

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 2009

# PLAY LIKE GIRLS - 2009/2010

## ~ COUNTDOWN TO 100 ~

Toronto - *Alumnae Theatre Company* proudly announces its 90th season:

featuring *A Delicate Balance* by Edward Albee, *Palace Of The End* by Judith Thompson, *Hay Fever* by Noël Coward, the *New Ideas Festival*, and *The Queens* by Normand Chaurette (translated by Linda Gaboriau).

In this, our 90th season, we are starting a countdown to 100, by presenting each season a play from one of our previous decades. In 2019/2020, we will present Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes*, which was Alumnae's very first production, way back in February 1918! The current season pairs classics with new Canadian works, and features phenomenal roles for women, which is one of Alumnae Theatre's mandates.

"The lineup is theatre at its best," says Programming Committee Chair Alanna Stone. "We've got Albee's wit, Thompson's lyrical yet brutal take on the Iraq war, Coward's comedic genius, and Chaurette's power-hungry 'queens' who prove to be more than a match for the ominous presence of Richard III."

The "Countdown to 100 play" this season is Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* (Sep 25 – Oct 10). Albee won the first of his three Pulitzer Prizes in 1966 for the original production, and the 1996 Broadway revival earned two Tony Awards. It was produced at Alumnae in February 1983. The cautionary tale of a tense weekend when a couple reluctantly plays host to their much-married daughter, the wife's alcoholic sister and a pair of friends who've left their own home in unexplained terror, contains Albee's trademarks of improbable situations mingled with utterly realistic characters. Call it a "metaphysical drawing room drama" with a touch of absurdism.

Two-time Governor General's Award winner Judith Thompson has been dubbed "the Dark Lady of Canadian theatre", and certainly earns the nickname with *Palace Of The End* (Nov 13 – 28), which had its critically acclaimed Canadian premiere in January 2008. The play consists of three monologues, which present very different perspectives on the war in Iraq. Based on real people, the speakers are a young and pregnant U.S. soldier accused of abusing prisoners; a British weapons inspector who exposed his country's justifications for the invasion; and a middle-aged Iraqi mother with a harrowing tale of her family's torture by Saddam's secret police.

In January, we turn things over to Noël Coward to lighten the mood. His 1924 comedy classic *Hay Fever* (Jan 15 - 30) "has no mission but to delight", and it's been doing just that for 85 years. Each member of the eccentric and unconventional Bliss family – without consulting the others - invites a guest to spend the weekend at their country house. Naturally this causes much confusion with the sleeping arrangements! Throw in some outlandish behavior, flirtations, and ridiculous parlour games, and you have a delightful cross between high farce and a comedy of manners.

*The New Ideas Festival* (Mar 10 - 27), now in its 22nd year, showcases never-before-performed short plays and experimental works, providing the writers (from Canada and elsewhere) with the opportunity to hear directly from the audience in the development of their work. Weekly talkback sessions give audience members an inside look at the creation of exciting new theatre.

We round out the season (Apr 16 – May 1) with Quebec playwright Normand Chaurette's award-winning *The Queens*, translated by Linda Gaboriau. Set in snowbound London of 1483, and inspired by Shakespeare's *Richard III*, six noblewomen battle – using lies and innuendo couched in elegant, poetic language – to win the favour of the new monarch.

## Our Directors: 2009 ~ 2010 Season

### **BARBARA LAROSE** - *Wit* • September 26 – October 11, 2009

Barbara Larose studied theatre at Concordia University in her home town of Montreal and has worked as an actor, director, dramaturge, and acting coach for many years. At the Alumnae Theatre, Barbara has previously directed Margaret Edson's *Wit*, Wendy Wasserstein's *The Sisters Rosensweig*, Michel Tremblay's *The Real World?*, Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Memory of Water* by Shelagh Stephenson. Other directing credits include several productions at the New Ideas Festival and the 'Slaw Festival, Rick Jones' *Millennium Madness Sale!* for Thick & Thin Theatre, the box-office hit Franca Miraglia's *Life on a Diet* for By the Word Productions and *Guests Who Harangue: Two Plays by Durang* for Svengali Productions. Previous forays into directing Edward Albee plays include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *The American Dream* for Fireplay Productions at the Toronto Fringe.

### **JASON MAGHANOY** - *Palace of the End* • November 13 – 28, 2009

Jason Maghanoy is a professional playwright represented by Great North Artists. He is a graduate of McGill University, The National Theatre School of Canada's Playwriting Program, and was a member of the 2006 Banff PlayRites Colony. He has received grants for his work from the Ontario and Toronto Arts Councils, and his plays have been directed by some of Canada's leading directors, including Guy Sprung and Sarah Stanley. His most recent play *dust* was selected as an Outstanding New Play and Production by NOW Magazine and was published (along with his play *The Corner*) in the Spring 2009 issue of the Canadian Theatre Review. This past June, Jason was commissioned by the Playwrights Theatre Centre, The News Program, and presented his new play *tear*, as part of PTC's New Play Festival. Selected directing credits include: *The Corner* - 2008 Next Stage Theatre Festival, *dust* – 2008 SummerWorks Theatre Festival, and *paper series*, written by David Yee, as part of the 2009 ReCurrents at the CrossCurrents Festival at the Factory Theatre. Jason is the playwright-in-residence at Cahoots Theatre Projects. For more information on his work please visit his website at [jsquaredtheatre.blogspot.com](http://jsquaredtheatre.blogspot.com).

### **KEVIN JOHN McDONALD** - *Hay Fever* • January 15 – 30, 2010

Kevin is pleased to be making his directorial debut with Alumnae with this production. Previously he has directed *Anne* for the Scarborough Theatre Guild; *Oliver!* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman the Musical* for Scarborough Music Theatre; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Standup Shakespeare* for Shakespeare in the Vineyard; *Agnes of God* for Vagabond Players and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown!* for the Beaverton Town Hall Players. Kevin is also a playwright, currently working on a musical called *Kinky Kabaret*. His collection of monologues, *Mirrors in the Crowd*, premiered at the New Ideas Festival.

### **MAT HOWARD** - *The Queens* • April 16 – May 1, 2010

Mat Howard is a playwright, theatre director and performer, having produced over 30 main-stage and studio productions in Australia, Canada, Thailand, and the USA. In 1998, Mat was named Young Australian Shakespearean Artist of the Year, and studied at the Globe Theatre, London, and RSC. Mat has since taken on many ambitious challenges, re-interpreting both classical and contemporary texts and devising original works. Directing credits include *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (2000), *Hamlet* (2002), *Angels in America* (2004), *Medea* (2004), *Fallen Fruit* (2005), *A Story Told Four Times with Four Different Endings* (2006) and *The Third Tomorrow* (2007), which premiered in the 2008 New Ideas Festival; *Lady in Waiting*, which toured to New York City (2008); and *Talking Heads* for the Alumnae Theatre (2008).

## Events Calendar: 2009 ~ 2010 Season

The media and public are invited to attend a reception following each opening night performance. There will be a Talkback session following the second Sunday matinee performance of each production. Talkback sessions for New Ideas are held following each Saturday matinee.

September 25, 2009	Opening Night: <i>A Delicate Balance</i>
October 10, 2009	Closing Night: <i>A Delicate Balance</i>
November 13, 2009	Opening Night: <i>Palace of the End</i>
November 28, 2009	Closing Night: <i>Palace of the End</i>
January 15, 2010	Opening Night: <i>Hay Fever</i>
January 30, 2010	Closing Night: <i>Hay Fever</i>
March 10 - 13, 2010	22nd annual New Ideas Festival: Week One
March 17 - 20, 2010	22nd annual New Ideas Festival: Week Two
March 24 - 27, 2010	22nd annual New Ideas Festival: Week Three
April 17, 2010	Opening Night: <i>The Queens</i>
May 2, 2010	Closing Night: <i>The Queens</i>

**Showtimes:** Wednesdays – Saturdays at 8:00 pm; Sundays at 2:00 pm

**Tickets:** Wednesday: 2-for-1; Thursday\* - Saturday: \$20; Sunday: PWYC

**New Ideas Showtimes:** Wednesday - Saturday: 8:00 pm  
Saturday Readings: Noon; Saturday matinée: 2:30 pm

**New Ideas Tickets:** \$35 Festival Pass; or \$15/week + PWYC readings

**Location:** Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley Street, Toronto

**Box Office:** 416-364-4170 (box 1) or email [reservations@alumnaetheatre.com](mailto:reservations@alumnaetheatre.com)  
Our box office opens one hour prior to each performance

*\*Thursday ticket price (previously 2-for-1) is now \$20*

Check our website at [www.alumnaetheatre.com](http://www.alumnaetheatre.com) for press releases, production photographs, and a retrospective on how Alumnae Theatre shaped Toronto's theatre scene since 1919.

MEDIA CONTACT: **Tina McCulloch**, *Marketing & Publicity*, at 416-364-4170

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