



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
September 20, 2016



University  
of Victoria

## SUPERHEROES, LOUSY STOCK BOYS AND COQUETTISH CLOWNS

*UVic Theatre alumni return to the Phoenix with solo shows to make you laugh.*

### 2016/2017 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON

#### Alumni Festival

October 11 – 29, 2016

Presented by our Alumni Sponsor  
**iA Financial Group**

CHARLES ROSS:

**One-Man Lord of the Rings**

October 11, 12 & 13 at 8pm

**One-Man Star Wars\* Trilogy**

October 14 at 8pm, October 15 at 2pm & 8pm

**One-Man Dark Knight: A Batman Parody**

October 16 at 2pm & 8pm, October 17 at 8pm

TJ DAWE: **The Slipknot**

October 18 – 22 at 8pm, October 22 at 2pm

SHANNAN CALCUTT: **Burnt Tongue**

October 25 – 29 at 8pm, October 29 at 2pm

*Each show is followed by a short talkback session.*

\*One-Man Star Wars Trilogy performed with permission of Lucasfilm Ltd. All 'Star Wars' elements property of Lucasfilm Ltd. All rights reserved.

### 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.*

### Gut Girls

February 9 – 18, 2017

By Sarah Daniels

Directed by Alix Reynolds (MFA Candidate)

*Brash, unrefined women toil in Victorian-era slaughterhouses and struggle for emancipation.*

### The Inspector

March 9 – 18, 2017

Written Nikolay Gogol

Directed by Linda Hardy

*This 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian satire about greed and corruption is adapted to today's political landscape.*

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[www.phoenixtheatres.ca](http://www.phoenixtheatres.ca) | Box Office: 250-721-8000

In celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the University of Victoria's Department of Theatre has invited even more alumni back to the stages of their Alma Mater. This year, the Phoenix Theatre expands its usual fall "Spotlight on Alumni" into a three-week **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Alumni Festival** featuring three internationally acclaimed artists presenting five solo shows over various dates 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** – an irreverent homage to the Christopher Nolan movies. Ross' 2007 presentation of *One-Man Star Wars Trilogy* as that year's "Spotlight on Alumni" holds the prestigious honour of being the most held-over show in Phoenix history!

Prolific writer, performer, director and international Fringe icon, **TJ Dawe** will remount the very first "Spotlight" show in 2003. His then-newish play, **The Slipknot**, is now one of 14 autobiographical solo shows he performs regularly around the world. Since then, his two-person play, *Toothpaste & Cigars* (written with alumnus Mike Rinaldi), was adapted into the Hollywood movie *The F Word* featuring Daniel Radcliffe and Zoe Kazan. *The Slipknot* is a comic monologue about three equally horrible jobs – from stock boy, to driver, to post office customer service. In turns hysterical and heartbreaking, Dawe offers observations on relationships, Santa Claus, the recreational use of Gravel, and why you should never put meat in the mail. "Ironically," Dawe says of his most-purchased script and most-produced show to date, "*The Slipknot has made me enough money to get out of the world of horrible jobs.*"

Cirque du Soleil clown extraordinaire **Shannan Calcutt** is also an acclaimed writer, actor and instructor. For the past decade, Shannan Calcutt has called the Las Vegas stage of Cirque du Soleil's show *Zumanity* her home. She is also the show's Co-Comedic Director and the Clown Coach for Cirque du Soleil's seven resident shows. To many, Calcutt is best known as her alter ego Izzy, the charming and radiant clown with a keen sense of timing and a razor sharp wit. Calcutt returns with her hilarious solo show, **Burnt Tongue**, that introduces us to Izzy on the night of her first blind date with a man on the internet. Deciding that this guy is the one for her, Izzy arrives "totally prepared to be spontaneous" . . . wearing a wedding dress!

Of his return to the Phoenix, Dawe says "*It's a nice full circle. I've built a career out of original, self-created theatre, something I first did in the classrooms and rehearsal spaces in this building. Self-created theatre has gained much more of a foothold in the last 20 years. In my student days it barely existed. Now it's thriving. All the Festival shows are shining examples of it... I get to work with the students, and maybe I'll light the fire for one or two of them. Maybe you'll be seeing them here in 20 years.*"

While here, alumni will work closely with current students in the production process as well as participate in class visits or workshops. "*Not only is this an opportunity for the Phoenix to share our graduates' talents with Victoria audiences, we also want our current students to learn from these experienced, talented artists who have already made their mark on the world,*" says Department Chair Allana Lindgren. "*We couldn't be prouder of all our grads and their many achievements. We look forward to celebrating this anniversary with as many alumni as possible over the year.*"

All UVic Theatre alumni are invited to attend the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Alumni Reunion**, held over the November 11-13 long weekend, to reminisce with old friends, faculty and staff. Generations of Phoenix grads have become successful artists, working across the world and playing important roles in Canada's cultural institutions, or creating their own theatre companies in Victoria and across Canada, the US and Europe. Over the past 50 years, they have become a driving artistic force in Victoria's theatre community. A special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary website outlines reunion details and other events, and features an interactive timeline history of the department listing all productions, faculty and selected alumni at [www.phoenixtheatres.ca/50th](http://www.phoenixtheatres.ca/50th).

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season continues in November with Christopher Hampton's play, **Les Liaisons Dangereuses**, directed by Fran Gebhard; **Gut Girls**, by Sarah Daniels, directed by MFA Candidate Alix Reynolds in February; and Nikolay Gogol's political satire, **The Inspector**, directed and adapted by Linda Hardy. Season packages start at \$39.00 for 3 plays, \$52 for 4 plays or \$125 for the entire 8-show season. Details at [www.phoenixtheatres.ca](http://www.phoenixtheatres.ca)

**Phoenix Box Office Opens:** October 6 for sales in person, or over the phone at **(250) 721-8000**

**Festival Tickets:** All seats \$26 | **Subscriptions:** \$39 for 3 plays, \$52 for 4 plays & \$125 for all 8 shows!



## HISTORY OF THE PHOENIX THEATRE

### 2016/2017 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Visit [www.phoenixtheatres.ca/50th](http://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](http://finearts.uvic.ca/theatre/alumni/_pdf/DepartmentAlumni-www.pdf)

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