

The Shaw Guild

President's Column

On June 5, an unfortunate article on The Shaw Festival was published in The Toronto Star. The article, written by theatre critic Richard Ouzounian, sets forth a simplistic, negative and unfair analysis of the Shaw Festival generally, and of Jackie Maxwell in particular.

Mr. Ouzounian bases his judgments on inaccurate assumptions about theatre attendance this year. In fact, despite challenging economic pressures, attendance is substantially up this year – across the board and specifically in the Festival Theatre.

- Ticket sales to date for 2008 are 6% ahead of 2007; 9% up in revenue.
- Attendance at performances in 2008 April and May is up 15% over 2007; 9% over 2006 and 2% over 2005 - in fact it is the best in five years.
- 2007 May - October ticket sales were the highest ever for that period of the season.
- 40% of the audience continues to come from the US.

Fundraising from the private sector has increased 50% in the past five years.

Numbers can tell a lot of different stories and need to be looked at in context of a number of factors, including the different world we are living in. For instance, If we compare tickets sales for The Shaw (as Mr. Ouzounian does) between 2002 and 2007, the numbers are down by 16% overall (with fluctuations during that period). Similarly compared, Stratford shows the same tendency and overall result (again with fluctuations). In fact they show being down by 17% for the same period.

He gives a negative spin to everything, including the fact that actors and artists do move in and out of the Company to pursue other opportunities. As is often the case, we fully expect that some actors, who are not with us this season, will return for the next. We take pride in their successes elsewhere and their continuing connection to The Shaw. The mobility of our fine actors is not a one-way process and is not a new phenomenon. Talented actors seek a range of opportunities and enrich the company when they return.

- Thom Marriott, joined us from Stratford in 2007.
- Claire Jullien, with Stratford for ten years, is at Shaw this year.
- Thom Allison, new this year at Shaw from Stratford.
- Ben Campbell, came to Shaw from Stratford in 2003 and has been here since.
- Glynis Ranney – was at Stratford, came to Shaw in about 1999, and has been here since with the exception of 2001 and 2006.
- Peter Hutt – was at Stratford in the 1970s; at Shaw from the 1980s until 1998; returned to Stratford for four seasons and has been back at Shaw since 2003

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In particular, Mr. Ouzounian targets Jackie and criticizes her programming choices. He suggests that an artistic director is not a success unless the company is sustained by the box office alone. Astonishingly, he also asserts that SARS was not the major reason for declining audiences in 2003 and 2004. No one is immune to the vicissitudes of theatre. In fact, over the 23 years of his tenure, even Christopher Newton experienced 7 years of deficits ('81, '88, '89, '91, '93, '94 and 2002).

2003 saw Mirvish close *Mama Mia* in Toronto due to slow ticket sales. World Stage Festival at Harbour-front ticket sales were 35% lower than expected, organizers joking about a "biblical plague".

The article ignores the expansion of the Festival's program and the accomplishments of the Company under Jackie's artistic leadership. Jackie Maxwell is widely recognized for expanding the Festival's artistic vision, developing new works, revitalizing older ones, presenting both successfully, and expanding the readings and the touring productions.

Trust in the look of enjoyment and appreciation on the faces of our audiences. They buy their tickets and come to the theatre to be swept away in the actors' wonderful performances, and by the sets, the costumes, the lighting, and the music. The Shaw Festival Company delivers, performance after performance.

A few years ago critic John Simon, writing in *New York Magazine*, characterized the Shaw Festival as "the best repertory theatre on the entire continent". The Festival continues to earn that reputation, and "things in Niagara" are looking just fine.

Suzanne Hebert

President, The Shaw Guild

We Need your help for the Fair and Fete

Monday, August 4th.

Guild members traditionally run the Tea Table and Treasure Table, Bingo, info booth and ticket sales.

Once again, we require **your support** to make it another successful and fun event for the whole family. We are in need of volunteers to help us in various capacities for one and a half hour shifts (12:00-1:30 PM, 1:30-3:00 PM or 3:00-4:30 PM) or to provide some baked goods - squares or cookies (no cakes). If you have not already signed up, please call Suzanne Lefebvre at 905-468-8985 or Josie O'Brien at 905-357-3577 to let us know.

Drop-off for Treasure Table

We would appreciate any hidden treasures you would like to donate for our Treasure Table. No clothing, large items or soiled goods, please. Kindly drop off at these locations on the listed dates only.

443 Nassau St, Unit 13- leave on front porch (no need to call first)

Mon. July 14th- Wed. July 29th· Friday, August 1st

393 Mississauga St. (garage entrance off William St.)

Must call Peggy Service first at 905-468-5155

Wed. July 30th 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM only, Thurs. July 31st- 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM only

Sat. Aug 2nd 9:30- 12:00 PM only

SHAW GUILD NOMINATION PROCESS

In accordance with Article XIII of the Shaw Guild by-laws, a Nominating Committee was presented by Faye Goodwin, Past President & Chair of the Nominating Committee and approved by the Guild Executive, at their June 16, 2008 meeting.

Members of the Nominating Committee are: Faye Goodwin, Chair, Suzanne Hebert, President (ex-officio), Moyra McEachern, William Charnetski, Maureen Dalglish.

The Nominating Committee is tasked with presenting a 'Slate of Nominees' for the approval of the Shaw Guild Executive Committee, at their September 2008 meeting.

Our by-laws do not provide for nominations 'from the floor' at our Annual Meeting. However, in accordance with Article XIII, item 4, a member of The Shaw Guild may "*recommend a Nominee to the Nominating Committee not later than September 1, provided that the Nominee meets the criteria for the position, has consented in writing and the nomination has been seconded by another Member.*"

Nominations or questions regarding the nomination process should be directed to Faye Goodwin, Chair (905-468-8981 or bob.faye@sympatico.ca).

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING THE EXECUTIVE OR CHAIRING AN EVENT?

If so there are two ways you can indicate your interest

1. Be nominated in accordance with our by-laws prior to September 1, or
2. contact a member of the Nominating Committee to chat about your area(s) of interest and the positions currently available on the Executive or other committees. Committee phone numbers are as follows: Suzanne Hebert: 468-3590; Maureen Dalglish: 468-4329; Moyra McEachern: 468-1148 ; Bill Charnetski: 468-4735 and Faye Goodwin 468-8981

Hosting

Hosting captains are encountering an increasing number of members who are requesting to tear tickets at a specific show or who are refusing shows because they have seen that particular play. Members should bear in mind that The Guild's objective is to promote the arts and to assist The Shaw Festival in that endeavour. Captains cannot accommodate specific requests and member who refuse to host a show for the above reasons will be bypassed until the next calling cycle.

Mark Your Calendar

THE GUILD DRESS REHEARSAL

This Shaw Guild dress rehearsal is *Mrs. Warren's Profession* at the **Festival Theatre on July 4, 2008 at 1 PM**. Tickets will be distributed beginning at Noon on a first come first serve basis. The bar will be open to buy alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks while members wait.

Shaw Fair and Fete

The Shaw Fair and Fete takes place on **August 4, beginning at noon on the grounds of the Festival Theatre.**

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Enrichment Event on Friday August 8, 7 pm, Festival Rehearsal Hall

(Please enter through Stage door)

An introduction to the Alexander method with Victoria Heart, Alexander Coach at the Shaw

Do you suffer from repetitive strain injury or carpal tunnel syndrome? Do you have a backache or stiff neck and shoulders? Do you become uncomfortable when sitting at your computer for long periods of time?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, the Alexander Technique could be of great benefit to you. It has been recognized for one hundred years as a unique and remarkably effective technique of mind-body reeducation. It can be applied to sitting, standing, walking, lifting and speaking - to whatever you do during your day. We are often unaware of habits that cause us stress and interfere with our ability to respond effectively to the stimuli in our daily lives. How can we change our habits so that we can respond more effectively and achieve better functioning?

F. Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) was an Australian actor and teacher. He originally developed the Alexander Technique as a method of vocal training for singers and actors in the 1890s. While he was developing his method of voice training, he realized that the basis for all successful vocal education was an efficiently and naturally functioning respiratory mechanism. Alexander had also made the discovery that breathing and vocalization are part and parcel of how the body functions as a whole. Habitual breathing and vocal patterns are parts of habitual patterns of general coordination. In fact, many problems we see as involving just one particular part of the body, e.g. lower back pain and "RSI," are often symptoms of larger habitual patterns of bad coordination.

Just as people had found Alexander's "vocal" technique helped them with their breathing problems, so a number of his students found his method of respiratory re-education helped them with other physical difficulties. Basically, Alexander had evolved a method for learning how to consciously change maladaptive habits of coordination.

Cricket Match

Wow, he bowled another maiden over!

This cricketing term refers to the upcoming Annual Shaw versus Stratford Cricket Match to be held **on Monday, August 25th, on the Commons**. Please join us when we gather at **Noon** for a glass of Pimms No.1, to be followed by a delicious box luncheon with wine. We will cheer on our team and then join both teams for tea at The Festival Theatre. Please remember to bring either rugs or deck chairs (seating not provided!) Ticket price \$27 all inclusive. For further information and tickets call Moyra MacEachren 905.468.1148.



Andrew Bunker

Save The Date

September 10 Props Warehouse Visit in Virgil

October 2 Curtain Call

October 11 Guild Members Day

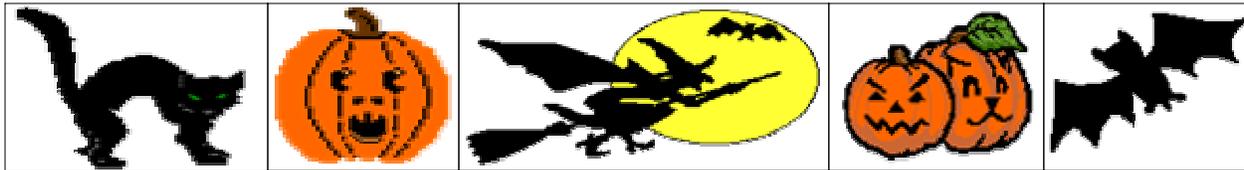
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Annual Halloween Gala –October 31

The Guild is hosting its second Annual Halloween Gala. If you were there last year, or heard about it, you'll know how much fun we had, and how great the reception, dinner, costumes and masks were. Some really special entertainment is being lined up for the evening.

The Gala Auction this year will feature Fine Art & Rare Wines as well as a few other special treats. Details will follow shortly but if you want tickets all inclusive at \$100.00 per person, or to book a table of eight for you and your scary friends, call Peter Gill at 468-5190 or gillhome@cogeco.ca

We are also looking for tax deductible auction items. If you have something nice on your walls, or an object d'art of some kind or something tasty from your wine cellar, please call Peter at the number above to arrange valuation & pick up. Donors also get a substantial discount on the dinner should they wish to attend.



This and That

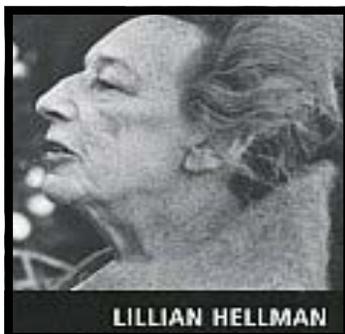
The Garden Tour

The 2008 Garden Tour involved about 60 Guild member with about 400 people attending. The Tour of seven great secret gardens raised just over \$10,000 which will go into our Endowment Fund. The fund receives matching grants so in effect it will likely raise close to \$20,000 for The Shaw Festival.



Lillian Hellman was no stranger to controversy. A chapter in the second volume of her memoirs *Pentimento* was made into the film *Julia* starring Jane Fonda playing Hellman (Julia) and Vanessa Redgrave (as the anti-fascist activist). In the story Hellman portrays herself as heroically carrying money into Nazi Germany for her socialist activist friend. According to a number of her biographers this story is a complete fabrication. In fact author Mary McCarthy had said publically on the Dick Cavett television show referring to Hellman's two autobiographies "I think every word she writes is false, including "and" and "the." Hellman filed a 2.5 million dollar lawsuit in February 1980 against McCarthy and the Educational Broadcasting Company.

McCarthy claimed Hellman had appropriated the life of Muriel Gardiner, the real Julia, a story she had learned from a mutual friend of both Hellman and Gardiner. Hellman died before the case went to trial however this very public controversy lingered and it is largely believed that McCarthy was correct in her allegations as Gardiner later wrote her own story *Code Name Mary*.



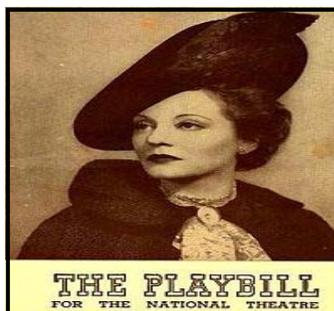
Another biographer adds "her plays are often brilliant-deserving of their place in the canon of the American theatre- but Hellman's autobiographical writings are scandalous; she quite explicitly lied about her life." He goes on to say that "*Julia* arose out of Hellman's anti-fascist play *Watch On The Rhine* not out of the actuality of Hellman's life. *Julia*, is the projection of a woman who was a legend in her own mind- a Dickensian tale of wish fulfillment."

Executive Committee

President	Suzanne Hebert	905-468-3590	sogestec@sympatico.ca
Past-President	Faye Goodwin	905-468-8981	Bob.faye@sympatico.ca
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Fundraising	Peter Gill	905-468-5190	gillhome@cogeco.ca
Orientation	Jack Harmer	905-468-0990	harmer@niagara.com

Lillian Hellman and The Little Foxes

The Little Foxes premiered on Broadway at the National Theatre on February 15, 1939. Tallulah Bankhead played Regina Giddens. She and Hellman were at odds with each other during the run of the play as it was publically revealed that Lillian Hellman was an alleged member of the Communist Party and a champion of Russia. In fact, much later on in her career Hellman was called before HUAC and would not reveal any information to them. However when the play closed Bankhead and Hellman did not speak to each other for over thirty years.



Three major actresses have played Regina Giddens on the stage since Tallulah Bankhead: Anne Bancroft, Elizabeth Taylor and Stockard Channing.

Bette Davis played Regina Giddens in the 1941 film version of *The Little Foxes*.

