

STEP INSIDE...

PRESENTED BY THE CHEMAINUS THEATRE FESTIVAL

AN AUDIENCE ENRICHMENT GUIDE

February- April 2006



Enchanted April

By Mathew Barber

From the novel by Elizabeth von Arnim

Directed by Jeremy Tow

February 16 to April 1, 2006

"A magical triumph!"

The Los Angeles Times

What could be better than a month by the sea at a luxurious Italian villa? That's what the characters in *Enchanted April* find when they escape the chill of a London winter for the warmth of the Mediterranean sunshine. There, under a shower of wisteria blossoms, they rediscover the joy of romance and find the chance to bloom, again.

"A comical journey of discovery... from inhibition to unrestrained joy. Beautiful and theatrically rewarding."

Daily Variety

Show Sponsors:



Artistic Director: **Jeremy Tow**
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Box Office: 1-800-585-7738

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For more information contact: Jessie van Rijn, Arts Coordinator or Mark DuMez, Artistic Associate, 250-246-9800

About Step Inside

STEP INSIDE is designed to begin discussions, supply historic context, and encourage interested audience members and students to get the most out of their theatre experience.

The **Chemainus Theatre Festival** supports the arts and education community through our enrichment guides, the Kidzplay Series, student matinees, talkbacks, special events, community outreach and the Golden Neighbour Program.

About Enchanted April

Enrichment Guide Content:

2. Synopsis
3. A New Direction
4. Elizabeth von Arnim
5. Production History
6. 1920's
7. Over There
8. Garden Symbols
9. Ciao!

Synopsis of Enchanted April:

Lotty Wilton and Rose Arnott, two frustrated London housewives, decide to rent a villa in Italy for a holiday away from their bleak marriages. They recruit Lady Caroline Bramble and Mrs. Graves, two very different English women, to share the cost and the experience. Among the wisteria blossoms and Mediterranean sunshine, each unlikely flower in this enchanted garden blooms again—rediscovering themselves in ways that they—and we—could never have expected. Set against the tumultuous background of WWI, Mathew Barber's adaptation of Elizabeth von Arnim's best-selling novel celebrates the foibles of broken relationships even as it mends them. The play is a delightful romance with bubbling dialogue and lessons about hope and reconciliation for anyone who is ever loved or lost.

Critical Reviews of Enchanted April:

2003 John Gassner Award winner—Outstanding New American Play

2003 Tony Award Nominee—Best Play

Outer Critics Circle Nomination – Best Play

Drama League Nomination – Best Play

"ENCHANTED APRIL is that rarity: a play where every single element falls perfectly into place—a show that leaves you positively glowing." —nytheatre.com

"The kind of play that reminds you of why you love theatre." —Hartford News

Chemainus Theatre Festival's
2006 Kidzplay Series
presents
Kaleidoscope Theatre's

The Bremontown Musicians

March 15, 16, 17, 18 @ 11 am



Director: Jeremy Tow



Jeremy is an actor, director and a playwright, and is the Artistic Director of the Chemainus Theatre Festival (CTF). Favorite shows as a director at CTF include **A Streetcar Named Desire**, **Driving Miss Daisy**, **An Inspector Calls**, **The Wizard of Oz**, and **The Heiress**. Recently, Jeremy directed **Richard III** for Savage God in Vancouver, and portrayed *Duke Orsino* in Kaleidoscope Theatre's production of **Twelfth Night**. Jeremy trained at the Actors' Space in New York City, and he lives in Chemainus with his lovely wife, Anita Wittenberg, and their children, Emma and Sebastian.

A New Direction

Welcome to a new era at the Chemainus Theatre Festival!

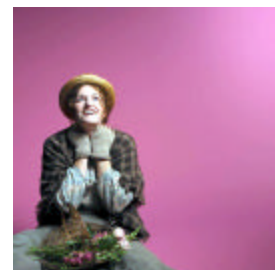
Artistic Director, Jeremy Tow, recently lead the company in the process of refocusing the artistic vision of the Chemainus Theatre Festival. This process took several months, many discussions, and finally, board approval...but we are pleased to say that the end result was embraced with great enthusiasm. In the future, CTF will produce seasons of plays that are chosen from the classics (including comedies, farces, dramas, musicals, mysteries, melodramas and operettas), from modern award winning scripts (including Canadian and International award winners), and adaptations from classic literature.

The Festival has a particular, though not exclusive interest in the themes of veracity, hope, love, forgiveness and reconciliation. A great deal could be written to explain these words, but in brief we will attempt to include plays within our seasons that engage our audience in stories that champion truth telling and stories that valiantly expose the truth that lies beneath the surface; we will explore stories that celebrate hope, love, forgiveness and reconciliation...both when it is offered and refused, and when it is offered and accepted.

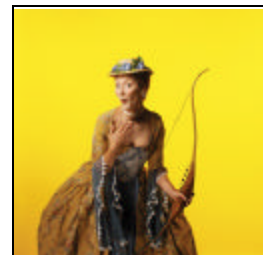
Plays of the calibre described above reflect a company that is aware of the social, cultural and spiritual responsibility art has in society. Classics, both modern and historical, defy mediocrity and place both audience and artists in the milieu of inspiration. This means that through humour, drama, literature, music, movement and image a difference may be made in people's lives. As a theatre company we are entertainers...yes, but we are also a conscious impulse of vitality and enlightenment in the world.

Repertory Summer:

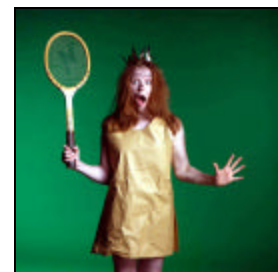
Coming July 5, 2006!



My Fair Lady



She Stoops To Conquer



Kidzplay Series: The Paper Bag Princess

Elizabeth von Arnim: Bibliography and History

Selected Bibliography:

Elizabeth and her German Garden: Macmillan 1898, Virago 1985

The Solitary Summer: Macmillan 1899, Virago 1993

The Benefactress: Macmillan, 1901

Princess Priscilla's Fortnight: Smith & Elder 1905

Fraulein Schmidt and Mr. Anstruther: Smith & Elder 1907, Virago 1983

The Caravaners: Smith & Elder 1909, Virago 1989

The Pastor's Wife: Smith & Elder 1914, Virago 1987

Christopher and Columbus: Macmillan 1919

In the Mountains: Macmillan 1920

Vera: Macmillan 1921, Virago 1983

The Enchanted April: Macmillan 1922, Virago 1983

Love: Macmillan 1925, Virago 1988

Introduction To Sally: Macmillan 1926

Father: Macmillan 1931

Jasmine Farm: Heinemann 1934

All the Dogs of My Life: Heinemann 1936, Virago 1995 (her autobiography)

Mr. Skeffington: Heinemann, 1940, Virago 1993

Biography:

Elizabeth von Arnim put many elements of her own life into her novels. Born Mary Annette Beauchamp, her books were published anonymously as her husband, a German Count, did not think writing a suitable occupation for his wife. E. M. Forster and Hugh Walpole were tutors to her children and her friends included Bernard Shaw, Max Beerbohm, and Katherine Mansfield, her cousin. Her second husband was Francis Earl Russell, Bertrand Russell's brother. It was not a happy marriage. She was a bestselling author that enjoyed critical as well as popular success.

Summation from ***Elizabeth, the Author and Her German Garden*** by Karen Usborne

In response to criticism:

"I know myself far better than you can know me, and I think I am quite as nice as are most women."

Elizabeth von Arnim

She also wrote under the pseudonyms "Elizabeth of the German Garden" and "Elizabeth"



"Have you noticed how difficult it is to be improper without men?"

Lotty Wilkins, Enchanted April



Production History: A Book, A Movie, A Play

A Book:

Terence de Vere White, in the after word to *Enchanted April*, describes “Elizabeth’s” book:

“After the cathartic *Vera* she wanted to write a happy book. She knew that she had found the perfect setting for it when she arrived at Portofino with her friend Emily Strutt. Several hotels were tried and found wanting, but Elizabeth’s sharp eye had fallen on the mediaeval *catello*, and when she heard it was to let for April she rented it at once. Another woman friend was added to the April party. Now it only remained to sit down and write the novel. The scenery was clamouring to be described; there was lacking only the plot...she grudged every minute spent indoors. It was all ‘so wildly, ridiculously, divinely beautiful...’

The Enchanted April was on the bookstalls the last day of October 1922. It was a Book-of-the-Month choice in America and is probably the widest read of Elizabeth’s novels.”

A Movie:

By 1992, **Miramax Studios**, a small independent film company formed in 1979 by Harvey and Bob Weinstein, had made a name for itself as a mainstream film company. They had already successfully made *Working Girls*, *My Left Foot*, and *The Grifters*. They decided, with the help of BBC, to produce *Enchanted April*, a film that ran to rave reviews.

With a good sense for story, Miramax went on to produce other popular title like *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Sling Blade* (1996) and the Best Original Screenplay-winning *Good Will Hunting* (1997), the Best Picture-nominated Italian film *Life is Beautiful* (1997), *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999), and *The Cider House Rules* (1999).

“It’s a jewel of a movie that brims with the pleasures of the unexpected.” – Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*



Portofino.

Along Italy's northern coast lies enchanting Portofino, picturesquely situated in a narrow cove at the south eastern tip of the promontory of the same name. The tiny port owes its popularity to its beautiful setting, agreeable climate and lush and luxuriant vegetation. This "Pearl of the Mediterranean" has long been known as an exclusive gathering place for the wealthy, artists and actors. In 1935 the city government of nearby Genoa declared Portofino a national monument so architecture has changed very little in the past 60 years as alterations must receive approval.

A Play:

Enchanted April was the first play Mathew Barber, the Midwestern journalist, had ever written. In 2000, it premiered at *Hartford Stage* and three years later went on to Broadway starring Jayne Atkinson and Molly Ringwald. Barber received his first Tony Award nomination for his adaptation. The play garnered several other awards throughout its run on Broadway and has gone on to be produced throughout England and North America. While changing some of the character’s names from the original von Arnim book, the play stays faithful to many of the character traits and attributes. While some of the dialogue has been drawn directly from the book’s text, other sections have received a more theatrical rendering.

"*Enchanted April* is as good as they come: a lush, thoroughly refreshing theatrical holiday. Escape has seldom seemed so sweet. A magical triumph."
—*LA Times*

The 1920's

1920:

Treaty of Versailles in effect

Royal North-West Mounted Police become Royal Canadian Mounted Police

1% Federal sales tax imposed

Canada joins League of Nations when formed

Women stand for Parliament Dominion Elections Act

U.S. Post Office sets up metered postage

Women and WWI:

From 1914-1918, during the course of the Great War, an estimated two million women replaced men in employment. Mrs. Millicent Fawcett, a leading feminist of the time said, "The war revolutionized the industrial position of women – it found them serfs and left them free."



Aftershock:

WWI left many soldiers with great trauma. Snipers lost their sight while others developed hysterical facial tics and nightmares. The Great War was gruesome and vicious, making the transition back to civilized society a difficult one. Many were taught to minimize or repress their war experience in civilian life.

War Widows:

The Great War brought the British Empire, including Canada, almost 3 million casualties. Add the rest of the countries involved and the world was depleted of almost 40 million people. Many widows in England, who had worked during the war, went back to empty houses and the heavy toll of a country rebuilding.



A Very Long Engagement



Young Soldier

WWI:

First use of chlorine and mustard gas, flame throwers and tanks in battle

Brought use of "dogfight", "ace", "bomber" and "air raid" to battle terminology.

Both radios and telephones were the main method of communication -replacing dogs and pigeons.

First use of "trillion" in estimating war costs

1921:

Mary Ellen Smith appointed to the provincial Cabinet in BC, the first woman Cabinet minister in the British Empire

First female MP Agnes Macphail elected

Lord Byng announced Governor General

Cleveland Playhouse becomes first U.S. resident professional theatre

Photographs transmitted by wire across the Atlantic

At the movies: Chaplin's *The Kid*

Over There: London to Italy

1922:

The Enchanted April was first published in 1922. It was immensely popular and received 21 reprints in the same year

Leonard Thompson became the first person to be successfully treated with insulin at Toronto General Hospital

The means of transmitting photographs by wireless, invented by Canadian scientist (and spy codenamed *Intrepid*) Sir William Stephenson, was first used

Chanak Affair – Britain sent a telegram calling upon the Dominions to contribute soldiers in a demonstration of the Empire's solidarity against the Turks. PM King was noncommittal

Radio licenses floodgates open, but only three frequencies in the U.S.

Joyce's *Ulysses* develops stream-of-consciousness writing

Orphan Annie enters the comics

BBC goes on the air

Location, Location, Location:

Lotty and Rose travel from their Protestant churches and homes in Hampstead, a suburb to the north of London, to the picturesque castle on the Italian Riviera.

“There is something majestic in the bad taste of Italy.” *E M Forster*



Though some of von Arnim's descriptions combine inland locations with the Riviera, her location of choice is most likely San Salvatore on the eastern coast of Italy, just a stone's throw from La Spezia. As in the novels of E.M. Forster, Elizabeth von Arnim examines Italy's ability to invigorate and renew English presumptions. By thrusting the characters into a new setting, she gives them new challenges and risks they would not have met at home.

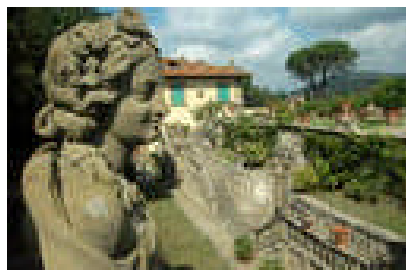


“A man who has not been in Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see.” *Samuel Johnson*

Garden Symbols

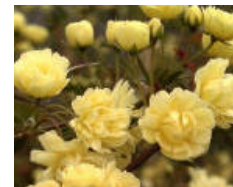
In *Enchanted April* a lush Italian garden serves as a symbol for the blossoming of each character's relationship. Elizabeth von Arnim writes:

That last week the syringe came out at San Salvatore, and all the acacias flowered. No one had noticed how many acacias there were till one day the garden was full of a new scent, and there were the delicate trees, the lovely successors to the wisteria, hung all over among their trembling leaves with blossom. . . Indeed the whole garden grew more and more scented. There were lilies, as vigorous as ever, and the white stocks and white pink and white banksias roses, and the syringe and the jessamine, and at last the crowing fragrance of the acacias.



Examples from a flower dictionary:

Lavender: Devotion
Field Lilly: Humility
Day Lilly: Coquetry



The Acacia Tree: Legends from ancient Egypt link the Acacia tree to birth and the afterlife. Its limbs were said to have magical healing effects. The tree produces a sweet smell and its gum has been used for food, medicine, incense, paints and glues. Posts made of the wood of the tree are known to last from 80 to 100 years. Mathew Barber replaces the Judas tree of the book with an Acacia tree, an apt symbol of healing and rebirth in the garden of San Salvatore.



"Flowers seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity."
John Ruskin

"Someone said that God gave us memories so that we might have roses in December."
J M Barrie

Ciao! Learn a Little Italian for the Road

Numbers:

- ? 0 **zero**
- ? 1 **uno**
- ? 2 **due**
- ? 3 **tre**
- ? 4 **quattro**
- ? 5 **cinque**
- ? 6 **sei**
- ? 7 **sette**
- ? 8 **otto**
- ? 9 **nove**
- ? 10 **dieci**

Common Words:

- ? **ciao** - hello, goodbye (familiar)
- ? **salve** - hello
- ? **addio** - goodbye
- ? **bene** - well
- ? **egli** - he (literary)
- ? **lui** - he (common speech), him
- ? **ella** - she (literary)
- ? **lei** - she (common speech), her
- ? **esso** - it (masculine)
- ? **essa** - it (feminine)
- ? **essi** - they (persons or things)
- ? **loro** - them (persons or things), they (common speech, persons)
- ? **grazie** - thank you
- ? **spiacente** - I'm sorry
- ? **noi** - us, we (plural)
- ? **signore** - sir, mister, mr.
- ? **signora** - madame, mrs.
- ? **signorina** - miss
- ? **tu** - you (informal)
- ? **voi** - you (plural, formal and informal)
- ? **io** - I

Excerpts form Love – In Other Words:

Love transforms. Why is it that the quotidian we are seeking, when we can't find it in the Bible or in Shakespeare, most often turns up in *Don Quixote*? Because Cervantes, from sheer love of life, made the nuances of life immortal. Why, when we are familiar with every line, must we stop and listen when "The Messiah" is playing? Because every note was born of a man's love for God, and we hear it. Try this experiment: catch (if you can) someone who loathes baroque music; play for him any part of *Semele*, then sit back and watch his polite attention turn to compulsive attention--see your captive become Handel's captive. Avarice never wrote a good novel; hate did not paint "The Birth of Venus"; nor did envy reveal to us that the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the two sides. Every creation of man's mind that has withstood the buffeting of time was born of love--love of something or someone.

Harper Lee

Love--In Other Words was published in *Vogue* April 15 1961, pp64-65.

Your Turn:

A little from the play, first Mellersh's broken attempts:

MELLERSH: *Bu-on gi-or-no. Par...parla...Ing...Ing* ("Do you speak English?")

WILDING: *Inglese?* Not only do I speak English, I am English.

Now Costanza's emphatic exclamation:

COSTANZA: *Oh tu! Diavolino! Tu sei figlio del tuo papa! Sei il figlio di papa!* ("Oh, you! Little devil! You are your father's boy! Your father's boy!")