

Why I Chose This Play

Chicago, Christmas Day, 1998. The opening day of the film *Shakespeare in Love*. I sat elated by the verbal pyrotechnics, the wit and the invention that were being kept in the air as if by a master juggler. I continually thought, "They aren't going to be able to keep this up; at some point it's going to come crashing to the ground!" Had I realized that playwright Tom Stoppard had written the script, I would have been less apt to anticipate Hollywood disappointment.

The only other time that I have derived the same kind of wonder and excitement from watching ideas and linguistic jokes spinning in the air – like a gymnast whose feet never touch the ground – was ten years earlier, at the opening night of the first production of Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* at the tiny Annex Theatre in Toronto. I sat there with Bill Glassco, founder of the Tarragon Theatre, and my boss at the time at CentreStage, neither of us knowing too much about the play we were about to see. To call it a revelation and an exciting evening in the theatre would be quite an understatement!

Desdemona was something totally new on the Canadian theatre landscape: a smart and breezy comedy. No kitchen sink. No farmers. No earnestness. Just a lot of humour – some of it wacky, most of it extremely intelligent – and all of it taking off from Shakespeare, with whom Ann-Marie was shadow boxing: writing her own blank verse to intermingle with and contemporize the Bard's!

I believe I have seen more productions of this play than any other, including

a revival at the Canadian Stage Company starring Ann-Marie herself. At last, in 2005, I directed a production starring Tanja Jacobs, the Constance I had watched in that very first production, and who was by then a frequent collaborator and a dear friend. Working on the play only increased my respect and love for the piece. Like Ann-Marie herself, it is quick and agile, clever and foxy.

Ann-Marie not only entertains us with her Shakespearean hijinks and literary pratfalls, she also takes her leading lady on a journey of self-discovery that provides the play with a contemporary sensibility, an emotional core and a forward momentum. She revises Shakespeare's *Desdemona* and *Juliet* through the contemporary lenses of feminism and sexuality. Constance's quest for the fools whom she believes were once characters in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, leads her towards a realization of her own intrinsic value. Like all good playwrights, Ann-Marie MacDonald gives us something to take away at the end of the evening. Like all good plays, *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* leaves us with plenty to think about.

The fact that both *Goodnight Desdemona* and *Shakespeare in Love* are based on Shakespeare's plays may be more than a coincidence. In addition to all his brilliance in so many areas, he may also be an inspired collaborator!



Michael Shamata
Artistic Director



ANN-MARIE
MACDONALD

Ann-Marie MacDonald is an author, playwright, actor and broadcaster. Her novels, *Fall On Your Knees* and *The Way the Crow Flies*, are international bestsellers. Among her works for theatre are, *Belle Moral: A Natural History*, *The Attic The Pearls* and *Three Fine Girls*, *Anything That Moves* and *Nigredo Hotel*. MacDonald is at work on a third novel, and is currently host of CBC's *Doc Zone*. She is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BELFRY AT THE LIBRARY

Once again, the Belfry Theatre is partnering with the Greater Victoria Public Library and coming to a branch in your neighbourhood. Join us for a casual lunchtime chat with an actor from our production of Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* and a special guest expert from the community. Register online at www.gvpl.ca or call your local branch for more information about these free events. Dates and branch locations are in our Performance Calendar.

THE WALRUS TALKS

Monday September 16 at 6:30pm
The Walrus Talks: The Art of Conversation will explore our increasingly polarized public discourse. The event will feature 70 minutes of talks by:
Jim Hoggan,
Bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster Michael Ingham,
War Child Canada's Samantha Nutt,
CBC Radio's Shelagh Rogers,
Wosk Centre for Dialogue's Shauna Sylvester,
Kali Taylor,
and bestselling author Robert Wiersema.
The Walrus Talks is a national series of public events produced by the charitable, non-profit Walrus Foundation as part of an educational mandate to provide forums for conversation on matters vital to Canadians. Tickets at 250-385-6815.

CULTURE DAYS

Saturday, September 28
The Belfry is taking part in Culture Days, a national event that promotes awareness, accessibility, participation and engagement of Canadians in the arts and cultural life of their communities.
We're working with a host of community partners including the Victoria Hindu Temple, Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre, Pacific Opera Victoria, Puente Theatre, the Victoria Shakespeare Festival, Story Theatre Company, and the Greater Victoria Public Library to bring you a feast of exciting free events you can take part in. Please visit our website for more details.

SHAKESPEARE ONSTAGE / OFFSTAGE September and October

This citywide event is a community celebration of the Bard with exhibits and special events to engage the young at heart – children, youth, and adults. Venues include libraries, theatres, art galleries, classrooms, concert halls and pubs. This unique and innovative cultural and community collaboration is brought to you by the Belfry, the Greater Victoria Public Library, Pacific Opera Victoria, UVic Library, UVic English Department, the Legacy Gallery and the Internet Shakespeare Edition website.

Connect with us hello@belfry.bc.ca

Facebook, Twitter, tumblr, Vimeo, Youtube, Linked In

SEASON SPONSORS AND GOVERNMENT FUNDERS:



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showguide

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GOODNIGHT DESDEMONA (Good Morning Juliet) by Ann-Marie MacDonald

www.belfry.bc.ca

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A tour
de force...
tremendous
wit...
and great
gusts of
knee-slapping
broad
comedy.
OTTAWA CITIZEN

Magical...
an uproarious
and smart
comedy.
PITTSBURGH PRESS

SEPT 17–
OCT 20,
2013

Contemporary.
Canadian.

B4PLAY

Saturday, September 14 at 11am
Belfry Theatre, Studio A, 1291 Gladstone Avenue

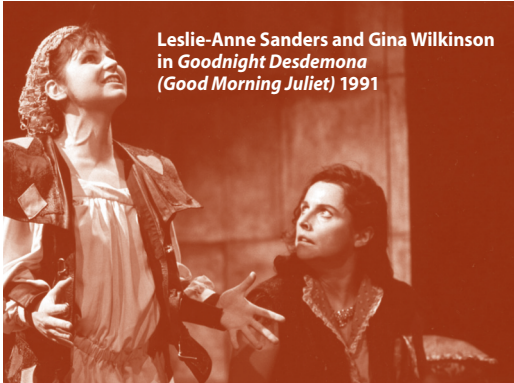
Join CBC Radio's Gregor Craigie for a live talk show with Director Ron Jenkins, actress Daniela Vaskalic and special guests.
Free Event.



Hello,

Welcome to the Belfry and our new production of Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*.

Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet) was Ann-Marie's first play and we originally produced the show with the immensely talented and dearly missed Gina Wilkinson taking the role of Constance Ledbelly and Richard Clarkin (from last season's hit, *Speaking in Tongues*) as Romeo.



Our new production features Daniela Vlaskalic (*The Drowning Girls*) as Constance and Jameson M. Parker (*Red*) as Romeo. Making their Belfry debuts are Michael Dufays (*Othello*), Nicola Elbro (*Desdemona*) and Pippa Mackie (*Juliet*).

If you are a Shakespeare aficionado, Ann-Marie's writing will astound you; if you are looking for a genuinely good belly laugh, we can promise you that too. *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* truly has universal appeal.

We've scheduled plenty of free events (see our calendar) where you can learn more about the play, gain insight into the creative process and meet the actors.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Jung at Heart

by Hilary Knight

*"The individual, on his lonely path, needs a secret; ... a secret which he cannot betray – one which he fears to give away, or which he cannot formulate into words, and which therefore seems to belong to the category of **crazy ideas**..."*
Carl Gustav Jung, epigraph to the play.

Poor Constance Ledbelly. Overworked and overlooked in her Queen's University cubby-hole, the assistant English professor is abused by her students and exploited by Professor Claude Night, her glib and unscrupulous boss. But she loves him. Devotedly. So she's been ghost-writing his best work for the past ten years. Some day he'll pluck her from drudgery and carry her off to Happy-Ever-After-Land. Won't he?

She's humming "Fairy tales can come true," but she's living the wrong fairy tale. Claude isn't her knight in shining armour. He's her night, her shadow, and nobody's going to rescue Connie but Connie herself. But what is her Self?

She won't discover it at Queen's, where she's "The Mouse," loser and laughingstock. She wears this mask to avoid confrontation with others – and with herself. Fortunately, beneath Connie's mouse mask – deep in her unconscious mind – are two feisty women who can help her in her quest.

Connie puzzles over Shakespeare's Desdemona and Juliet in her much-derided thesis. She's convinced that the circumstances destroying them could have been averted; surely these magnificent heroines were destined for life-affirming comedy, not tragic death. Shakespeare must have removed from the original comic sources a Wise Fool who smacks a few characters upside the head, sorts out the mess, and brings down

the curtain on harmony. After all, Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* is "proved" unfaithful like Desdemona, and like Juliet she takes a friar's advice and feigns death, but the fool Dogberry blows the whistle on Don John's rotten plot and sets all to rights.

To prove Connie right, Ann-Marie MacDonald's mercurial mind mingles elements of the quest, Jungian psychology, and alchemy.

In the classic quest, an untried young hero leaves the threatened City of Light and Reason and ventures into the dangerous Green World to find "the precious thing" that will restore safety and vitality to the City. He encounters trials and obstacles, helpers and hinderers. After one last formidable travail, the hero triumphs and returns with his prize, which is sometimes less important than the hero's transformation into a prudent, humble, and wise leader of the resurrected City.

The Quest is one of Carl Jung's identified "archetypes" common to all cultures, buried in our collective unconscious and manifested through symbols and myths. Archetypes include natural phenomena, patterns of action, and resonant character-types such as the Wise Fool, the Warrior Woman, and the Lovestruck Adolescent.

Jung would say that Connie needs to "individuate," to cast off her debilitating mask – the "persona" or socially-constructed self – and

find her true Self by confronting her Shadow and making her battling archetypes work for her, not against her. The Shadow opposes the conscious mind, distilling qualities we dislike and deny in ourselves. When controlled, it is invaluable: Claude Night has spurred Connie to produce brilliant work.

"What's alchemy?" asks the Chorus. Historically, it was a complex and fantastical pseudo-science by which practitioners tried to change base or "corrupted" metal into gold by "mingling and unmingling opposites" in the alchemical vessel through the agency of mercury, the Great Transmuter. This "Great Work" could be accelerated by the ineffable Philosopher's Stone.

To Shakespeare's contemporary Ben Jonson, alchemy was "the hoax of charlatans." Others claim that the quest for gold was not material but spiritual, a "mystic quest for stuff of life itself." To Jung it was a metaphor, "a symbolic system for the transformation of the human spirit from its lead-like state of ignorance into the gold of enlightenment."

The title of Connie's thesis, "*Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*:" The Seeds of Corruption and Comedy," implies that tragedy is corruption and literally a dead end. Comedy, however chaotic, is life and pure gold. "Ledbelly" suggests that Connie's fertility centre is leaden, her ten-year labour profiting others. However, it was Lake "Constance" that inspired Jung's theories of the unconscious mind. The quest for spiritual gold demanded descent into the unconscious in an arduous

process of purification before transmutation and golden re-birth.

The Chorus reveals that the Gustav Manuscript (the knowledge she already possesses in her unconscious mind) is "the key to her Philosopher's Stone." By "mingling and unmingling" her warring archetypes she can "invite them from the shadows to the light," integrating them into her new Self: "one plus two makes one, not three."

This "double-edged re-birthday" is midwived by mercury, the element reconciling opposites of liquid and solid. The messenger-god Mercury communicates between the conscious and unconscious minds, and the planet Mercury governs the intellect and eloquence. It rules Gemini, the twins, shown either as male and female or as one hermaphrodite, implying the Jungian anima and animus. Cross-dressing, anyone?

Harried by her extremes – one archetype's violence against others and the other's violence against herself – and by the humourless Tybalt, implacable spirit of tragedy, will Connie ever understand the Ghost's riddles? Will she find that elusive Wise Fool, the Source, and the Author? Will she whip her unruly archetypes into line before they do her in? And will she ever achieve Jungian individuation into her mature, fertile Self and find the Golden Mean of balance?

Fairy tales can come true – it can happen to you – if you're Jung at heart.

Hilary Knight taught university English for 21 years. She believes everyone should see this play and every girl-child should receive the script at birth.



The Belfry Librarian

To help you get a bit extra out of every show, we've unleashed the librarians at the Greater Victoria Public Library on *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*. They have put together a reading and viewing list if you would like to learn more or brush up on your Shakespeare.

Fall on Your Knees
by Ann-Marie MacDonald (1996)

Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?
by James S. Shapiro (2010)

How Shakespeare Changed Everything
by Stephen Marche (2011)

Shakespeare: The World as Stage
by Bill Bryson (2007)

The Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Retracing the Bard's Unknown Travels
by Richard Paul Roe (2011)

Shakespeare Uncovered (DVD) (2013)

The Shakespeare Wars: Clashing Scholars, Public Fiascoes, Palace Coups
by Ron Rosenbaum (2006)

Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom: The True History of Shakespeare and Elizabeth
by Charles Beauclerk (2010)

Shakespeare's Pub: A Barstool History of London as Seen Through the Windows of It's Oldest Pub – The George Inn (2013)

Shakespeare's Restless World
by Neil MacGregor (2012)

A Thousand Times More Fair: What Shakespeare's Plays Teach Us About Justice
by Kenji Yoshino (2011)

List Compiled by Ursula Benoit, GVPL.

AFTERPLAY WEEKS

Sept 24 – 28 / Oct 8 – 12
Ever want to "debrief" after seeing a show? Or maybe you're curious how other audience members interpreted the play. Stick around after the evening performances on the dates listed above, and chat with fellow audience members. Facilitated by a Belfry staff member.

TALKBACK THURSDAY

Thursday, Sept 26
Following the 8pm performance of *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, join the actors from the show and your fellow audience members for a 20-minute Q & A session.



Sunday, October 27
from 5 – 8 pm
Inn at Laurel Point
Crush ~ A Fine Wine Affair ~ returns as the Belfry Theatre's fundraising event of the season!
The beautiful Inn at Laurel Point provides the perfect setting for an evening of fine wine, sumptuous catering, and exceptional company.

Performance Schedule September 14 – October 20, 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
SEPT 8	9	10	11	12	13	14 11 am B4Play
15	16	17 8 pm Preview	18 8 pm Preview	19 8 pm Opening	20 8 pm	21 4 pm 8 pm
22 2 pm	23	24 12 pm 8 pm Afterplay	25 1 pm 8 pm Afterplay	26 8 pm TalkBack	27 12 pm 8 pm Afterplay	28 4 pm 8 pm Afterplay
29 2 pm	30	OCT 1 12 pm 8 pm	2 1 pm 8 pm	3 8 pm Belfry 101	4 12 pm 8 pm	5 4 pm 8 pm
6 2 pm	7	8 8 pm Afterplay	9 8 pm Afterplay	10 8 pm Afterplay	11 8 pm Afterplay	12 4 pm 8 pm Afterplay
13 2 pm	14	15 8 pm	16 8 pm	17 8 pm	18 8 pm	19 4 pm 8 pm
20 2 pm Closing	Library events / for locations – www.belfry.bc.ca					

Previews / Tuesdays at 8 pm	\$ 25
Wednesday Matinees at 1 pm	\$ 30
Wednesday / Thursday at 8 pm	\$ 35
Friday / Saturday at 8 pm	\$ 40
Saturday Matinees at 4 pm	\$ 35
Sunday Matinees at 2 pm	\$ 30

Student and Senior discounts available.

Tickets

250-385-6815 /
tickets.belfry.bc.ca

BOX OFFICE HOURS	During Performance Weeks
Monday Tuesday – Saturday Tuesday – Sunday	9:30 am – 5 pm 9:30 am – 7 pm one hour prior to curtain time for in person sales only.
Monday – Friday	During Non-performance Weeks 9:30 am – 5 pm

thanks to our Production Sponsors for
GOODNIGHT DESDEMONA (GOOD MORNING JULIET):



For more information on any of these events please visit

www.belfry.bc.ca

cast & creatives



Daniela Vlaskalic
Constance



Michael Dufays
Othello



Nicola Elbro
Desdemona



Pippa Mackie
Juliet



Jameson M. Parker
Romeo



Ron Jenkins
Director



Camellia Koo
Designer



Michelle Ramsay
Lighting Designer



Brian Linds
Sound Designer