



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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University
of Victoria

CRITICS AGREE: THE UGLY DUCHESS IS "BEAUTIFUL," "ENGRASSING" & "HEARTBREAKING"

2007/2008 Season

Phoenix Theatre launches season with all-alumni show

1 SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI: THE UGLY DUCHESS

October 11 – 20, 2007

By Janet Munsil

Featuring Paul Terry

Directed by Britt Small

*A Gothic tale about beauty, power,
politics and the plague.*

Pre-show Lecture: October 12 at 7pm
with Dr. Erin Campbell, History in Art
Department

2 WIND IN THE WILLOWS

November 8 – 24, 2007

Adapted by Alan Bennett from the
book by Kenneth Grahame

Directed by Brian Richmond

Production Design by Mary Kerr

*The riverside adventures of Ratty,
Mole, Badger and Toad.*

FIND 2008:

Festival of Innovative & New Drama

3 LIONEL

February 14 – 23, 2008

By Pan Bouyoucas

Directed by Ewan McLaren

An MFA Thesis Production

*The 1920's odyssey of the shortest
tenor in history.*

4 THE INCREDIBLE CASE OF SEÑOR MORTON

(El Insólito Caso del Señor Morton)

March 13 – 22, 2008

Written & Directed by Martín Zapata

Performed in English

A promiscuous whodunit!

Phoenix Theatre

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What does it mean to be so ugly that your portrait makes it into the annals of art history?

Such is the story of Margaret Maultasch, the 14th century monarch of Tyrol who is represented in the work of Leonardo da Vinci and 15th-century painter Quinten Massys. Her reputed portrait, titled "A Grotesque Old Woman," now sits on the walls of the National Gallery in London where it inspired Victoria playwright and UVic alumna, Janet Munsil to tell her Gothic tale of beauty, power, politics and the plague.

The Phoenix Theatre opens its 2007/08 season with Munsil's play, *The Ugly Duchess* as its SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI, October 11 – 20, 2007. Her husband, acclaimed Victoria-based actor and UVic alumnus (BFA 1989) Paul Terry, performs the role of the ill-fated heroine who, despite her appearance was also a monstrously desirable political bride.

"I was wandering around the National Gallery in London, a totally overwhelmed tourist, when I came face-to-face with... "The Ugly Duchess," says Munsil. "Margaret of Bohemia, (less affectionately known as The Maultasch or "Pocket-Mouth,")... was a real woman who governed Tyrol, briefly, in the 14th Century. She was divorced from her first husband and excommunicated. She lived through the Great Death – a.k.a. the Black Plague – which wiped out two-thirds of Europe. Nobody knows how ugly she really was."

The Ugly Duchess was first produced in 1993 as part of the Open Space New Theatre Series. It was remounted for the Victoria Fringe Festival and again at the UNO Festival of Solo Performance in 1999. Since then, it has been sold out, held over and named "Best of the Fest" at fringe and theatre festivals across North America. The Globe and Mail called it "one of the most beautifully nuanced performances of the entire festival."

This production at the Phoenix Theatre will be an all UVic alumni affair: it will be remounted for the Roger Bishop stage with a new set designed by Janet Munsil (BFA 1989), with new costumes designed by Roberta Doylend (BFA 1992), and will be directed by Britt Small (MFA in Directing 2004/ BFA 1998). Munsil is also the Producer/Artistic Director of Intrepid Theatre since 1992 and her other plays include *That Elusive Spark*, which premiered at the Phoenix in 2005, and *Circus Fire*, which was part of the Phoenix Theatre's first Festival of Innovative and New Drama in 2003.

Please join us for our **FREE Pre-Show Lecture**, Friday, October 12 at 7:00pm with Dr. Erin Campbell, Assistant Professor in the History in Art Department speaking on "The Ugly Woman in the Renaissance Imagination." Her teaching focuses on the visual culture of Europe from 1500-1800 and her research interests include cultural representations of old age, aging and creativity. This lecture is free of charge and open to everyone.

This production marks the first of four in the Phoenix Theatre's 2007/08 season. More information about the season is available at www.phoenixtheatres.ca. Subscription packages of three or four shows are on sale now for \$30 and \$40. To order season tickets, call (250) 721-8000 or fill in the order form from the website and FAX to (250) 721-6596.

The performance schedule for *The Ugly Duchess* at the Phoenix Theatre at University of Victoria, is as follows:

Public Preview Performances 8pm: October 9 and 10 (Tickets \$5 after 5pm)

Evening Performances 8pm: October 11 (Opening Night), 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20

Matinee Performance 2pm: Saturday, October 20

Tickets: \$10-\$20 Single tickets available from October 4 at Phoenix Box Office or by calling: (250) 721-8000.