



SATIRE TORN FROM THE PAGES OF OUR OWN NEWSPAPERS

Nikolay Gogol's "Government Inspector" gets a West Coast rewrite inspired by local news stories.

Mainstage Season

The Inspector

March 9 – 18, 2017

Adapted by Linda Hardy

Inspired by "The Government Inspector"

or "The Inspector General" by Nikolay Gogol

Edited by Nicholas Guerreiro

A West Coast version of Gogol's hilarious 19th-century Russian satirical farce is no less funny – or relevant – when reimagined into our own political landscape.

Director	Linda Hardy
Assistant Director	Jeffrey Renn
Set Designer	Delaney Tesch
Costume Designers	Barbara Clerihue Hana Ruzesky-Bashford
Lighting Designer	Eryn Griffith
Sound Designer	Christopher Green
Projection Designer	Marites Frazer
Choreographer	Jacques Lemay
Stage Manager	Rebecca Marchand

Friday, March 10 @7pm

Free preshow lecture by Linda Hardy and several design students about the creation of *The Inspector*.

Saturday, March 18 @2pm

Matinee performance includes sign language interpretation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing with Deaf interpreter Nigel Howard & hearing interpreter Jen Ferris.

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Lately, following the daily news can seem like a comedy sketch, but the Phoenix Theatre's newest production takes this to hilarious farcical heights in a new, West Coast version of Nikolay Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. Adapted and directed by Professor Linda Hardy, ***The Inspector***, runs at UVic from March 9 to 18, 2017.

"Every day brought new gifts in the Times Colonist," says Hardy about the process of writing the play last spring and summer. *"I was grateful to the passion of the citizens who wrote letters to the editor."* Over five months, new ideas were woven into Gogol's tale about a town whose officials hear a government inspector is coming – incognito! Will their little improprieties be exposed? When they mistake a cunning ex-civil servant for the inspector, their schemes are turned against them. Greed, corruption, and hypocrisy escalate and this farce spins out of control – proving that Gogol's 19th-century satire is no less relevant (and possibly even more humorous!) when reimagined into our own political backyard.

While leaving the plot of the original 1836 play intact, Hardy places her characters in the "fictional" West Coast town of Paradise. Paradise' problems will sound terribly familiar – from a debacle over sewage treatment, to concerns of homelessness and a Tent City, and controversies over new bike lanes. Watch for bike cops, real estate developers, yoga instructors, and lots of protestors, including a reference to a Victoria icon in a poop suit!

"Why do comedy?" says Hardy. *"One answer is that it provides release in these uncertain times; another, that it has always been the responsibility of the artist to function as a catalyst, a provocateur – and yes, a "shit disturber."* *Gogol understood this in spades and was applauded as a "realist" in the Russia of his day."*

While things "spin" out of control in the play, the stage itself will be spinning too! A revolve stage in the Roger Bishop Theatre space is put to great use to maximize the farcical elements of the play as the cast of 19 theatre students ride bicycles, skateboards, shopping carts and other modes of transportation across it – all carefully choreographed by Jacques Lemay. The set, designed by fourth-year student, Delaney Tesch, recalls iconic Victoria landscapes, including streetscapes with flower-basketed lamp posts, ivy-walled buildings, upscale hotels, and bamboo-fenced gardens. Costumes, designed by students Barbara Clerihue and Hana Ruzesky-Basford, will make you feel like you're standing on Fort and Douglas Streets, or on the corner in your neighbourhood. Hardy also incorporates the use of masks, created especially for the play by Laura Farn, to better represent all 35 different characters. Lighting by MFA design student Eryn Griffith takes us from parks, to hotel rooms and backyard parties, complemented by city soundscapes and original music by fourth-year student Christopher Green. Projections by third-year student Marites Frazer add to the set and lighting designs. Stage management is by fourth-year student Rebecca Marchand.

A long-time professor at the Department of Theatre, Linda Hardy is master teacher of acting and voice who has trained professional actors and singers for stage and film, nationally and internationally. She sees ***The Inspector*** as an excellent finale to the department's 50th season, and a gift to the current students. *"For me, the greatest joy is the chance to write roles for my actors, knowing their needs as young artists, and the needs of the play. To "tailor make" something that we all bring together makes for a rare collaboration and is a fitting end to the 50th Anniversary season."*

Everyone is welcome to join us for our free Preshow Lecture, Friday March 10 at 7pm with writer and director Linda Hardy discussing the creation of *The Inspector*. The Saturday matinee on March 18 will include sign language interpretation by Nigel Howard and Jen Ferris. Performances for ***The Inspector*** are as follows:

Public Previews @8pm: Tuesday and Wednesday, March 7 & 8 (limited seating)

Evenings @8pm: (Monday – Saturday) March 9 (opening), 10 (preshow lecture), 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

Matinee @2pm: Saturday, March 18 with Sign language interpretation

Preshow Lecture @7pm: Friday, March 10 with Director Linda Hardy

Single Tickets: Weekdays & Matinee: \$15 - \$25, Weekend evenings: All seats \$26 (Preview: \$8.00 after 5pm)

Phoenix Box Office Opens: February 28 for sales in person, or over the phone at **(250) 721-8000**.

Open Monday through Saturday from 12:00 pm to 8:30 pm.