

# UPSTAGE

A GREAT PLACE TO READ ABOUT GREAT THEATRE

Belfry  
Theatre

VOLUME 3 / ISSUE 1



**DIVORCED,  
BEHEADED,  
DIED,  
DIVORCED,  
BEHEADED,  
SURVIVED.**

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*Meet Katherine Parr.*

*The Survivor.*

*The Queenmaker.*

# Hello!

Welcome to the Belfry and our production of Kate Hennig's acclaimed new play, *The Last Wife*.

The mere mention of Henry VIII immediately evokes a reaction, and the success of series like *The Tudors* and *Wolf Hall* attests to our continuing fascination with this iconoclast.

*The Last Wife*, a contemporary re-imagining of the compelling relationship between Henry VIII and his last wife, Katherine Parr, is a witty and powerful examination of sexual politics and women's rights. It's a dangerous game of chess, with Henry's offspring, Mary, Elizabeth, and Edward as pawns.

Kate Hennig has turned the spotlight in a new direction, creating a theatrical event that will have you talking for days. [Join us.](#)



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 AT 11 AM**

Belfry Theatre, Studio A  
1291 Gladstone Avenue

Free Event. Join us in Studio A for a live talk show hosted by CBC Radio's Gregor Craigie, featuring Esther Jun (director), Celine Stubel (actor), Dr. Erin Kelly, who will speak about Katherine Parr and Dr. Georgia Sitara, who will explore the sexual power dynamics in *The Last Wife*.

If you can't make it to B4Play in person, don't worry: you can listen to these always entertaining interviews on our website or listen to our podcasts at [soundcloud.com/belfrytheatre](https://soundcloud.com/belfrytheatre).

Tickets 250-385-6815



**UPSTAGE** is produced four times per year and can be found at branches of the Greater Victoria Public Library, the Belfry and online at [issuu.com/belfrytheatre](http://issuu.com/belfrytheatre). If you would like a digital copy please drop us a line at [hello@belfry.bc.ca](mailto:hello@belfry.bc.ca).

**BELFRY THEATRE**  
**1291 GLADSTONE AVENUE**  
**VICTORIA, BC**  
**V8T 1G5**  
  
**WWW.BELFRY.BC.CA**

Upstage is supported by



## Playwright's Notes

*The Last Wife* is an imagining of history. Oh, yes, it's based on actual people and events, and while parts of it are deliciously accurate, some bits may offend the historically precise among you, while still others are completely and utterly fabricated. My priority in choosing must always favour the dramatic.

What I am deeply interested in is the humanity of these iconic historical characters. I want to imagine what makes them do what they do, just as I want to imagine what makes Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi and Aung San Suu Kyi do what they do. They are humans after all. They have mothers, fathers, siblings, and children. One expects that they play tennis, watch television, read books; they laugh, worry, drink too much coffee from time to time. It fascinates me to create these personal possibilities and then imagine how they might lead to some of the major decisions that history records. It helps us to see women as a moving political force of history away from the battlefields and the halls of office. It helps us to see the Tudor wave of feminism.

**KATE HENNIG**

## Join Us



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# MORE than the LAST WIFE

BY ERIN E. KELLY

**KATERYN PARR WAS A WOMAN OF HER TIME.**

Born in 1512, she was likely named after the queen of England, Henry VIII's first wife Catherine of Aragon. She received a humanist education – with a heavy emphasis on Latin – in keeping with an early sixteenth-century trend for educating girls to make them excellent companions to their husbands as well as effective first teachers for their children. She also mastered the skills demanded of a woman of her social status, especially the duty to tend to the health of all members of a large household.

Part of a complex, aristocratic family network, Kateryn married twice before becoming queen of England. She wed Edward Burgh in 1529, when she was seventeen, and was a widow by 1533. A year later, she became Lady Latimer by marrying John Neville. He was twice her age, and she was a dedicated stepmother to his two children. In 1543, months after Neville's death, Henry VIII became her third husband, but not her last. She married Thomas Seymour, likely for love, shortly after the king passed away in 1547. Remaining a widow would have given Kateryn some independence but also meant she would live without the protection of a husband or father, an unusual choice for a sixteenth-century woman – albeit one made by Kateryn's mother Maud.

Not surprising for an individual living around the time when Martin Luther put forth his Ninety-five Theses in 1517, Kateryn's life was affected by a tangle of religious controversies. Her first husband's family were almost certainly reform-minded Protestants while her second was devoted to the traditional practices of the Catholic faith. Kateryn found her voice as a writer during her

## Story Highlights

- *The Last Wife* premiered at the Stratford Festival last year. This is the second production of the play.

- Our Henry VIII is played by Oliver Becker. Oliver played painter Mark Rothko in our production of *Red* four years ago.

- Ellis James Frank is playing the young Prince Edward. At 11, Ellis is the youngest member of the Vancouver Musicians' Union and has played with Jesse Roper and Spirit of the West.

Special Thanks - National Portrait Gallery, London / Portrait of Katherine Parr, attributed to Master John, oil on panel, circa 1545.

term as queen by translating and patronizing religious books for publication, eventually publishing her own firmly Protestant statement of faith, *The Lamentations of a Sinner*, in 1547, after King Henry's death. She became the first English woman to publish a book with her name on the title page, but she was hardly the only female to authorize her right to speak and write by claiming she was demonstrating her obedience to God.

As an active queen of England, Kateryn should not be seen as a renegade. She was a successful regent during Henry's time in France, but no more so than Catherine of Aragon had been. She was a major force in bringing about reconciliation between Henry VIII and his daughters, ensuring Mary and Elizabeth were reinstated into the succession. Her influence on national and international politics was not terribly different from that brought about by other noblewomen, including Henry VIII's formidable grandmother Margaret Beaufort and Catherine of Aragon's mother Isabella of Spain.

Kateryn Parr was an admirably brilliant, strong, and compassionate woman, and was thought to be so even during her lifetime – but she was not unique. Even as we appreciate Kateryn as more than Henry VIII's last wife, we should also see her as a representative of other accomplished Renaissance English women, many of whom have been entirely forgotten. ▲

*Erin E. Kelly is an associate professor in the department of English at the University of Victoria. She teaches courses on 16th- and 17th-century English literature and directs the first-year academic writing program.*

## Why I Chose This Play

*The Last Wife* was one of the easy choices – a play that immediately struck me as right for our audience. It is smart, engaging, funny, unique, and offers a different perspective on the world. What I love most is the simplest – yet most revolutionary – aspect of Kate's play: it looks at historical events through the eyes of a woman, rather than a man. Henry VIII plays a supporting role to Katherine Parr's protagonist, and one realizes how rare and how enlightening it is to look at history from this angle.

In the way that the press discuss female athletes so differently from their male counterparts, women of substance have been largely overlooked by history's chroniclers. *The Last Wife* looks at the dangers endured, and the successes and missteps perpetrated, by one of history's many remarkable – and invisible – women. That it does so using contemporary language and modern dress only adds another layer, and reminds us of the systemic imbalance that still exists in so many female-male relationships – especially where power is concerned.

I had a number of friends and colleagues involved in the premiere production at Stratford last season, including playwright Kate Hennig, and a number of people whose opinion I respect spoke glowingly about the play and the audience's response to it. Finally, *The Last Wife* provides a great role for Celine Stubel, and that in itself is a pretty strong incentive for choosing a play!

**MICHAEL SHAMATA**

## Cast & Creatives



Sean Baek  
(THOMAS)



Ellis James Frank  
(EDWARD)



Anie Richer  
(MARY)



Oliver Becker  
(HENRY)



Celine Stubel  
(KATE)



Mahalia Golnosh  
Tahriha (BESS)



Kate Hennig  
(PLAYWRIGHT)



Esther Jun  
(DIRECTOR)



Shannon Lea Doyle  
(DESIGNER)



Martin Conboy  
(LIGHTING  
DESIGNER)



John Gzowski  
(SOUND DESIGNER)



Nicholas Harrison  
(FIGHT DIRECTOR)



Jennifer  
Swan (STAGE  
MANAGER)



Jessica McLeod  
(ASSISTANT STAGE  
MANAGER)

# LIVE EVENTS

Throughout *The Last Wife* we'll host a number of events that will deepen your experience or just plain astound you.

## AFTERPLAY

Facilitated discussions – audience member to audience member – following every evening Mainstage performance of *The Last Wife* (except Opening Night and Talkback Thursday). These are a great opportunity to share your thoughts and hear how fellow patrons reacted to the show.

## TALKBACK THURSDAY

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

Meet the actors from *The Last Wife* post-performance when they return to the stage to answer questions and provide insight into the play.

## BOOKSMACK

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 AT 7:30 PM**

Librarians go head-to-head as they race against the clock to speed review their favourite books in these fun and competitive events, co-presented with the Greater Victoria Public Library.

## VOCAL EYE

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16 AT 2 PM**

For our patrons with low or no vision, we'll offer a VocalEye performance during *The Last Wife*. Trained Audio Describers provide descriptions of the visual elements of the show, allowing people with low vision to enjoy the theatrical experience without missing any of the details.

## Belfry Librarian



The wonderful librarians from the Greater Victoria Public Library have compiled a list of books to help you get even more out of our production of *The Last Wife*.

### NON-FICTION AND DRAMA

*The Creation of Anne Boleyn: a new look at England's most notorious queen.*

By Susan Bordo (2013)

*Feminism: the essential historical writings.*

By Miriam Schneir (1992)

*Henry VIII: the king and his court.*

By Alison Weir (2001)

*The Last Days of Henry VIII: conspiracies, treason and heresy at the court of the dying tyrant.*

By Robert Hutchinson (2005)

*The Mistresses of Henry VIII.*

By Kelly Hart (2009)

*Six Wives: the queens of Henry VIII.*

By David Starkey (2003)

*The Six Wives of Henry VIII.* (DVDs).

By Ronald Travers (2010)

*The Story of Women and Power.*

(DVD) By Amanda Vickery

*The Tudors* (DVDs)

*Chess: from first moves to checkmate.*

By Daniel King (2000)

*The Victoria and Albert Museum's Textile Collection: Embroidery in Britain from 1200 to 1750.*

Victoria and Albert Museum (1993)

### FICTION

*Lamentation.*

By C. J. Sansom (2014)

*The Last Wife of Henry VIII.*

By Carolly Erickson (2006)

*Queen's Gambit.*

By Elizabeth Fremantle (2013)

*The Sixth Wife.*

By Suzannah Dunn. (2007)

*Three Sisters, Three Queens.*

By Philippa Gregory (2016)

*The Taming of the Queen.*

By Philippa Gregory (2015)

*Wolf Hall.*

By Hilary Mantel (2009)

Compiled by Ursula Benoit, Collection Development Librarian,  
Greater Victoria Public Library



# Belfry Theatre launches \$1 Million Capital Campaign



The Belfry Theatre has been a thriving cultural destination in Greater Victoria for over 40 years. Every year thousands of patrons enjoy great theatre in our beautiful building. We have thoughtfully guided our beloved heritage home through five previous phases of improvements, growing along with our audiences. In each of these renovations, we have prioritized the comfort and experience of our artists and our patrons.

Looking to the future, we have a new vision that will create increased lobby space, an improved concession, enhanced wheelchair access, additional washroom facilities, sound insulation, and new seating. To achieve our vision, we will need to raise \$1 Million.

Up to \$340,000 has been pledged by the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program, to help us make improvements. We need to match this dollar-for-dollar, and raise more, to complete these vital changes by 2017: Canada's 150th Anniversary.

We need you to help us set the stage for the next 40 years of ongoing excellence at the Belfry Theatre.

Please support this \$1 Million Capital Campaign through your donations and / or the many naming opportunities available for our donors. A seat, a space, a piece of equipment: talk to us about what is possible, and your name could be part of the fabric of the Belfry for the next decade.

For further information contact Judi or Susan at 250-385-6835 or email [development@belfry.bc.ca](mailto:development@belfry.bc.ca).



Canada

# Calendar



## The Last Wife

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

**September 20 - October 16, 2016**

Tuesdays – Thursdays at 7:30 pm

Wednesday Matinees at 1 pm  
(September 28, October 5 and 12)

Fridays + Saturdays at 8 pm

Saturday Matinees at 4 pm

Sunday Matinees at 2 pm

### Audience Engagement Schedule

**B4PLAY** · Saturday, September 17 at 11 am

**TALKBACK THURSDAY** · September 29

**AFTERPLAY** · Following most  
evening performances

**VOCAL EYE** · Described performance  
Sunday, October 16 at 2 pm

## How to buy tickets

### By telephone

250 385 6815

Please have your credit card ready, as well as the date and time of the performance you wish to attend.

### Online

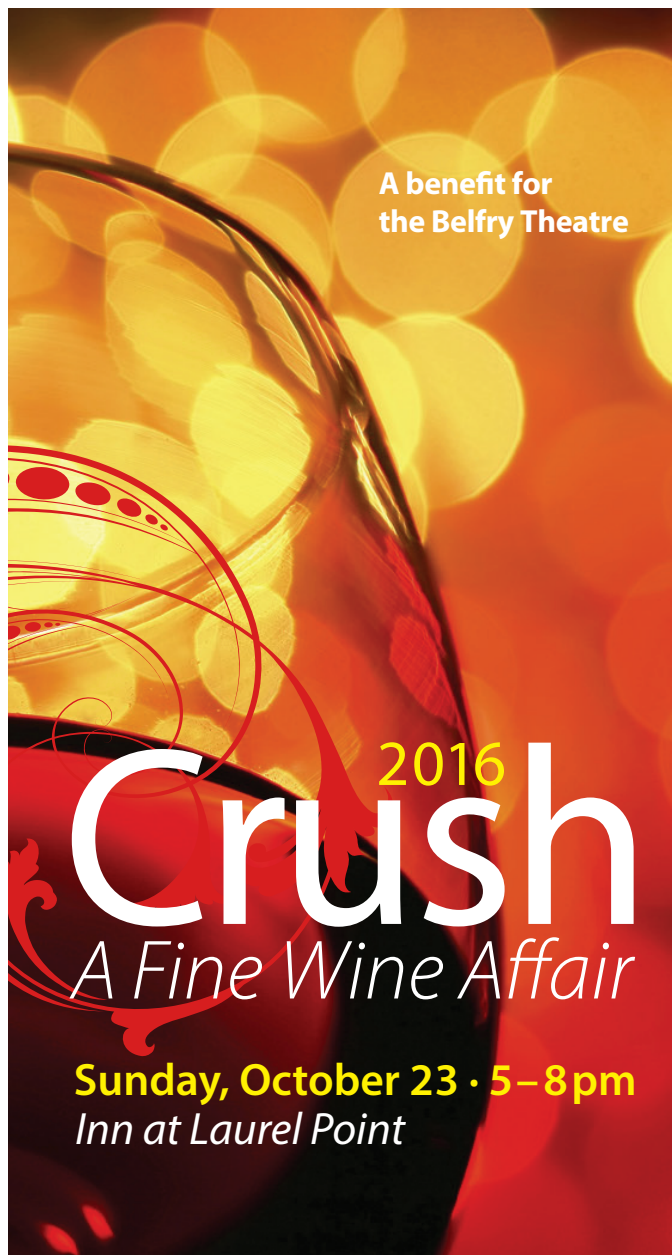
Visit [belfry.bc.ca/tickets](http://belfry.bc.ca/tickets)

and buy your tickets online, anytime.

### In person

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