

"If you ask me, there's something funny going on."

AFTER MAGRITTE THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND

by TOM STOPPARD

Directed by Ellen Green & Barbara Larose

Tony Award-winning playwright **Tom Stoppard's** work is full of linguistic complexity, and his plays often deal with philosophical issues. However, he cautions against trying to find or attach too much purpose to the one-act comedies *After Magritte* and *The Real Inspector Hound*, insisting that they "must be untouched by any suspicion of usefulness."

After Magritte begins in a surreal fashion (like the works of the painter for which it's named) and plays with the ideas of perception and point of view. The story of the piece becomes gradually and hilariously comprehensible, as a dogged detective and his sidekick unravel the supposed crime of a ballroom-dancing couple. Stoppard (born Tomáš Straußler in Czechoslovakia in 1937) mined his early career as a drama critic for *The Real Inspector Hound*, even adapting a character name from his own reviewer pseudonym, William Boot. In the play, two rival theatre critics, Moon and Birdboot, become bizarrely involved in the action of the murder/mystery they have been sent to review (a spoof of **Agatha Christie's** famously long-running *The Mousetrap*).

Barbara Larose and **Ellen Green**, who have worked together as director and assistant director on previous Alumnae Theatre productions such as *Wit* and *A Delicate Balance*, are co-directing both the Stoppard pieces. "We are excited to work together, especially on this weird and wacky duo of plays that somehow make us think while simultaneously laughing ourselves silly."

Stoppard spent his childhood in Singapore and India, then moved to England with his family in 1946, and became a journalist while still in his teens, working for various newspapers. *The Real Inspector Hound* was one of his early plays (1968) – revised from the original title, *The Stand-Ins*. *After Magritte* was first produced in 1970. Stoppard won an Oscar in 1999 for his screenplay *Shakespeare in Love* (co-written with Marc Norman), and was knighted in 1997.

The designs for this duo of one-acts were inspired by the 1926 Magritte painting *L'assassin Menacé* (The Threatened Assassin), with its colour palette of tan, gold, red, gray, black, brown, white, blue. Costume Designer **Charmaine Huculak** handily dealt with such challenges as swamp boots ("like life rafts for feet") and a unisex ballgown. Set Designer **Marysia Bucholc** has created a set that reverses perspective between the two plays, and contains visual references to Magritte paintings. **Paul Hardy's** lighting plays with the various realities of the two pieces, from the juxtaposition of light and dark and the use of Magritte-style images in *After Magritte* to the mirroring of the audience through a projected image and the development of the characters' journey into the surreal in *The Real Inspector Hound*. **Angus Barlow's** sound design develops a vocal imagery to support the madcap mayhem of *After Magritte* and allows the voices of the theatre critics to be subtly disseminated throughout the audience in *The Real Inspector Hound*, while at the same time adding a backdrop of horror and mystery to the goings on at Muldoon Manor.

Alumnae Theatre Company's production of *After Magritte* features **Andrea Brown, Patrick Brown, Rob Candy, Susan Wilson** and **Adrian Yearwood**. *The Real Inspector Hound* features **Rob Candy, Andy Fraser, Richard Jones, Leeman Kessler, Scott Moore, Derek Perks, Brenda Somers, and Laura Vincent**.

The Details - AFTER MAGRITTE/THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND

- Running Time:** approx. 2 hours total; including intermission
- Opening Night:** Friday January 21, 2011
- Performances:** Friday January 21 - Saturday February 5, 2011
- Schedule:** Wednesday - Saturday 8:00pm; Sunday matinée at 2:00pm
There will be a **Talkback** with cast & director after the matinée on January 30
- Tickets:** Wednesday 2-for-1; Thursday, Friday & Saturday \$20; Sunday PWYC
- Location:** Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley Street, Toronto
- Box Office:** 416-364-4170 (box 1) or email reservations@alumnaetheatre.com
Box Office opens one hour prior to each performance
Please note: Box Office does not accept credit or debit cards

Production photos for *After Magritte/The Real Inspector Hound* will be available for download on the **Media** page at www.alumnaetheatre.com by January 13.

Read cast & creative team bios on the **After Magritte/The Real Inspector Hound** page.

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Read the blog: alumnaetheatre.wordpress.com

For more information or to set up an interview please contact:
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thought-provoking, challenging and rarely-performed plays since 1919.*

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