



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 20, 2015



University
of Victoria

ROCKING AMADEUS... AND GRAD SCHOOL

Professional director goes back to school for MFA
and opportunity to direct 7-time Tony Award-winning play

2014/2015 Season

4

Amadeus

March 12 – 21, 2015
Written Peter Shaffer

Director Chari Arespacochaga (MFA Candidate)
Set Designer Allan Stichbury
Costume Designer Pauline Stynes
Lighting Designer Michael Whitfield
Sound Designer Brian Linds
Stage Manager Jaymee Sidel

The acclaimed Tony-winning play and Oscar-winning movie about Mozart, music and jealousy.

Many associate **Amadeus** with the Academy Award-winning movie and the catchy anthem “Rock Me Amadeus” that were part of the cultural phenomenon in the 80s – but it all started with the play. A hit in the West End and on Broadway, where it received seven Tony Awards including Best Play, it catapulted the story of Mozart’s genius into pop culture.

Running March 12-21, 2015, the University of Victoria’s Phoenix Theatre presents Peter Shaffer’s original play **Amadeus**, directed by current MFA directing student, Chari Arespacochaga. Reimagined in an asylum on the last night of Antonio Salieri’s life, Salieri shares his possibly-skewed memories as a court composer and his devious schemes to destroy the career of his rival, the young music genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Like many MFA students, director Chari Arespacochaga came to UVic to further her education with an already-strong resumé in professional theatre. With previous experience directing major Broadway shows in Manila and Singapore, her credits include *Footloose The Musical*, *Doubt*, *Spring Awakening*, *The Full Monty*, *Legally Blonde*, *Avenue Q*, *Rock of Ages* and several Disney productions including *The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, and *Tarzan*. As you can see, musicals have a special place in Chari’s heart, but for her masters degree she wanted to step out of her comfort zone while still working with music.

“This is a play about faith, talent, envy... Is talent a gift from a God, or is it something that can be developed?” says Chari. “I thought these questions about artistic ability and what one would do to achieve success were important and fascinating ideas to explore in school where people are trying to become artists.”

Fourth-year student Pauline Stynes also proves that returning to school a little later in life is extremely rewarding. After training and a career in tailoring and costume creation, Pauline wanted to be on the designing side of the costumes she was making. Now in her final year of her BFA in Design, she’s already made her mark in the theatre community – last year she beat out the city’s best as winner of the Critics’ Choice Spotlight Award for Best Costume Design for the Phoenix’s production of *Picnic*. Her costumes for **Amadeus** help the audience blend the line between the tattered and torn-clad asylum patients and the affluent and regal members of the 18th-century court of Salieri’s memories.

Joining them is a powerhouse of creative professionals. Faculty member and set designer Allan Stichbury creates the skewed world of the asylum by using a dramatically raked stage lined with many doors to create a minimalist corridor that references the actual 17th-century Bedlam Hospital. Sound design by Brian Linds will infuse the production’s soundscape with iconic classical melodies (including some works that were recorded on the UVic School of Music’s own pianoforte played by theatre student Christopher Green). Lighting by instructor and alumnus Michael Whitfield (BA’67) transports the audience into Salieri’s asylum, where the luxuries of the past mix with the decrepit present. Fourth-year student Jaymee Sidel is the stage manager.

Everyone is welcome to join us for our FREE pre-show lecture on **Friday, March 13 at 7pm** to hear director Chari Arespacochaga in conversation with faculty member Peter McGuire as they talk about her international experience, returning to school and her work on **Amadeus**. This discussion will be recorded and podcast the following week on www.phoenixtheatres.ca.

Performances of **Amadeus** are on the following dates:

Public Previews @8pm: March 10 & 11

Evenings @8pm: March 12 (Opening Night), 13 (preshow lecture), 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Matinee Performance @2pm: Saturday, March 21

Single Tickets: \$14 Student/\$20 Senior/\$24 Adult/\$24 Weekends @ 8pm (Previews \$7.00, available after 5pm)

More information: www.phoenixtheatres.ca

Phoenix Box Office Opens: March 3 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.

Phoenix Theatre Media Contact:

Adrienne Holierhoek
Marketing & Communications
Department of Theatre
email: aholierh@uvic.ca | 250-721-7992
www.phoenixtheatres.ca | Box Office: 250-721-8000