...also in November, **David Ferry** directed *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* for Birdland Theatre at the Fermenting Cellar... **Mitch Pollock** played Tootles in Carousel Theatre's *Peter Pan* in Vancouver in December... **Michael Klemak** is the voice of Thrifty Foods on local radio... **Leah James** is studying in London, England at the Central School of Speech and Drama...**Marisa Vest** is currently on a nine month U.S. tour as an assistant stage manager/stage carpenter with *Clifford the Big Red Dog Live* following stints at the Banff Centre and Toronto Operetta Theatre...UVic theatre grads dominated the recent Victoria Critic's Choice Awards for 2005. Visit our website for details: [www.phoenixtheatres.ca/alumni](http://www.phoenixtheatres.ca/alumni).

Thank You,

Phoenix Theatre

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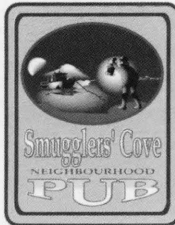
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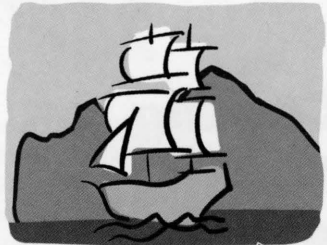
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