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Reasons to Be Pretty

by Neil LaBute

CREATIVE TEAM

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Director | Christine Willes* |
| Set Designer | Breanna Wise |
| Costume Designer | Halley Fulford |
| Lighting Designers | Erin Osborne & Michael Whitfield |
| Sound Designer | Hayley McCurdy |
| Stage Manager | Imogen Wilson |
| Assistant Director | Jonathan Maxwell |
| Fight Choreographer | Jacques Lemay |
| Projections Coordinator | Freya Engman |
| MFA Supervisor | Brian Richmond |

CAST

(in alphabetical order)

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Kent | Alex Frankson |
| Greg | Robin Gadsby |
| Carly | Alberta Holden |
| Rich | Blair Moro |
| Steph | Reese Nielsen |
| Warehouse Employees | Nic Beamish, Kim Black, Sean Brossard, Kapila Rego |

The outlying suburbs, not very long ago.

There will be one 15-minute intermission during the performance.

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*Christine Willes appears with the permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

Reasons to Be Pretty is presented by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc, New York

Original Broadway production produced by

Jeffrey Richards, Jerry Frankel MCC Theatre

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Robert LuPone & Bernard Tesley, Artistic Directors;

William Cantler, Associate Artistic Director; Blake West, Executive Director.

Director's *Notes*



I have long been a fan of Neil LaBute's provocative, challenging plays. His portraits of our less-than-savory characters, and characteristics, have always rung true to me. I'm not alone. LaBute's work is performed more than that of almost any other contemporary playwright. His popularity is sustained by something more than mere shock value. He goes one better and makes us laugh.

Reasons to Be Pretty, a coming-of-age play, is the last installment of a trilogy of plays that examine our North American obsession with physical appearance (*The Shape of Things* and *Fat Pig* are the other two). Thin subject for a play you might think. After all, "you can't judge a book by its cover." Alas, it appears we do. The fine-looking among us, studies prove, earn more money, and self-identify as happier. True for men, true for women. It may not be fair, but it is real. Or is it?

LaBute compels us to examine how our beauty-conscious culture affects two young working-class couples. When one of them overhears a chance remark, then reports it to her friend, their world explodes. Ideas about appearance, the battle of the sexes, ambition, and becoming an adult permeate the play. They drive us all to look deeply into how our own lives have been affected by judgments of our looks.

Reasons to Be Pretty so resonated with audiences that, of LaBute's twenty plays, it was the first to transfer from Off Broadway to Broadway. In 2009, it was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play. It also resonated, remarkably so, with the extraordinary creative team that worked on this production. The excitement with which all approached their work was inspiring and infectious. I couldn't have asked for a more talented or hard-working company of actors, designers, technicians, assistants and support personnel. Their professionalism was exemplary, and made this project a joy from beginning to end. I would like to extend a special thanks to my thesis supervisor Brian Richmond. He, like LaBute, never failed to provoke me, or make me laugh.

We are so pleased to share our production with you. May you leave the theatre tingling with provocation and laughter, and moved by the strength and courage it takes to grow up.

Christine Willes

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Playwright's *Bio*



Neil LaBute received his Master of Fine Arts degree in dramatic writing from New York University and was the recipient of a literary fellowship to study at the Royal Court Theatre. Films include *In the Company of Men* (New York Critics Circle Award for Best First Feature, Filmmakers' Trophy at the Sundance Film Festival), *Your Friends and Neighbors*, *Nurse Betty*, *Possession*, *The Shape of Things* — a film adaptation of his play by the same title — *The Wicker Man*, *Lakeview Terrace* and *Death at a Funeral*. Plays

include: *Reasons to Be Pretty*, *Bash: Latter-Day Plays*, *The Shape of Things*, *The Distance From Here*, *The Mercy Seat*, *Autobahn*, *This Is How It Goes*, *Some Girl(s)*, *Wrecks*, *In a Dark Dark House*, *Helter Skelter*, *The Furies* and *The War on Terror*. LaBute is the author of several fictional pieces that have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Playboy*, among others. A collection of his short stories was published by Grove/Atlantic. *Reasons to Be Happy*, the sequel to *Reasons to Be Pretty*, opens at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York in June 2013.

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Creative Team



Christine Willes *Director*

A top Vancouver actor and teacher for over 30 years, Christine has been inspired and engaged by the challenges and opportunities offered through studies for the MFA in Directing at the University of Victoria. She holds bachelor degrees in Fine Arts (Acting, University of Alberta) and Education (English and Drama, University of British Columbia), and has taught acting, voice, acting styles, and film technique at such institutions as Studio 58, UBC, the U of A, the William Davis Centre for Actors' Study, William Penn University, UVic, and the Canadian College of Performing Arts. Past directing credits include *As You Like It*, *Platonov* (UBC), *The Blue Room*, *Autobahn*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Heaven and Hell on Earth* (WDC). Recent stage credits include *Arms and the Man* (Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre), *Dangerous Corner* (Vancouver Playhouse), and Herr Beckmann's *People* (Touchstone). She has received several Jessie Richardson awards for excellence in theatre, and a Leo nomination for her television work on the CW's *Reaper*. Internationally known as Delores Herbig in Showtime's Emmy-nominated television series, *Dead Like Me*, other film and television credits include *Red Riding Hood*, *InSecurity*, *Smallville*, and *Emily Owens MD*. An in-demand acting coach, international clients have included Michelle Ryan, Zac Efron, and the cast of *The Secret Circle*. Christine has two great children, and is proud to call the Canadian Pacific Northwest home.



Breanna Wise *Set Designer*

Breanna is a fourth-year design student and is very excited to finally be working on a Phoenix mainstage in the role of set designer. Theatre design is a way for Breanna to enjoy the best of both her passions: theatre and visual arts. More recently at the Phoenix, Breanna played the role of Mrs. Leverett in *Rookery Nook* (2011), she was assistant to the set designer for *Eurydice* (2012) and she was assistant to the costume designer for *The Marowitz Hamlet* (2012). Breanna has also designed the set on various productions including *Beautiful Obedient Wife* (Victoria Fringe Festival, 2012), *I, Claudia* (SATCo, 2012), *Mr. Unforgettable* (SATCo, 2012) and *Greg Phillips: Alleged Antichrist* (SATCo, 2012).



Halley Fulford *Costume Designer*

Halley Fulford is a fifth-year Theatre and English Honours student at the University of Victoria. She was born on the Caravan Farm Theatre in Salmon Arm, and spent her childhood pilfering dresses from the designery, and performing as a cat, evil fairy queen, and Clydesdale. Her family moved to Salt Spring Island when she was five, where Halley obligingly learned to enjoy the smell of skunk cabbage instead of camomile. Select theatre credits include *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (Costume Design), *Threadless* (Costume Design), *Arabian Nights* (Design), *No Exit* (Inez), *Arms and the Man* (Louka), and *Criminals in Love* (Gail).



Erin Osborne *Co-Lighting Designer*

Erin is a third-year design student, with a focus on lighting design. She feels greatly honoured to have been given the opportunity to work alongside such amazing and talented individuals. Previous credits include lighting designer on *A Play, or Something Like One* (SATCo), co-lighting designer on *The Yalta Game*, and assistant lighting designer on *Good Person of Setzuan* (Phoenix Theatre), *Bereavement* (SATCo), and *Woyzeck* (German Department).

Creative Team



Michael Whitfield *Co-Lighting Designer*

In a career spanning almost 40 years, Michael Whitfield has designed the lighting for hundreds of plays, operas and ballets throughout North America and overseas. As resident lighting designer at the Stratford Festival for over 25 years, his lighting included such classics as *The Mikado*, which toured throughout North America and also played at London's Old Vic Theatre. His opera and ballet designs have been featured at companies such as the Canadian Opera Company, San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, the National Ballet of Canada and the Finnish National Ballet. Michael has mentored the careers of dozens of young Canadian lighting designers and he has been a frequent guest designer at the University of Victoria.



Hayley McCurdy *Sound Designer*

Hayley McCurdy is a third year acting specialization student, however she is very excited to be able to have the experience of sound designing *Reasons to Be Pretty*. Some of her past work includes sound designing SATCO productions *Frog in Love* and *Tears of Tithonus* in 2011. As well as pursuing acting, Hayley is an aspiring musician and composer. Some of her work has been incorporated into productions such as *BFA: The Musical!* (Fringe 2011), and the Pick of the Fringe show *Struwwelpeter* (Fringe 2011) for which she composed the entire score.



Imogen Wilson *Stage Manager*

Imogen is a third-year student in the Department of Theatre. She would like to thank everyone for this wonderful opportunity and the tremendous support from the Phoenix community throughout this process. In addition to serving as the Technical Director to the Student Alternative Theatre Company for the past two seasons, previous credits include *Mr. Unforgettable*, *Greg Phillips: Alleged Antichrist* (Lighting Designer, SATCo), *A Play, or Something Like One*, *Tears of Tithonus* (Stage Manager, SATCo), *Eurydice*, and *Inside* (Assistant Stage Manager, Phoenix Theatre Mainstage).

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Cast



Alex Frankson *Kent*

Alex is a fourth-year acting student in the Department of Theatre. Previous Phoenix credits include Antonio in *Twelfth Night*, Putz in *Rookery Nook*, Polonius/Clown in *The Marowitz Hamlet*, and Yang Sun in *Good Person of Setzuan*. Credits outside of the Phoenix include Atomic Vaudeville's *The Gift* and other Fables, and *Alone* at the 2012 Victoria Fringe Festival. He hopes you enjoy *Reasons to Be Pretty!*



Robin Gadsby *Greg*

This is Robin's fourth and final year at the Phoenix Theatre, where he has performed in *Twelfth Night*, *The Marowitz Hamlet*, *Good Person of Setzuan*, and a variety of SATCo productions. Along with conspirator Kieran Wilson, Robin wrote *Greg Phillips: Alleged Antichrist*, which won Best SATCo and will be reworked this summer for a future production.



Alberta Holden *Carly*

Reasons to Be Pretty marks Alberta's final Phoenix performance, and she is happy to add it to her previous credits, including *Good Person of Setzuan*, *Inside*, and *Yerma*.



Blair Moro *Rich*

Blair is a third-year Applied Theatre student, who is thrilled to be in his first mainstage production. Blair's credits include *Arms and The Man* (Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre) *Goldilocks and The Three Bears* (St. Luke's Players) and *Three Angry Pigs* (SATCo). Thanks to Christine and all the members of the cast and crew!



Reese Nielsen *Steph*

Reese is thrilled to mark her first mainstage in *Reasons!* It has been a privilege to work alongside such a talented cast and crew. She'd also like to take this moment to apologize to her parents for lying about the amount of swearing in the show. Surprise!

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Assistant Stage Manager (Costumes)

Assistants to the Costume Designer

Coordinating Wardrobe Supervisor

Wardrobe Supervisors

Dressers

Hair and Makeup Coordinator

Hair Dresser and Cuts

Head Sound

Assistant to the Set Designer

Scenic Painters

Electrician

Lighting Operator

Sound Operator

Props Coordinators

Scenic Carpenter

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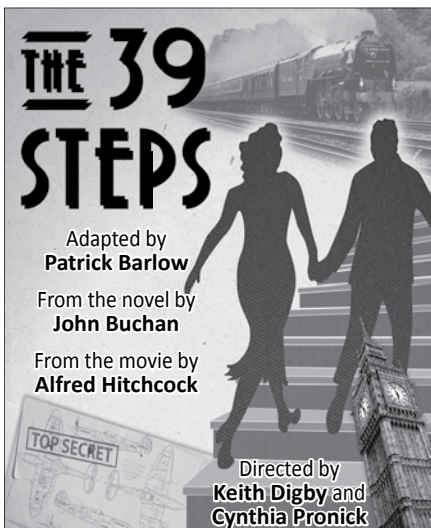
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TIMES COLONIST

Phoenix *Phacts*

Several of our alumni's work is being featured in Intrepid Theatre's YOU SHOW, an incubator program that provides project-based mentorship and performance space to emerging artists. In January, **Mika Laulainen** (BFA '12) presented *The Runaway*, a bittersweet look at love, loss, acceptance and extraterrestrials. It featured Laulainen and fellow Phoenix alumna **Randi Edmundson** (BFA '12). Next in the line-up, February 23 sees **John Demmery Green's** (BFA '12) *The Occupied Mind of Mr. K*, directed by **Molly Noonan** (BFA '12) and featuring alumni **Graham Roebuck** (BFA '11) and **Randi Edmundson** (BFA '12), current student **Alex Carson**, and former student **Stephanie Tiede**. Finally, on May 18 **Nicole Natrass** (BFA '91) presents a staged reading of *Mamahood: Turn and Face the Strange*. The solo work-in-progress is a sound and text exploration of one woman's journey into "mamahood" from the prolific actor/playwright. The YOU SHOW concept was originally created by the late Phoenix alumna **Megan Newton** (BFA '05), and has since presented 17 new plays-in-development. Many have gone on to become successful touring productions – for example, *Little Orange Man*, which was created by former UVic theatre student **Kathleen Greenfield** and UVic alumna **Ingrid Hansen** (BFA '09), went on to win "Pick of the Fringe" at the Victoria and Vancouver Fringe Festivals, and "Most Outstanding Overall Production" at the Ottawa Fringe Festival.

Also at Intrepid Theatre, their January festival of international theatre *Winterlab*, featured work by UVic alumna **Kate Braidwood** (BFA '03). Braidwood is the co-artistic director of Wonderheads, whose mask-driven, supernatural silent comedy *Grim and Fischer* had previously been part of the 2011 Victoria Fringe Festival, where it won Pick of the Fringe and Best Physical Theatre. Braidwood also makes the masks used in Wonderheads' performances.

This January Langham Court Theatre's contemporary drama, *That Face* featured two current students, third-year **Melissa Taylor**, and first year **Katherine Taddei**. It also featured production work by second year **Katelyn Clark**.

Andrew Wade (BFA '11), last seen on the Phoenix stage as Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, has kept busy since graduating from UVic. Over the winter, he's played Van Helsing in Awkward Productions' *Dracula: The Musical?*, stage-managed Shift Theatres' *Closer*, played multiple characters in APPLAUSE! Musicals' *Flora the Red Menace* – and appeared in several roles-of-a-lifetime as Jesus, Santa Claus and others in the Rock Theatre Co. *New Year's Revue at the Revue*. Wade isn't slowing down in 2013: January saw him act in Fighting Chance Productions' *Side Show*, he plays Mr. Zapatella in APPLAUSE! Musicals' *Fiorello* February 14-16, and April-May will have him appear as Filch in *The Beggar's Opera* for Seven Tyrants Theatre Society. He writes about his experiences as an actor, director and more at <http://adewade.wordpress.com>.

A cavalcade of UVic students and alumni will invade this summer's 2013 Victoria Fringe Festival. Companies with familiar faces in the festival will include **Molly Noonan** (BFA '12), Da Vinci's Kitchen Dramatick Theatre Productions Company (**John Green**, BFA '12), Singles Awareness Theatre Company (current students **Blair Moro** and **Amy Culliford**), Random Samples Collective and Story Theatre Company (**Jim Leard**, BFA '70), Silent Zoo Productions (current students **Francis Melling** and **Josh Turpin**) and Performance Inspiration Group (current student **Rain Mair**).

If you missed the whole gang of theatre alumni in the December production of Atomic Vaudeville's *Ride the Cyclone* here at the Phoenix, you can invite your friends and family to catch them along their national tour. After leaving Victoria the production went to Calgary and back to Vancouver (at the Arts Club Theatre until February 16), and then they take off for Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon before returning to Nanaimo in April. For details or to follow their amazing ride, check out www.ridethecyclonemusical.com.

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Screenplay by Betty Comden & Adolph Green

Songs by Nacio Herb Brown & Arthur Freed

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A PRETTY GIRL A SHAYNA MAIDEL

By Barbara Lebow

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Oct 11 – Nov 9

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*Bonus Show