



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 30, 2009



University
of Victoria

PASSION, POWER & SEDUCTION – LA RONDE EXPLORES PSYCHOLOGICAL DANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

New professor brings edgy movement to Freudian-inspired play.

2008/2009 Season

3 LA RONDE

February 19 – 28, 2009

By Arthur Schnitzler

Direction: Conrad Alexandrowicz

Set & Lighting Design: Paphavee Limkul (MFA)

Costume Design: Cat Haywood (MFA)

Stage Manager: Lydia Comer

A psychological dance of passion, power and seduction through Viennese society in the 1890s.

Advisory: Mature subject matter, sexual content.

4 THE MEDEA

March 19 – 28, 2009

By Euripides

Directed by Linda Hardy

A disturbing yet powerful Greek tragedy of the revenge of Medea, a woman whose passion and love lead to her own destruction

What better time to dissect the psychology of relationships and human sexuality than just after Valentine's Day? Where better than at the University of Victoria Phoenix Theatre's production of **La Ronde**, February 19 to 28, 2009.

Steeped in the struggles of psychology, sex, relationships and social classes, Arthur Schnitzler's play **La Ronde**, written in 1897, explores ten couples in Viennese society in the late 19th century. Structured like a round, in music or dance, **La Ronde** features a cast of five men and five women and follows their intricately woven encounters through witty, innuendo-filled dialogue. From a soldier and a prostitute, to an actress and a count, their intimate relationships transcend social and economic status to comment on the sexual mores of the day. Schnitzler himself was no stranger to such curiosities. A close friend of Sigmund Freud, Schnitzler was considered Freud's creative equivalent. He shared Freud's fascination with sex: historians have noted that he began frequenting prostitutes at age sixteen and recording meticulously in his diary an analysis of every orgasm he achieved!

Recently appointed professor of acting and movement, director Conrad Alexandrowicz gives **La Ronde** a contemporary twist while maintaining the late 19th century period of the play. His direction has been influenced by Bertolt Brecht as he deconstructs the theatrical fourth wall, the theoretical plane that separates the audience from the illusion of the actors and their world on stage. Alexandrowicz utilizes his extensive dance and movement background to provide the actors with gestures and movement that will evoke the language of relationships and be visually engaging for audiences. As well as a professor at UVic, he is also a director, writer, choreographer and artistic director of Wild Excursions Performance – a company that explores the areas where dance and theatre overlap – and holds a BFA in dance from York University and an MFA in directing from the University of Alberta.

"I feel the play has an elasticity that makes it adaptable to nearly any time, in any society," says Alexandrowicz. "We may have evolved technologically, but the essence of human sexuality, and the complexities of the psyche, relationships and society as a whole are all essentially the same."

The Phoenix Theatre welcomes two talented MFA students to the creative team for **La Ronde**. Cat Haywood's costume designs fuse the classical and the contemporary by giving period-referenced attire a titillating Freudian flare. Paphavee Limkul's set design also makes abstract references to the period while providing a minimalist background that allows the actors and their elaborate costumes to stand out. Stage manager is Lydia Comer.

La Ronde opens Thursday, February 19, with two PREVIEW performances February 17 and 18. Join Dr. Helga Thorson from UVic's Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies for a **FREE Pre-Show Lecture** entitled "Schnitzler's Vienna" on **Friday February 20 at 7:00pm**. The Phoenix Theatre will present a special performance of **La Ronde** with **Sign Language Interpretation** for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on **Saturday, February 28 at the 2:00pm** matinee, featuring the internationally renowned Deaf interpreter Nigel Howard and Victoria hearing interpreter Mary Warner.

The performance schedule for **La Ronde** at the Phoenix Theatre @ UVic is as follows:

Preview Performances 8pm: February 17 & 18 (Previews \$6.00 at the door after 5pm)

Evening Performances 8pm: February 19 (Opening Night), 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28

Matinee Performances 2pm: Saturday, February 28 * with sign language interpretation

Single Tickets: \$12.00 (Student) - \$22.00 (Adult/Weekend)

Phoenix Box Office opens February 11, 2009 in person or by phone: **(250) 721-8000**.

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CONRAD ALEXANDROWICZ

Director of *La Ronde*

Assistant Professor, Acting & Movement

Conrad Alexandrowicz is a director, writer and choreographer, and the artistic director of Wild Excursions Performance. Originally from Toronto, he performed with a number of Canadian dance companies, principally Dancemakers, which he joined in 1982, and where he began to produce his own work, much of which featured original text. He left the company in 1987 to choreograph, direct and perform independently. To date he has created over forty-five dance and physical-theatre works, some of which have been presented across Canada, in New York City, France and the U.K.

In 1994 he moved to Vancouver where he founded Wild Excursions Performance. His play for two men called *The Wines of Tuscany* was produced three times in Vancouver, in Calgary, Victoria and Edmonton, and at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto. It won Jessie, Dora and Sterling Awards. Other credits from this time include *Dance, Little Lady!* a satirical cabaret about women, dance, and the patriarchy, and *Passion: Elysian Fields*, his first full-length play, co-produced with Touchstone Theatre.

In 2002 he completed an MFA in Directing at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and returned to Vancouver to restart the company and his freelance professional career. He has taught at SFU, UBC, Vancouver Film School and Capilano College, and directed at Douglas College, Studio 58 and United Players. Recent projects include two world premieres: a musical satire for five actors called *Beggars Would Ride*, produced in Vancouver by Wild Excursions Performance, which was nominated for eight Jessie Awards; and *i think i can*, a dance-play for one actor and eight tap dancers by playwright Florence Gibson and tap choreographer Shawn Byfield, produced by Young People's Theatre in Toronto, for which he was nominated for a Dora Award. Upcoming: *The Boy Who Went Outside*, a work for actors and singers based on the life and work of American musical revolutionary Harry Partch.

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