



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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University
of Victoria

EPIC FAMILY STORY COMES TO STAGE LIKE AN ILLUSTRATION COMING TO LIFE!

2007/2008 Season

Phoenix Theatre sets the stage for Ratty, Mole, Toad & Badger

2 WIND IN THE WILLOWS

November 8 – 24, 2007

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

**Recommended for children aged 8 and older.*

Adapted for stage by Alan Bennett
from the book by Kenneth Grahame
Directed by Brian Richmond
Production Design by Mary Kerr
Lighting Design by Steven Hawkins
Composition & Music Direction
by John Mills-Cockell
Movement Director/Choreography by
Treena Stubel

Presented by



FIND 2008:

Festival of Innovative & New Drama

3 LIONEL

February 14 – 23, 2008

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

By Pan Bouyoucas
Directed by Ewan McLaren
An MFA Thesis Production

4 THE UNUSUAL CASE OF SEÑOR MORTON

(El Insólito Caso del Señor Morton)

March 13 – 22, 2008

*A seedy detective story satirizing moral
ambiguities in the sexually charged,
film noir style.*

Written & Directed by Martín Zapata
Performed in English

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Paddle down the English River Bank and wander into the Wild Woods with childhood friends Ratty, Mole, Toad and Badger at the Phoenix Theatre's musical production of Kenneth Grahame's classic tale *Wind in the Willows*, on at the University of Victoria from November 8 to 24, 2007.

This much-loved childhood book was adapted for stage in 1991 for the National Theatre in London, England by acclaimed British playwright and author Alan Bennett. Director Brian Richmond, Chair of the Department of Theatre, brings a unique passion to this production, based on his experience at the original National Theatre production. "I was taken by its magical presentation of the story and by Bennett's witty dialogue that appealed to all ages. This play also gives many of our talented students a chance to work with the clever and wonderful words of one of Britain's foremost playwrights," says Richmond.

With boats "floating" down stage, trains surging across it and horse-drawn caravans meandering about it, the Phoenix Theatre's production goes far to capture the imagination of the original book. Faculty member Mary Kerr's inspired production designs draw from illustrations in the storybook genre and seek to bring them to colourful life, with sets of sailing-by clouds, rolling green hills and vibrant, playful costumes.

"I was inspired by the illustrations in the books I read as a child that my grandmother had given me. Many of them were written around the same time as *Wind in the Willows* (1908) and have the most lovely art deco illustrations. I sought to capture their linear, drawing-like nature and vibrant colours on stage," says Kerr.

To complete the experience, Richmond has brought in Composer and Music Director, John Mills-Cockell to pen original music for the story's many verses; Lighting Designer Steven Hawkins; and Movement Director and Choreographer Treena Stubel. The lead roles of Mole will be performed by Rielle Braid, Rat by Peter Carlone, Toad by Jesse Fleming, Badger by Jason Moldowan and Albert the Horse by Sam Mullins.

Playwright Alan Bennett is known for his many stage and television plays including *Forty Years On*, *Habeas Corpus*, *Talking Heads*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *The Madness of King George III* and *The History Boys*, which won multiple awards for Best Play, including the illustrious Laurence Olivier Award. He also played Mole in the original National Theatre production of *Wind in the Willows*.

Please join us for our **FREE Pre-Show Lecture**, Friday, November 9 at 7:00pm with UVic Professor Emeritus and specialist in Children's Literature Judith Terry speaking on *The Unlikely Story of Wind in the Willows*. Terry will look at the undiminished popularity of Kenneth Grahame's book as it approaches its centenary in 2008. She will compare aspects of Grahame and Alan Bennett, and consider both the novel and the script to illuminate this performance. This lecture is free of charge and open to everyone.

The Phoenix Theatre is also offering special sign language interpretation at its Tuesday November 13 performance. Deaf interpreter Nigel Howard will be signing the dialogue and play description during the live performance for the Deaf and hard of hearing, with funding from the UVic Equity and Human Rights Office.

The performance schedule for *Wind in the Willows* at the Phoenix Theatre @ UVic, is as follows:

Public Preview Performances 8pm: November 6 & 7

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

Matinee Performances 2pm: Saturday, November 17 & 24

Sign Language Interpretation Performance 8pm: Tuesday November 13

Single Tickets: \$15-\$20 available from November 1 at Phoenix Box Office or by calling: (250) 721-8000.