



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
June 29, 2016



University
of Victoria

2016/2017 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Alumni Festival

October 11 – 29, 2016

Presented by our Alumni Sponsor
iA Financial Group

CHARLES ROSS:
One-Man Star Wars Trilogy*
One-Man Lord of the Rings
One-Man Dark Knight: A Batman Parody

TJ DAWE: *The Slipknot*

SHANNAN CALCUTT: *Burnt Tongue*

Mainstage Season Les Liaisons Dangereuses

November 10 – 26, 2016

By Christopher Hampton
Directed by Fran Gebhard

A chilling tale of sensual decadence and revenge among the French aristocracy, played as a high-stakes game of life and death.

Gut Girls

February 9 – 18, 2017

By Sarah Daniels

Directed by Alix Reynolds (MFA Candidate)

This story of brash, unrefined women who toil in Victorian-era slaughterhouses cuts to the heart of women's struggle for emancipation.

The Inspector

March 9 – 18, 2017

Written Nikolay Gogol

Directed by Linda Hardy

This 19th-century satirical farce about greed and government corruption is no less relevant when set in our current political landscape.

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50 YEARS OF CREATING CANADA'S THEATRE ARTISTS & GREAT THEATRE!

UVic's Phoenix Theatre celebrates with expanded season and alumni reunion

This season, the University of Victoria's Department of Theatre celebrates its 50th anniversary, marking half a century of educating Canada's theatre artists and creating great theatre here in Victoria!

To mark the occasion, the Phoenix Theatre has expanded its usual fall "Spotlight on Alumni" into a three-week **50th Anniversary Alumni Festival**. Internationally acclaimed artists and alumni have been invited to present five different shows during the festival, from October 11-29. Self-proclaimed 'professional geek' **Charles Ross** is best known for his *One-Man Star Wars Trilogy*, which he has performed all over the world. Ross will present all of his one-man nerd trilogies including *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*, and his newest, *Dark Knight: A Batman Parody*. Prolific writer, performer, director and Fringe veteran, **TJ Dawe** will remount his play *The Slipknot*, which was performed as the very first "Spotlight" presentation in 2003. Cirque du Soleil clown, and Co-Comedic Director of *Zumanity* in Las Vegas, Shannan Calcutt is sometimes better known as her alter ego, Izzy the Clown. Calcutt returns for the festival with her hilarious solo show, **Burnt Tongue**.

The Phoenix Theatre's **50th Anniversary Mainstage Season** begins in November with **Les Liaisons Dangereuses**, the Christopher Hampton play about sex and revenge among the French aristocracy that was adapted into the Oscar-winning film. It's also director Fran Gebhard's favourite play! In February, MFA Candidate Alix Reynolds will direct **Gut Girls**, by Sarah Daniels. With sharp dialogue and dazzling humour, **Gut Girls** is set in the Victorian era against the backdrop of women's struggle for emancipation. The season closes with Nikolay Gogol's **The Inspector**. Directed and adapted by professor Linda Hardy, this 19th-century Russian satirical farce about greed, hypocrisy and corruption is no less relevant in today's political landscape.

The Department of Theatre is also inviting all of its graduates to come back to campus over the November 11-13 long weekend for the **50th Anniversary Alumni Reunion**. The Phoenix will host three days of events for alumni to reminisce with old friends, department faculty, and staff. *"It will be an exciting weekend. There are already hundreds of alumni interested in coming – and bringing their families with them! The Department is looking forward to reconnecting and hearing what everyone has been up to in their lives and their careers,"* says Department Chair Allana Lindgren.

Generations of Phoenix alumni have become successful artists, working across the world and playing important roles in Canada's cultural institutions, including Michael Whitfield, Resident Lighting Designer for 35 years at the Stratford Festival; Denis Garnhum, most recently the Artistic Director of Calgary Theatre and soon to be at The Grand Theatre in London ON; and Nathan Medd, the Managing Director of English Theatre at the National Arts Centre. Many other alumni have created their own theatre companies that have become part of Canada's cultural landscape, including Britt Small and Jacob Richmond of Atomic Vaudeville and the Broadway-bound hit *Ride the Cyclone*; Peter Balkwill of Calgary's Old Trout Puppet Workshop; Ingrid Hansen and Kathleen Greenfield of the now Toronto-based SNAFU Dance Theatre; national three-time Canadian Comedy Award winners and CBC comedy writers Chris Wilson and Peter Carlone of Peter N' Chris; and Kate Braidwood of Portland's Wonderheads. Here in Victoria, our faculty and alumni have been a driving part of the theatre community for the past 50 years, beginning in the early days with the Campus Players, Company One, and the adventurous city-wide fine arts festival, Victoria Fair (1969-71). Our alumni have founded enduring Victoria theatre companies like Theatre Inconnu (1978), Story Theatre (1981), the Fringe Festival and Intrepid Theatre (1986), the Greater Victoria Shakespeare Festival (1991), Theatre SKAM (1995), Giggling Iguana Productions (1998), and more recently workingclass theatre (2009) and Impulse Theatre (2011). A complete history of the department's growth, play productions and faculty, including many successful alumni is now available on an interactive timeline at www.phoenixtheatres.ca/50th.

The Department of Theatre is also planning many other activities during the year, including an exhibition of Phoenix play posters at the UVic Archives, a human library event and historical displays. See background on history of the department on next page.

Phoenix Box Office Opens: October 6 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.

Season subscriptions: Available now: \$39 for 3 plays & \$52 for 4 plays and \$125 for all 8 shows!

Details & order forms at www.phoenixtheatres.ca



HISTORY OF THE PHOENIX THEATRE

2016/2017 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Visit www.phoenixtheatres.ca/50th
for a detailed and interactive timeline of:

- Department of Theatre history
- All Phoenix Theatre productions
- Department faculty
- Featured alumni

50 years ago, Victoria was a growing city, quickly becoming a cultural hub for the west coast. Few could have foreseen the extent of how the advent of the University of Victoria in 1963 and the creation of a theatre on campus would change how Victoria's arts and culture scene developed.

Professor Roger Bishop, the Chair of the Department of English had the foresight and understanding that drama needed to be performed and seen live to really be studied properly by students. The written word was only the beginning. To this end, Bishop approached Carl Hare, a young English professor with an interest and training in theatre, and shared his idea of creating a fully-realized theatre program. By 1964, four theatre classes were offered within the English department, and by 1965 a Division was formed inside English that offered a Bachelors with a major in Theatre by 1966.

Charged with the development of a theatre curriculum and the promise of two army huts, Carl Hare began transforming the small, square buildings on the Gordon Head campus that had been erected as a military base classroom and performance spaces. With relentless energy and enthusiasm, Hare mobilized volunteers, faculty, and students to start work on what would become a tiny 80-seat theatre – the Phoenix Theatre. In 1965, the theatre space was completed by erecting a concrete building to fit between two long huts. It contained a simple stage and a control booth, but no wing space or fly tower. Nevertheless, it was regarded fondly then, and is still remembered fondly, as a creative venue. The name – the Phoenix Theatre – was a fitting moniker for a building that rose from the remnants of the old military hospital, morgue and chapel. A group called the Campus Players, made up faculty and students, began presenting theatre in the summer, beginning with *Shakespeare '64* (performed at Lansdowne Auditorium on the old campus), and then *Renaissance Festival* in 1965 in the newly opened Phoenix Theatre.

By this time, plans were afoot to create a new School of Fine Arts on campus that would integrate the theory, history and practice of the arts. Created in 1967, the divisions of Theatre, Music, and Art and Art History offered students a Bachelor of Fine Arts. Only two years later, this School of Fine Arts developed into the Faculty of Fine Arts. The divisions became the Departments of Theatre, Art History, Studio Visual Arts and Music. This new faculty was very active and immediately launched Victoria Fair, an adventurous, Victoria-wide summer cultural event that was rich with theatre, music, lectures, and art exhibitions. Victoria Fair was focused around three plays mounted by the Department of Theatre in the MacPherson Playhouse and usually featured professional theatre artists from across Canada and the US working with faculty, students and local artists.

Within a decade, it was clear that the growing department needed new facilities. Located across campus from the military huts in what would become a Fine Arts area, the new Phoenix Building was open in January of 1982, with faculty, staff and students working through the Christmas break to move furniture, costumes, sets and props into their new home in time for classes and rehearsal to begin in the new year. Designed by architects Peterson & Lester, the Phoenix Building featured three performance spaces and took advantage of the most current technology of the time, including a computerized stage lighting system. Over the three and a half decades since, the university has continued to maintain the Phoenix's facilities to current industry standards so that students can continue to learn in an environment that will prepare them for careers in professional theatre.

Over five decades, the Phoenix Theatre has presented hundreds of memorable productions, both throughout their mainstage seasons and during their much-loved Phoenix Summer Theatre productions, which began in 1972 and ran for 26 years. From 1985 to 1998, PST also offered outdoor dinner theatre at the Faculty (now University) Club where performances were staged using the Club's patio, trees, shrubbery and even the pond as part of the scenery for outstanding productions including *As You Like It*, *Murder On The Nile*, *Hayfever*; and *Peter Pan*, which was filmed and broadcast on CHEK TV and featured actors flying through the trees and a mechanical crocodile swimming in the pond!

Generations of successful alumni have walked the boards of the old and new Phoenix buildings, learned how to hang lights, and design costumes. The comprehensive and multi-disciplinary nature of Department of Theatre's curriculum has led to a multitude of directions in which alumni can pursue in life. Armed with a wide range of transferable skills, our students become highly skilled managers and leaders in whatever they choose to do in the future. For a comprehensive list of Theatre alumni visit http://finearts.uvic.ca/theatre/alumni/_pdf/DepartmentAlumni-www.pdf

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