



## ROOKERY NOOK: "SO WE CAN ALL ENJOY A GOOD LAUGH."

Kinghorn rediscovers the "simple and pure" humour of the old-time farce

"I love the silliness of the English farce; even this play's name sounds farcical!" says director Bindon Kinghorn, the long-time Theatre Manager at the Phoenix Theatre of his upcoming play **Rookery Nook**, running from November 3-19, 2011 at the University of Victoria.

With boater-hatted gentlemen, bobbed-hair flappers and a Tudor cottage by the sea, Kinghorn sets his **Rookery Nook** in the nostalgic and stylish era of 1926 – the year playwright Ben Travers penned this, his second of nine farces that became known as the Aldwych Farces. But **Rookery Nook** has some personal nostalgia attached to it as well. "Before I came to the University of Victoria in 1973, this was one of the first plays I worked on professionally in England," says Kinghorn, "So it seems appropriate at this stage in my career to direct it." The play is even set in his home county of Somerset, which he proudly shows off an old printed map of the seaside region.

"There is something pure and simple about these old farces that I am trying to discover and recreate for Rookery Nook," says Kinghorn. In the play, Gerald and Clive, two fun-loving and unfortunately overly-helpful young friends, find themselves caught in a tangled web of silly white lies and flirtatious innuendos when a pretty girl arrives at their rented cottage seeking protection and a shoulder to cry on. (Oh, my! So what's a gentleman to do?) In a fast-paced array of pranks, jokes and comings-and-goings, it makes a mockery of the pretentious class system and the oddities of the British way of life – ridiculing a tyrannical sister-in-law, her hen-pecked husband, an interfering housekeeper, a Prussian neighbour and a crazed admiral. (Not to mention the cat!) Comments Kinghorn, "Unlike the sex farces of the 1960s and later, it's all very innocent and a lot of silly fun."

Ben Travers playwriting career (1886-1980) was one of the longest and most successful in the history of theatre. His series of comedies included some of London's most popular plays of the '20s and '30s. All of the nine farces performed at the Aldwych Theatre had lengthy runs, totalling almost 2700 performances. He wrote for screen and theatre late into his 90s, long enough to see a resurgence in 1976 when he had three plays running simultaneously in the West End. "[Farce] can be one of the happiest of theatrical forms," the London Times noted in his obituary, "It is also among the most difficult to write. Ben Travers, undeniably, was the twentieth century's chief practitioner."

Director Bindon Kinghorn is working with a talented creative team, all of whom are currently undergrad or graduate students in the Department of Theatre. Bringing the fantastic clothing styles of the era to life is Costume Designer Kat Jeffery. Set Designer Jessica P. Wong has created the rickety interior of an English Tudor cottage by the seaside. Lighting Designer and MFA design student, Bryan Kenney, will be designing the lighting for all of the Phoenix plays this season. Sound Designer Neil Ferguson gives a voice to the nefarious animals in **Rookery Nook**. Caitlinn O'Leary is the Stage Manager.

Join Dr. Denis Johnston on **Friday, November 4 at 7pm** for a **FREE preshow lecture** on "Ben Travers and the Aldwych Farces." Johnston, a UVic grad and the previous Audience Outreach Director for the Shaw Festival, will give an introduction to the play, the author, and the team that created this phenomenal series of comedies at the Aldwych Theatre.

The matinee on **Saturday, November 19 at 2pm** will feature **Sign Language Interpretation** of **Rookery Nook** by international Deaf interpreter, presenter and performer Nigel Howard and hearing interpreter Jen Ferris.

Information is available online at [phoenixtheatres.ca](http://phoenixtheatres.ca) or by calling **250-721-8000**.

The performance schedule for **Rookery Nook** is as follows:

**Public Preview Performances 8pm:** November 1 & 2

**Evening Performances 8pm:** November 3 (Opening Night), 4 (Lecture), 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

**Matinee\* Performances 2pm:** Saturday, November 19 \*with Sign Language Interpretation

**Single Tickets:** \$13 Student / \$18 Senior / \$22 Adult / \$24 Weekends @ 8pm (Previews \$7.00, available after 5pm)

**Season Subscriptions:** \$36 for 3 plays

Phoenix Box Office opens October 25 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.

## 2011/2012 Season

### 2 ROOKERY NOOK

**November 3 – 19, 2011**

By Ben Travers

Directed by Bindon Kinghorn

Set Designer Jessica P. Wong

Costume Designer Kat Jeffery

Lighting Designer Bryan Kenney

Sound Designer Neil Ferguson

Stage Manager Caitlinn O'Leary

*A suave and stylish 1920s farce set on the English seaside.*

**"The Aldwych Farces" Free PreShow Lecture:**

**November 4 at 7pm**

with Dr. Denis Johnston, UVic alumni and previous Audience Outreach Director for the Shaw Festival

Presented By



### 3 EURYDICE

**February 16 – 25, 2012**

By Sarah Ruhl

Directed by Jeffrey Pufahl, MFA Candidate

*A quirky, contemporary retelling of the Orpheus and the Underworld myth through Eurydice's eyes.*

### 4 THE MAROWITZ HAMLET

**March 15 – 24, 2012**

By William Shakespeare & Charles Marowitz

Guest directed by Charles Marowitz

*Marowitz rethinks Shakespeare's masterpiece by cutting it up and piecing it back together again.*

Department of Theatre and

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