



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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University
of Victoria

GOOD PERSON OF VICTORIA?

Brecht's timeless parable play questions the trials of being a good person
– be it in China or in our own backyard.

2012/2013 Season

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Good Person of Setzuan

November 8 – 24, 2012

By Bertolt Brecht

Direction: Conrad Alexandrowicz

Set Design: Simon Farrow

Costume Design: Kat Jeffery

Lighting Design: Bryan Kenney

Composer & Music Direction: Francis Melling

Stage Manager: Kristen Iversen

Set in a big international city in today's globalized world, Brecht's famous parable play explores the trials of being a good person.

Preshow Lecture: November 9 @ 7pm

The Director's Series: Join us for our series this year that puts our directors front and centre talking about the inspiration for their play.

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French Inc. New York City

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Reasons to Be Pretty

February 14 – 23, 2013

By Neil LaBute

Directed by Christine Willes (MFA Candidate)

Four friends mine the layers between self-image and self-esteem in a beauty-obsessed society.

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You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown (Revised)

March 14 – 23, 2013

Book, Music and Lyrics by Clark Gesner

Directed by Fran Gebhard

Broadway hit follows the loveable Peanuts gang through a day as they ponder the meaning of life.

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It could be any city... any big international anywhere city. It could be Victoria. It is every city.

In his classic parable play *Good Person of Setzuan*, Bertolt Brecht asks many difficult questions of his characters and of his audience. Why is it so hard to do the right thing... to be a good person? While developing his production of *Good Person of Setzuan*, running from November 8 to 24, 2012 at the University of Victoria Phoenix Theatre, director Conrad Alexandrowicz couldn't help think, not only of those caught in the global economic crisis, but also of the poverty and homelessness in his own city.

"I was curious to see how the philosophical questions and moral lessons of Brecht's original translated to a world that has grown more thoroughly corporatized and materialistic than that of his day," said Alexandrowicz, a professor in the theatre department who is also the Artistic Director of Wild Excursions Performance. *"We live in one big globalized world now. It could be anywhere. It could be here."*

The trials of living in Victoria were recently recounted in the Vital Signs report (produced by the Victoria Foundation). It described a city where the cost of a "living wage" is \$18.07 per hour and the minimum wage is only \$10.25. 11.3% of people in the region live in poverty and rental costs continue to increase, if, at 3% rental availability, you can find a suite available at all.

In Brecht's mythical city of Setzuan, economic times are also tight when three gods come in search of "one good person." They are dismayed to find the search is so difficult. After seeking accommodation at many households, wealthy and otherwise, it is at the home of an impoverished young prostitute, Shen Te that they find good will. However, Shen Te's troubles really begin after a thank-you gift from the gods places her new-found status, new tobacco shop and her generosity in jeopardy and makes her easy mark for theft, deceit and corruption. To avoid financial ruin, she re-invents herself as Shui Ta, a shrewd, no-nonsense male cousin to protect her business interests.

"It's an incredibly clever play," said Alexandrowicz. *"Brecht shows great depth in his understanding of the human condition and the way that different classes operate in a money-centric society."*

Alexandrowicz's vision for the play is mirrored in the set designed by fourth year student Simon Farrow. It is dominated by a large panoramic skyline of a big "anywhere" international city that includes references to Shanghai (World Financial Centre), New York (the waterfront), Johannesburg (the designer's home town), Kuala Lumpur (Petronas Twin Towers), Dubai (Burj Dubai) and Soweto (Orlando Nuclear Towers). This towers over a downtrodden slum that can magically transform from Shen Te's tobacco shop, to Sandalmaker's Lane, to a restaurant's private dining room. Fourth-year student Kat Jeffery's costumes for the Setzuan residents also have a globalized inspiration, merging Western street style with a sense of Orientalism, while the gods appear as hybrids many eastern deities. Third-year student Francis Melling has composed music to accompany song lyrics in the play and is overseeing the music direction. Lighting design is by recent MFA grad Bryan Kenney and the stage manager is Kristen Iversen.

Join us on **Friday, November 9 at 7pm** for a **FREE preshow lecture** with director Conrad Alexandrowicz as he shares his inspiration and ideas around this production. Call **250-721-8000** for details or visit phoenixtheatres.ca. The performance schedule for *Good Person of Setzuan* is as follows:

Public Preview Performances 8pm: November 6 & 7

Evening Performances 8pm: November 8 (Opening Night), 9 (Lecture), 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Matinee Performances 2pm: Saturday, November 24

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

Season Subscription: \$36 for 3 plays

Phoenix Box Office Opens: October 30 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.