



A LIFE BEHIND THE MASK

Alumna's passion for theatre masks at UVic develops into love, marriage and an internationally touring theatre company.

2015/2016 Season

1 SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI: LOON

October 14* – 24, 2015

Produced by WONDERHEADS

Featuring

**Kate Braidwood (BFA '03)
and Andrew Phoenix**

*Performed in full-face mask, this wordless,
whimsical love story will whisk you to the moon!
(Fun for ages 8 to 98!)*

**NOTE: Opening night falls on a Wednesday
evening for this production.*

Presented by



2 The Threepenny Opera

November 5 – 21, 2015

By Bertolt Brecht

Directed by Brian Richmond

*Brecht's musical social satire is set in a dystopic
future, where money corrupts & crime pays... still!*

3 Wild Honey

February 11 – 20, 2016

By Michael Frayn, Adapted from

an original play by Anton Chekhov

Directed by Peter McGuire

*A summer gathering turns a love triangle into a
hilarious game of cat-and-mouse.*

4 Summer and Smoke

March 10 – 19, 2016

Written Tennessee Williams

Directed by Alan Brodie (MFA Candidate)

*One woman's passionate and bittersweet story of
love and longing in a small southern town.*

You might think that wearing a mask is a way to hide from others, but UVic Theatre alumna Kate Braidwood discovered at university that masks are a fun and engaging way to express herself on stage.

With her husband Andrew Phoenix (what a great name!), Kate created WONDERHEADS, the unique internationally touring theatre company whose playful physical theatre shows are performed in full-face masks. Their production **LOON** opens the Phoenix Theatre's 2015/16 season as this year's "Spotlight on Alumni," October 14-24, 2015.

LOON tells the story of Francis, a lonely janitor with a child-like imagination and a wild fascination with the moon. Unfortunately, Francis hits an emotional rock bottom and he feels like there's nowhere to go but up, and up! And UP! You guessed it: Francis takes the audience on a journey to the moon! It's a surprising mix of physical theatre, comedy, and pathos – all wrapped up in a peculiar, but beautiful, love story.

Kate and Andrew create all of their full-faced, oversized "wonderhead" masks from scratch. First they sculpt the head and facial expression out of modeling clay. The head is then covered with liquid rubber to capture expressions into a casting mould, and strips of plaster-soaked cloth are laid around this rubber to construct a hard shell for the exterior of the mould. When it's dry, the rubber mould is filled with strips of papier-mâché to create the actual mask. The final mask is given eye and air holes, painted lovingly with rosy cheeks, or freckles or whatever is needed for the character, and then topped with a hairdo. (See www.phoenixtheatres.ca for a 2-minute time-lapsed video of the 50-hour long process.)

Kate attributes much of her direction in life to her studies in the Acting Specialization. *"My time at UVic played no small part in my journey that led to founding WONDERHEADS. It was at UVic that I first performed with masks. I was lucky to have Peter Balkwill (of Old Trout Puppet Workshop fame) as a movement teacher at the time, and creating vocal masques in Jan Wood's class shed light on the path to devising and creating my own original work."*

After graduating in 2003, Kate trained at Dell'Arte International, a physical theatre school in California, where she met Andrew Phoenix. *"During the process of creating our first show together, we happened to fall in love. We got married, and when it came time to create our next show we thought "love" would be a fitting theme. LOON isn't just about love; it's also about loneliness, loss, and letting go. It's about remembering how a person or experience helped shape who we are, and how we keep them in our hearts as we move on."*

As a Co-Artistic Director of her own theatre company, based out of Portland Oregon, Braidwood is also appreciating other aspects of her education. *"The program at the Phoenix trained us to have a wide range of skills in the theatre, and the importance of being multi-faceted is integral for me today now that I run my own company."*

The Phoenix Theatre opens their season each fall by celebrating the success of UVic Theatre graduates and presenting their work as part of the mainstage season. The "Spotlight on Alumni" program also provides opportunities for class lectures and mentoring of current students. *"When I moved on from the Phoenix, I kept the experience in my heart, and it is an honour to return to share my work with current students."* Kate and Andrew will also be speaking at the **FREE Preshow Lecture on Friday, October 16 at 7pm** about the various acting styles used when working with masks and how these influenced their work.

All **LOON** performances are followed by a talkback session with the artists. Performances run:

Public Preview @8pm: Tuesday October 13

Evenings @8pm: October 14 (Wednesday Opening), 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Matinee @2pm: Saturday, October 24

Preshow Lecture: Friday, October 16 @7pm: Kate and Andrew speaking about the art of acting with masks.

Single Tickets: \$15 Student / \$20 Senior / \$25 Adult / \$25 Weekends @ 8pm (Preview \$7.50 avail. after 5pm)

Season Subscription: \$37.50 for 3 plays & \$50 for 4 plays. Details & order forms at www.phoenixtheatres.ca

Phoenix Box Office Opens: October 6 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.

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