

January 20—
February 19
2017

Belfry
Theatre

WORLD PREMIERE

Gracie

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BY

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From the Artistic Director

A new year and a new play. It doesn't get more exciting than that. Especially when that play has been written by Joan MacLeod. And even more so when the Belfry commissioned the play, and Joan therefore wrote it with the knowledge that it would be performed on this stage and for this audience.

Despite the Belfry's productions of many plays by Joan MacLeod (from *Toronto, Mississippi*, 28 years ago, to last season's *The Valley*), this is the first time that we have commissioned Joan to write for us. It gives me a thrill to know that we – all of us in this room together – have had a role in the beginning of this very human play.

We have been fortunate to have a partner in this process. Alberta Theatre Projects in Calgary –

which has given a number of Joan's plays their first production – has collaborated with us on the development of this script, and on the production you are about to see. After *Gracie* closes here in Victoria, it will start performances a week later in Calgary! This partnership has also brought us a brilliant director for this play, Vanessa Porteous, who is the Artistic Director of ATP, and is making her long-overdue Belfry debut with *Gracie*.

Like the Belfry, Alberta Theatre Projects produces contemporary plays and Canadian plays. This shared mandate, together with an all-important shared esthetic, has made for a very smooth and happy partnership.

May you enjoy Joan's beautiful play.

And all best wishes for a happy and healthy 2017.

P.S.: Afterplay

No doubt you have heard us talk about the Belfry's Afterplay events, heard us announce them from the front of the stage before our evening performances, and from the stage itself following those performances.

Now I want to encourage you to give it a try – if you haven't already. We consider it an "added bonus" that will enhance your experience of the play and the Belfry.

We designed Afterplay to create an opportunity for you to discuss the play you've just seen with your fellow audience members. These discussions are facilitated, but the facilitator's role is to encourage conversation and interaction between you and the other participants. We often get the ball rolling by asking, "What were you expecting when you arrived at the theatre tonight, and how did the play and the production differ from those expectations?" Sometimes that's the last thing that the facilitator has to say – the conversation is off and running!

Sometimes we have a large group attending, and sometimes we have a smaller, more intimate group. What's important is that the opportunity exists for you to bounce ideas off of your fellow theatre-goers – should you choose to participate. And I do hope you will!

M.

Thank you!

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Our thanks to the 54 individuals who have taken part in the Name a Seat campaign.

Together with our patrons, friends, sponsors, and community, and a \$340,000 grant from the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program, we have now raised more than \$600,000 – putting us closer to our \$1 Million goal. We need you to help support the Belfry Capital Campaign for improved patron comfort and accessibility.

With your help, we can reach \$1 Million!

† Through the Victoria Foundation
As of January 3, 2017



This project is funded in part
by the Government of Canada.



Canada

Notes From the Executive Director

Like all performing arts, the theatre is a labour-intensive process, and that is no less so with a one person show. Contemporary theatre often involves the additional processes of commissioning the playwright, doing readings and workshops of various drafts of the play with director, actors and other creative personnel; all before starting the more intensive processes of rehearsal and production.

So, what is involved in the production of a one person play besides that actor you see? Moving beyond the research phase of the workshops and readings, the work intensifies with the director, set, costume, lighting and sound designers, composer, stage management, vocal coach and possibly a few others in the mix. Their work leads to the involvement of production staff, technical director, master carpenter, props master, head of wardrobe, stage technician and all the required crews for each of those areas. And before and after any of this, we have fundraisers getting us the money to do it, box office staff to ensure you can get tickets, marketing to let people know it's happening, artistic staff preparing and providing additional enrichment, volunteers to greet you and take care of your needs once you are here, administrative staff taking care of our creative personnel's needs while here, and managing the facility and budgets, and a volunteer Board to oversee the careful use of all of our resources.

This current one person show now involves the direct active participation of dozens of dedicated professionals putting in hundreds of hours to get it to the point of presenting it to you, our audience, for the first time ever, anywhere. Like all shows, the final participant is you, our loyal, smart, engaged audience, who make that work more valuable by your presence and response.



Work on new plays often does not stop at opening, but carries through for a time as minor adjustments to the script are made for subsequent productions, and the playwright has an opportunity to see the play mature as the performers grow more into the skin of the character. There are also subtle changes that occur to any performance of a play over the course of a run and that is especially true of new work. If you have the ability to experience that growth by seeing a play more than once we encourage you to do so. We'll even help, by giving you the opportunity to book a second attendance of Gracie at 40% off the normal ticket price.



Photo by Jo-Ann Richards, Works Photography

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performance.
(See page 3 for details)

Gracie

by Joan MacLeod

Starring

Lili Beaudoin

Director Vanessa Porteous
Set and Costume Designer Catherine Hahn
Lighting Designer Narda McCarroll
Composer and Sound Designer Tobin Stokes
Stage Manager Jennifer Swan
Apprentice Stage Manager Sadie Fox

Gracie was originally commissioned by The Belfry Theatre, Victoria, BC and developed in partnership with Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary, AB.

Gracie is staged by arrangement with Pam Winter, Gary Goddard Agency, www.garygoddardagency.com

This play is a work of fiction, inspired by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints communities in Canada and the U.S.

Gracie, all other characters and events in the play are works of fiction.

The use of video or audio recording devices is strictly prohibited at all times.

Gracie is generously sponsored by:



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Lili Beaudoin's role is supported by a generous contribution from Michelle & Stephen Brown.

Please enjoy the performance.

Gracie Workshop History

First Workshop (June 2015) with Celine Stubel and Michael Shamata. Belfry Theatre, Victoria, BC.

Second Workshop (October 2016) with Lili Beaudoin. Directed by Vanessa Porteous.

Special thanks to Catherine Hahn. Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary, AB.

Playwright's Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Belfry and ATP for the invaluable extended schedule and workshops. Thank you to the Banff Centre and especially Tamara Ross. Thank you to Marita Dachselt, Dede Crane and Bill Gaston; they are my colleagues at the Department of Writing and first readers of this script.

Thank you to my inspiring students.



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From the Playwright

I began researching this play by reading deeply about the FLDS – the sect that broke off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints over a century ago. I travelled to both Colorado City on the Utah-Arizona border and to Bountiful in the south eastern corner of B.C. I didn't go beyond the No Trespassing signs in either community; I never intended to. Colorado City felt desolate. Many houses were unoccupied, the community much diminished since their prophet, Warren Jeffs, was sent to prison in 2008. We were followed, a little too closely, by a large pick-up with tinted windows and were glad to leave. Bountiful was different. It was lush and beautiful. We watched a dozen boys in the distance, doing tricks on their bikes, on a little jump they'd created in a pasture. But Bountiful is still a community where the majority of the population of around 1,000 are descendants of seven men. Perhaps mystery is at the heart of all religions and writing about a place that is full of secrets is impossible. But this play began the way all my plays do: by creating one voice and trying to figure out why that voice wanted to be heard. The play takes place between 1992 and 2007; it begins when Gracie is eight and moves with her family to Canada when her mother is assigned to another man by the prophet in her former community. *Gracie*, it must be emphasized, is a work of fiction. There is no character or event meant to represent actual people or events in either community. Currently three people from Bountiful are on trial for allegedly removing girls from the community there and taking them to be wed to much older men in the community in Colorado City in 2004. A verdict will be handed down by the Supreme Court in February. Winston Blackmore – the leader from Bountiful who we most often see on the news defending the right for religious freedom under our Charter – is the younger brother of one of the men going to trial. It's estimated that at present he has fathered over 140 children.



Rehearsal photography by Peter Pokorny

Joan MacLeod

Joan MacLeod Bio

Joan MacLeod's plays include *Jewel*, *Toronto*, *Mississippi*, *Amigo's Blue Guitar*, *The Hope Slide*, *Little Sister*, *2000*, *The Shape of a Girl*, *Homechild*, *Another Home Invasion* and *The Valley*. Her work has been translated into eight languages. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the Governor General's Award and the Siminovitch Prize for Theatre. For seven years she was a playwright-in-residence at Toronto's Tarragon Theatre. Since 2004 she has worked at the University of Victoria as a Professor in the Department of Writing. *Gracie* is the first time she will have premiered work at home. She is thrilled with the team the Belfry has assembled and grateful for the support and long relationship she has with both the Belfry and Alberta Theatre Projects in Calgary.

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From the Director

Gracie is torn between two worlds: her childhood world of faith and family, and the outside full of unknowns. What path will she choose?

Her situation is not something we hear about a lot, except in TV segments when there's a bit of news. We get a blurred glimpse of a girl in the background, headed somewhere fast, her head turned away – then she disappears.

The play invites us to go deep inside Gracie's secret world, to see it through the eyes of its most innocent member. It's a close up view that beckons us not to easy judgment but to a kind of righteous compassion.

It is hard to believe that Canadian girls are living this way, in this very province, but it's true, and young women around the world would relate. Across the globe, many girls are raised to serve the dominant values of their culture, whether or not those values nurture their autonomy or keep them safe.

Someone once described Joan MacLeod's work as being 'like the tide coming in.' Gentle at first, its impact becomes inexorable, overwhelming. Her gift is to layer on detail until an intimate story takes on the outlines of the universal. No matter what kind of childhood we had, we all want to feel secure. We want love from our families; we want to believe the faith that gave us comfort as children; we want to trust that adults mean the best. Like Gracie, we want to belong.

But the play asks, what do you have to give up to belong? What sacrifices do we ask of each other in order to fit in? What personal needs must be abandoned to be part of the family, to be welcome in the community? Good questions to ask, these days.

I'm a mother, so stories about what adults do to children hit me harder now. I want to protect Gracie, all the Gracies. I want to put my arm around her, tell her everything will be all right. I want to keep her safe – but I want to set her free. Whatever path she chooses.

Vanessa Porteous

Vanessa Porteous Director Artistic Director at Alberta Theatre Projects

Belfry Debut. For ATP (selected): *Gracie* by Joan MacLeod (ATP/Belfry Theatre), *Cockroach* by Jonathan Garfinkel, based on the novel by Rawi Hage, *Charlotte's Web*, *You Will Remember Me* by François Archambault translated by Bobby Theodore, *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood, *The Erotic Anguish of Don Juan* by the Old Trout Puppet Workshop, *The Syringa Tree* (twice). Elsewhere (Selected): *Christina The Girl King* by Michel Marc Bouchard, translated by Linda Gaboriau (Stratford Festival), *The Penelopiad* (Arts Club). Awards: Two Betty Mitchell Awards for Outstanding Direction. Vanessa has been Artistic Director at ATP since 2009. For my mum.

ABOUT ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

Alberta Theatre Projects is a Calgary-based, not-for-profit, professional theatre company that celebrates the art of live theatre. From its home in The Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons, the company produces world-calibre shows with a focus on idea-driven new works, plays by Canadian playwrights, and contemporary theatre from around the world. It is also a national leader in new play development and dramaturgy.



Rehearsal photography by Peter Pokorny

Acting Company



Lili Beaudoin

Lili Beaudoin *Gracie*

Lili is thrilled to be making her Belfry debut in *Gracie*. Based in Vancouver, some of her past performances include Miranda in *The Tempest* and Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost* (Bard on the Beach), Ruth in *Sister Judy* (Arts Club) and Sarah in *Social Studies* (Firehall). When Lili is not on stage, you can find her behind the mic, doing voices on shows such as *My Little Pony*, *Beat Bugs* and *Max Steel*. Lili is a graduate of Studio 58 where she received the Antony Holland Award for outstanding ability and dedication. Thanks to all the folks I'm lucky enough to call family or friends.

Creative Team



Catherine Hahn

Catherine Hahn *Set and Costume Designer*

Catherine has been designing sets and costumes for over 40 years, much of it for new Canadian plays. She has augmented her work in the theatre with designs for large scale events, parade costumes, art installations, outdoor spectacles, film and television, paintings, jewelry and esoteric performance art. Her last show for the Belfry was *The Rez Sisters*, the next one is *Reverberations*, and for ATP: last year's production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. She is delighted to be collaborating with these two companies on this premiere of *Gracie*, an important new addition to the Canadian theatre canon.

www.catherinehahn.com



Narda McCarroll

Narda McCarroll *Lighting Designer*

Narda is very happy to be spending her January working with this amazing team assembled by the Belfry and Alberta Theatre Projects. She was last here as the Set and Costume Designer for *The Trespassers*. Narda is based in Calgary where she often collaborates with Vanessa at ATP. Her work has been seen across the country. She was the Lighting Designer for the national tour of *The Drowning Girls*, which premiered at ATP and also played at the Belfry. She is the recipient of four Sterling Awards (Edmonton), two Betty Mitchell Awards (Calgary) and a Critics' Choice Spotlight Award for *The Trespassers*, here in Victoria.

Rehearsal photography by Peter Pokorny



Tobin Stokes



Jennifer Swan



Sadie Fox

Rehearsal photography by Peter Pokorny

Tobin Stokes
*Composer and
Sound Designer*

Tobin is stoked to be back at the Belfry again! Since the late 1980s he's been lurking here as a performer, arranger, musical director, composer, and sound designer for various productions. Past musical projects at the Belfry have featured the music of *Joni Mitchell*, *Leonard Cohen*, *Patsy Cline*, *Harry Chapin*, and his own opera, *The Vinedressers*. Last spring his opera, *Fallujah*, premiered with Long Beach Opera in California and had a second production in November with New York City Opera. He's written other operas, including *Pauline*, a collaboration with Margaret Atwood. Tobin is currently working on a new opera and composing the score for a new nature documentary series coming to CBC this September.

Jennifer Swan
Stage Manager

Born and raised in Victoria, Jen is happy to once again be Island based. This is her 12th season (over 17 years) working at the Belfry. Other favourite Canadian theatres include: Theatre SKAM, Electric Company Theatre, Vancouver Playhouse, Canadian Stage, Caravan Farm Theatre and Theatre Calgary. Jen spent most of last season living and working in Calgary – stage managing *The Little Prince-The Musical* and *The Light in the Piazza* (directed by Michael Shamata), both for Theatre Calgary. She also works as Company Manager for Electric Company Theatre in Vancouver.

Sadie Fox
Apprentice Stage Manager

Since being introduced to the Belfry in her third year at the Canadian College of Performing Arts, Sadie has had the good fortune to keep a toe in the building. *Gracie* marks her third stage management apprenticeship with the Belfry (previous are *A Christmas Carol*, and *Speed-The-Plow*), and as stage manager for *21 Ways to Make The World Last Longer* with Runaway Moon Theatre which premiered in the Belfry's SPARK Festival last year. Most recently she worked on *The Last Wife* as child supervisor, also at the Belfry. Other credits include: *The Barber of Seville* (Apprentice Stage Manager-Pacific Opera Victoria), *The Call Went Out* (Costume, Props and Set Design-Story Theatre Company), *Spring Awakening* (Stage Manager-Co-production with the CCPA and the Belfry Theatre).

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Babes in Arms

The Belfry is proud to produce adult contemporary theatre. Our productions are not suitable for children 10 and under, including babes in arms.

Recording Devices

No cameras or recording devices are permitted in the theatre.

Audience Advisories and Running Times

We make every effort to advise you of strong language, subject matter or extreme technical effects (strobe lights, fog). Please look for signs at the entrances to the theatre. Advisories and running times are available at the Box Office as of the first preview.

Food & Drinks

Please feel free to take only food and/or drinks you've purchased from the Belfry bar into the theatre. Our goodies are packaged so that they don't make a lot of noise and disturb your fellow audience members.

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Please refrain from using perfume and cologne when you come to the theatre. Some of our patrons are highly allergic to scents.

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BY SARAH DANIELS

Directed by
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