



Phoenix Theatre
2019/20 Season

2 **Othello**

November 7– 23, 2019

By William Shakespeare

With its racially infused politics, misogyny and backstabbing friendships, Shakespeare's classic tragedy still reads like today's headlines.

Directed by Brian Richmond
Choreography/Fight Direction:
Jacques Lemay
Set Design: Conor Farrell & Logan Swain
Costume Design: Emily Friesen
Lighting Design: Michael Whitfield
Music & Sound: Olivia Wheeler
Voice & Text Coach: Michael Elliott
Stage Manager: Emma Jo Conlin

3 **Comic Potential**

February 13– 22, 2020

By Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Conrad Alexandrowicz
A wickedly funny sci-fi satire offers a cautionary tale about society's romance with technology.

4 **The Children's Hour**

March 12 – 21, 2020

By Lillian Hellman

Directed by Peter McGuire
Two courageous school headmistresses risk everything to fight for the truth to be heard.

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University
of Victoria

PHOENIX PRODUCES "OTHELLO" FOR THE FIRST TIME 53-YEAR HISTORY

And welcomes Shakespeare's Globe Research Fellow Dr. Tosh for lectures

Conversations around race, misogyny and manipulation of the truth could not be more relevant in the political landscape over the last few years. Director Prof. Brian Richmond felt it was important to bring these conversations to the stage and explore the parallels between then and now through the 400 year-old classic tragedy *Othello*. UVic's Phoenix Theatre is honoured to present – for the first time in its 53-year history – Shakespeare's *Othello*, from November 7 to 23, 2019.

Othello is the tale of two lovers from very different worlds: Othello a mighty general from a foreign land, and Desdemona, a beautiful and compassionate Senators' daughter. Undeterred by prejudices, they marry, however their love is put to the test when Othello's trusted advisor, Iago, stokes the flames of jealousy, and ruthlessly pushes the couple – and the world around them – to a tragic end. The story includes military maneuvering, political rivals, the spreading of malicious and racially-charged lies and backstabbing treachery. Sound familiar?

With recent productions at prestigious institutions around the world, including the Royal Shakespeare Company (in 2015), Shakespeare's Globe (in 2017) and Stratford Festival (on currently), it appears that many theatre companies are also looking to Shakespeare as a way to help society make sense of current events.

"This play has much to tell us about the downfall of societies where there is inequity – whether racial or gender differences – or those who are exploited by false information," says Richmond. *"But it is also about ourselves: how do we react when we feel like the outcast? Where does our trust lie?"*

Director Brian Richmond is working with a talented creative team of professional and experienced upper-level students. The black on black, semi-industrial set, designed by fourth-year students Conor Farrell and Logan Swain, moves and rearranges effortlessly to create great halls, Venetian bridges, and private bedrooms. The costumes graphically play with the themes of black and white while clearly referencing period 17th century gowns and military uniforms. Jacques Lemay returns to the Phoenix this fall to direct the choreography and gruesome sword fight scenes. Lighting designer and instructor Michael Whitfield emphasizes both set and costumes through colour and shadow. Fourth-year student Olivia Wheeler brings original compositions and 17th century music to the stage for the overall sound design. Professor Michael Elliott, who came to teach at UVic from Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company, is assisting on his first production at the Phoenix as Voice and Text Coach. Fourth-year student Emma Jo Conlin is the Stage Manager.

The Department of Theatre is also honoured to welcome Dr. Will Tosh, a guest lecturer and Research Fellow from Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. Dr. Tosh will present a free Preshow Lecture called *Othello at the Globe* on Friday November 8 at 7pm. His lecture will take us back to 1600s London to discuss how Shakespeare's diverse first audiences might have responded to *Othello*. Dr. Tosh led the Indoor Performance Practice Project (2014-16), which examined playing in the candle-lit Sam Wanamaker Playhouse at the Globe. He will also give a free lecture about the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse on Thursday November 7 at 12:45pm at the Phoenix Theatre.

Performances for *Othello* are as follows:

Public Previews @8pm: Tuesday & Wednesday, November 5 & 6 (Previews: \$8.00 after 5pm on day)

Opening Night @8pm: Thursday, November 7

Evenings @8pm: Tuesdays through Saturdays

Matinees @2pm: Saturdays, November 16 and 23

Preshow Lecture @7pm: Friday, November 8 "*Othello at the Globe*" with Dr. Will Tosh from Shakespeare's Globe

Tickets: \$15 to \$28 (depending on day), Student Rush: \$16 (30 minutes at the door)

Phoenix Box Office: open October 29 -November 23, Monday through Saturday from 12:00 to 8:30pm.

In person or charge by phone at **(250) 721-8000**.

Advisory: *Othello* has some coarse language, scenes of violence & domestic abuse. Ages 15 +