



Chick Reid as Mrs. Wilberforce and Damien Atkins as Professor Marcus in "The Ladykillers" (Shaw Festival, 2019).
Photos by David Cooper



Diana Donnelly as Margy LaMont and André Sills as Lieutenant Gregg in "Sex".

A SNEAK PREVIEW

At press time the Festival had just announced its 2020 season. Notably, only one play by its namesake playwright is on the playbill (*The Devil's Disciple*). Stephen Sondheim's *Gypsy* and the British farce *Charley's Aunt* are sure to be crowd pleasers while those who prefer tragedy with their theatre will want to catch Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*. Flush, a one-act play based on a Virginia Woolf novella about a cocker spaniel, promises to be a quirky offering.

BEYOND THE CURTAIN

Niagara-on-the-Lake has lots to keep you busy after the curtain closes. Book a bike with Zoom Leisure and ride along the picturesque Niagara Parkway (be sure to stop at one of the roadside markets for fresh fruit or ice cream). Wine tours are always popular (Queenston Mile Vineyard is the newest addition to the popular wine tour scene) and craft breweries such as The Exchange and Oast House Brewers are also making their mark. For a sweet-smelling excursion tour the aromatic greenhouse and lavender fields of Neob Lavender Farm.

The pedestrian-crammed Queen Street offers dozens of high-end specialty shops, galleries and antique stores. The Budapest Bakery (try its delectable chimney cakes) and the Spade and Sparrow flower shop are among the newest retail offerings. The Gate House restaurant on the edge of town is a new dining option that offers a spacious patio perfect for people watching before or after play watching.

Still time to catch a show at Shaw

By Anne Bokma

The Shaw Festival's regular season comes to a close in mid-October, which means there are still a few weeks left to take a seat at this world-class theatre before the curtain comes down.

Not sure which play to pick from the 10 currently running? Here are our top four recommendations:

1. Sex: Mae West was a woman ahead of her time. She wrote this play, partly set in Montreal's red light district of the 1920s, almost 100 years ago. Back then its Broadway run was so racy she was charged with "obscurity and corrupting the morals of youth." Incredibly, her play still holds up all these years later, thanks in part to inventive gender-bending casting.

2. The Ladykillers: A screen-to-stage adaptation of the 1955 movie about a band

of crooks who try to pull off a bank heist under the nose of a sweet little old lady who rents them a room, this deliciously macabre dark comedy offers brilliant slapstick, an incredible revolving set and a cast that clearly relishes showing off their comic chops.

3. The Glass Menagerie: Tender and honest, Tennessee William's 1944 autobiographical memory play about an overbearing mother, a vulnerable sister, a gentleman caller and a suffering son, still has the power to crack open the heart—especially with this sensitive and expertly directed production.

4. Cyrano de Bergerac: The charming tale of unrequited love featuring a big-nosed swashbuckler who uses clever wordplay to try and win the girl of his dreams has been making audiences swoon since the 19th century. Tom

Rooney as Cyrano has won rave reviews for his leading man performance.

The rest of the playbill includes the big-production Learner and Loewe musical *Brigadoon*, the psychological thriller *Rope*, two Shaw offerings (*Getting Married* and *Man and Superman*) Canadian playwright Hannah Moscovitch's *The Russian Play*, and *Victory*, a political and profane play set during the English restoration.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Although the official Shaw season ends in October, the company will offer two holiday shows later this year. For the third season, *A Christmas Carol* will be staged at the Royal George Theatre from November 13 to 22. And, for the first time, the Irving Berlin classic, *Holiday Inn*, will be performed on the main stage at the Festival Theatre from Nov. 16-Dec. 22.