



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 17, 2017



2017-18 Season

The Madwoman of Chaillot

November 9 - 25, 2017

By Jean Giraudoux

Adapted by Maurice Valency

Direction Conrad Alexandrowicz
Set Design Patrick Du Wors
Costume Design Michelle Ning Lo
Lighting Design Matthew Wilkerson
Sound Design Logan Swain
Stage Manager Emily Lindstrom

Giraudoux's poetic fable about a whimsical "Countess" and rag-tag group of artists, vagabonds and dreamers who unite to take back their Paris neighbourhood from corrupt businessmen after oil is discovered underneath Chaillot.

Crimes of the Heart

February 15 - 24, 2018

By Beth Henley

Director Peter McGuire

A Pulitzer Prize-winning dark comedy about three sisters who reunite at their granddaddy's Mississippi home.

The Comedy of Errors

March 15 - 24, 2018

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Jeffrey Renn (MFA Candidate)

The mistaken identities of two pairs of twins leads them into mystery and mayhem during a Day of the Dead parade in Mexico.

WHEN PIPELINES & PROTESTS ARE NO LONGER JUST A METAPHOR

1943 comedy's metaphors for Nazis are now a real threat to BC environment

In this era of pipelines and protests, director Conrad Alexandrowicz believes there is much to be learned from *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, the comedic fable about good and evil written over 70 years ago, which runs at UVic's Phoenix Theatre, from November 9 – 25, 2017.

Written by Jean Giraudoux during WWII when Paris was under siege by German Nazi forces – and over the final year of his life – he took to using metaphors in *The Madwoman of Chaillot* to undermine this violent incursion of his beloved city. Instead of Nazis, the evil force was portrayed as corrupt businessmen trying to profit from oil despite the destruction of everything around them. Fast-track to 2017 – when oil pipelines are being driven through our communities jeopardizing wildlife and our environment – and suddenly, Giraudoux's artistic metaphors are no longer a far-fetched threat.

Alexandrowicz, a professor in the Department of Theatre, remains fascinated by how this play's context has become so literal for today's audiences. *"We live in the era of climate crisis, something Giraudoux may not have been able even to imagine. With the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion set to begin, we are forced to take these figures of evil, bent on profit making regardless of the costs, at their face value; for us their status as metaphor has disappeared. This may also be why the play has enjoyed a wide resurgence of interest lately."*

The Madwoman of Chaillot tells the tale of Countess Aurelia, a whimsical and eccentric holdover from a less cynical time. When the Countess learns that corrupt businessmen have discovered oil deep beneath her neighbourhood of Chaillot, she bands together with a rag-tag group of artists, vagabonds and dreamers to stop them.

"This is a wonderful, sparkling comedy that is incredibly topically pertinent for our students and our audiences. But interestingly, even as a fable, Countess Aurelia presents a highly questionable solution to the problem of human evil!" laughs Alexandrowicz about the character's protest methods that, even by today's standards, would be considered extreme.

In the production, Alexandrowicz has taken a meta-theatrical approach to create a play that, as he says, *"operates in the realm of the fantastic, in the realm of post-modern performance as much as in comedy."* The sets, designed by recently appointed faculty member, Patrick Du Wors, allude to the nostalgic café-lined streets of Paris, even though they are only flat, massive representations of 19th century engravings. Costumes, designed by MFA student Michelle Ning Lo, have modern but Nazi-era references for the businessmen, and vibrant and flamboyant Edwardian-era frills for the "madwomen". Watch for elements of creative anachronism that help to make comparisons to 2017 even more apparent. Lighting design by fourth-year student Matthew Wilkerson captures the streets of Chaillot and helps heighten the moments of comedic absurdity, as does the sound design by third-year student Logan Swain, featuring classic Parisian music that is slightly off-kilter. The Stage Manager is third-year student Emily Lindstrom.

The public is encouraged to join us for our free **Preshow Lecture, Friday, November 10 at 7pm** with the director, Conrad Alexandrowicz. Performances for are as follows:

Public Previews @8pm: Tuesday and Wednesday, November 7 & 8

Evenings @8pm: (Tuesday – Saturday) Nov. 9 (opening), 10 (lecture), 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25

Matinees @2pm: Saturday, November 18* & 25 (*with sign language interpretation)

Preshow Lecture @7pm: Friday, November 10

Single Tickets: Weekdays: \$15 Student, \$20 Senior, \$26 Adult | Weekend Evenings: All seats \$26 (Previews: \$8.00 only after 5pm on day of performance)

Phoenix Box Office Opens: October 31 for sales in person, or by phone at **(250) 721-8000**. Open Monday through Saturday from 12:00 pm to 8:30 pm (Closed Monday November 13).

Season Subscriptions: 3-show packages available for only \$39.

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