



Painting by Eliza Griffiths

GREAT CANADIAN THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

The Attic, the Pearl and 3 Fine Girls

A Theatre Columbus Creation

By Jennifer Brewin, Leah Cherniak, Ann-Marie MacDonald,
Alisa Palmer and Martha Ross

Directed by Alisa Palmer

JANUARY 15 - 31, 1998

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Director's Notes

Five years ago we began this project with nothing but a spot, a pearl and a few miles of technique, talent and enthusiasm. We began by creating *The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls* from non-verbal improvisations and here we found the sisters and their memories. We created text and developed scene after scene until the story found us. Then came the trunks, the dresses, the music and, at long last, the audience.

I'm delighted to return to the Fine family home, to revisit it with fresh eyes and refuelled attitudes. I thank Theatre Columbus and the Great Canadian Theatre Company for the rare opportunity to party again with the Fine sisters and our extended family of thespian collaborators.

Alisa Palmer, Director
& Script Collaborator



The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls was developed and produced by Theatre Columbus. After a three year creation period, its first performance was at the Theatre Centre in 1995. It was recently performed as a Theatre Columbus production in association with Buddies-in-Bad-Times in 1997.

Theatre Columbus is an active member of Go7, the Group of 7 Theatres, the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and the Toronto Theatre Alliance and operates under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

***The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls* Production Credits:** CARPENTERS: Ross Imrie, Jeff Manning and Keith Moulton LIGHTING: Tracy Alves, Darcy Burgess, Jeff Manning and Keith Moulton. Assistant Technical Director: Kate

SPECIAL THANKS: the Brewin sisters & big brother, the Cherniak sisters, 12 Kensington for canine compassion et al., the Lone Palmer sister and brother, John Millard, the MacDonald sisters and icky brother, the Newman sisters, Nightwood Theatre's Groundswell program, the Ross sisters, Théâtre français de Toronto, Paul Rainville, Catherine Langlois and Pelee Island Winery.

PLEASE NOTE: The use of photographic or recording devices is strictly prohibited. **Please turn off cellular phones and beepers.** Please do not walk on the stage.

The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls

A Theatre Columbus Creation

By Jennifer Brewin, Leah Cherniak, Ann-Marie MacDonald,
Alisa Palmer and Martha Ross

Cast

Leah Cherniak Jelly Fine
Ann-Marie MacDonald Jayne Fine
Martha Ross Jo-Jo Fine



Alisa Palmer Director
Dany Lyne Set, Costume & Props Designer
Andrea Lundy Lighting Designer
Allen Cole & John Millard Original Music
Cathy Nosaty Sound Designer Re-mount
Sharon DiGenova Stage Manager
Judi Pearl Apprentice Stage Manager
Shauna Jansen Assistant Stage Manager (Toronto)
Jennifer Brewin Contributing Artist

THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION.

Opening Night Catering provided by Savana Cafe

This production of *The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls* is

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Two Fine Girls on Line One

A Long Distance Chat with the Co-artistic Directors of Theatre Columbus

Martha Ross and Leah Chemiak have been playing sisters for nearly 20 years. **Leah:** *"Martha was a year ahead of me and terribly disdainful."* They were both studying in Paris at the renowned Ecole Jacques Lecoq, home and honing ground to so many clowns and creative crazies - the zanies and buffoons of the theatre.

Back in Canada, their sister act was renewed. **Martha:** *"We began very innocently. We wanted to do a buffoon show. After Lecoq, buffoon and clown are the things that stick in your mind."* **Leah:** *"We played housebound Siamese twins who were being forced from their home. A third sister, a hunchback not a twin, brings people in to meet the two in the hope that they will be enticed out into the world."*

It's the kind of quirky material that has been Theatre Columbus' trademark for the better part of two decades. Their work began with a simple mandate: *"To do our own shows our own way."* The work has been highly personal in the best way. A very strong commitment to shared intimacy - stuff that's close to the bone, whether it be the funny bone or not. Their style and working process also embraces the contribution of many collaborators. The personality and talents that actors, writers, designers, directors, choreographers, musicians and all manner of collaborators bring with them to a work marks the development of a project.

The very first collaborator, according to Leah and Martha, was the audience. When they began, the first feedback came in the form of audience reaction. **Martha:** *"We started in a lovely, old Vaudeville theatre called the Poor Alex. It leant itself to direct contact with the audience and that's always been part of our work."* **Leah:** *"We jammed off each other and then looked at the work. Sometimes we had to scratch our heads and cry a little if we didn't succeed in translating what we found funny to the audience. The movement of the work from the very personal to outward is very important to us."*

Another aspect that characterizes the work of Theatre Columbus is time. *"We do francophone theatre on anglophone budgets."* That translates into work that takes months to evolve on the kind of budget that limits theatres outside Quebec to rehearsing full length plays in a mere three weeks. But if they didn't take the time, highly acclaimed pieces like *The Attic*, *the Pearls* and *3 Fine Girls* would never have survived. The work began as a series of nonverbal exercises that eventually took form after being transcribed from videotapes. There were really dark days early on as the material seemed to be going nowhere. But in the group that included Ann-Marie MacDonald, Alisa Palmer and Jennifer Brewin, the combined perseverance and belief in the project allowed what became a three year process to bear fruit. *"You have to stick it out for the long haul because that's what it takes. It should take a long time. Things have to emerge from the work."*

Much has emerged from this creative team over the years. Award winning material and a stellar cast has come to Ottawa in Theatre Columbus' production of *The Attic*, *the Pearls* and *3 Fine Girls*.

The Company

Leah Cherniak (Jelly) is Co-founder and Co-artistic Director with Martha Ross of Theatre Columbus. She directs, acts in, and co-creates for the Company, including *The Barber of Seville*, *Still*, *The Knee Plays I & II*, and *Ratbag*. Leah directed and co-wrote *The Anger in Ernest and Ernestine*, which was published in 1990 and has been performed in theatres across the country. She has worked with a variety of theatres across Canada, including most recently *The Diary of Anne Frank* for Young People's Theatre. In 1992 she received the Pauline McGibbon Award for Directing. She also teaches clown at the National Theatre School in Montreal. Upcoming projects for Theatre Columbus include are *The Betrayal* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

Ann-Marie MacDonald (Jayne) is a writer and actor whose previous work with Theatre Columbus includes *Twelfth Night* and *The Knee Plays*. Ann-Marie last performed on the GCTC stage in the late eighties with *This Is For You, Anna*. In 1990, her play *Goodnight Desdemona, Good Morning Juliet* ran at GCTC as part of Nightwood Theatre's national tour, and in the fall of 1996, *Desdemona* returned as a GCTC production. Ann-Marie has performed and written extensively for the screen and stage. Her works for theatre include the libretto for the chamber opera, *Nigredo Hotel* (Tapestry MusicTheatre/Tarragon Theatre), and *The Arab's Mouth* (Factory Theatre). Ann-Marie is the author of the novel *Fall On Your Knees*.

Martha Ross (Jo-Jo) is Co-artistic Director and Co-founder of Theatre Columbus with Leah Cherniak. Since 1983 she has been performing and writing for the Company. Her writing credits include: *Ratbag* (with music composed by John Millard), the award-winning *Paranoia* (written in collaboration with the Company), and *Dr. Dapertutto* which was nominated for a Floyd S. Chalmers Best Play Award. In 1987 Martha collectively created (with Leah Cherniak and Robert Morgan) *The Anger In Ernest and Ernestine*. She is currently writing another musical with John Millard about three Canadians in a snow storm; upcoming roles in the Theatre Columbus season include parts in *The Betrayal* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

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The Company

Jennifer Brewin (Contributing Artist) has just returned from seven months working with The Caravan Farm Theatre for whom she directed the winter sleigh-ride show, *The Winter Rose*, and the young company's adaptation of *Alice In Wonderland*. While at The Caravan Farm Theatre, she managed the theatre's day-to-day operations, stacked firewood and fed the chickens. Her long association with Theatre Columbus began in 1986 and, over the years, her role has changed and evolved from general manager to associate artist. With the Company she has worked as dramaturge on *Still*, *Betrayal* and *The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls* documenting the improvisational work and transcribing the results to text. She has also assisted Leah Cherniak in directing *The Knee Plays I & II* and teaching clown at Equity Showcase and The National Theatre School. Upcoming productions include directing a new play for the Buddies in Bad Times Rhubarb Festival and producing Sean Dixon's new play *Aerwacol*.

Allen Cole (Original Music) was last seen at Theatre Columbus as Music Director of *Ratbag*. He has received two Dora Mavor Moore Awards for his musical direction on *Hush* and *A Play About the Mothers of Plaza De Mayo*. Allen is a versatile musician, having played in local clubs and on several recordings with Toronto bands. He was the music director for Nightwood Theatre's *Wearing the Bone*, which was created and directed by Alisa Palmer. He also composed the music for Acme Theatre's *Golgo* by Howard Baker and he composed and wrote a murder-mystery-musical called *The Wrong Son*.

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The Company

Sharon DiGenova (Stage Manager) A native of Montreal, Sharon has stage managed throughout Canada, the USA, Mexico, South America and in Tokyo and Singapore. She worked predominantly in theatre for 10 years - Canadian premieres include: *B-Movie*, *The Play*, *Love and Anger* and several years of touring with Ronnie Burkett's Theatre of Marionettes. In 1990, she joined Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, where she stage managed more than 20 productions - and developed an affinity for dance. Since that time, Sharon has worked with numerous dance companies and independent choreographers including the Randy Glynn Dance Project, three seasons with Desrosier Dance Theatre and and this season toured with *The Holy Body Tattoo* in Europe and Canada. Sharon (and partner Eryn Dace Trudell) are Co-founders of Damn Straight and Co-artistic Directors of *Forward Motion* - a series presenting dance companies, festivals and workshops at Damn Straight (Toronto). Following the run of *Attic*, she will return to Toronto to stage manage Sky Gilbert's new play *Schubert Lied*, and in March will again tour Europe with *The Holy Body Tattoo*.

Andrea Lundy (Lighting Designer) continues a long relationship with Theatre Columbus having production managed many of their shows and designed the first two productions of *The Attic*, *the Pearls* and *3 Fine Girls* as well as *The Barber of Seville*, *Knee Plays I and II* and *Twelfth Night*. She has been nominated for six Dora Awards and won three - for *Attic*, Theatre Passe Muraille's *Possible Worlds* and Die in Debt's *Oedipus*. Other design credits include Tarragon Theatre's *The Designated Mourner*, Modern Times' *August 22nd*, Theatre Passe Muraille's *Still the Night*, Platform 9's *Gulag* and *eddycandyside*, Da Da Kamera's *Here Lies Henry* and the Augusta Company's *Red Tape* and *The Lorca Play*. She is also currently the production manager at Tarragon Theatre.

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An x-production

by Aaron Sorkin

directed by Richard Gelinas

January 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31, 1998 at 10:30 p.m.

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This biting comedy examines the place of humanity in the movie business. Humanity? Movies? Laced with wit and flirting with satire, *Hidden in This Picture* blurs the boundary between fantasy and reality in the world of big budgets and little integrity.



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What do you get when you bring together three of Canada's great singer-songwriters? Shari Ulrich, Bill Henderson and Roy Forbes deliver a memorable performance of heart warming songs, superb musicianship and beautiful vocal harmonies. Peterborough's Robert Atyeo is a gifted songwriter who delivers his original compositions with plenty of spirit and feeling.

The Company

Dany Lyne (Sets, Props & Costume Design) Upcoming projects comprise *The Miracle Worker* at the Avon Theatre, Stratford Festival and *Patience* at the Tarragon Theatre. Costume Design credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Stratford Festival) and *Barber of Seville* (Mississauga Opera). Set and costume design credits include *The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls* Dora Award: Set 1997: Costumes 1995 (Theatre Columbus and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre), *Court-Yard* (Kaeja d'Dance & Movado Dance Harbourfront), *eleMENTAL* and *Mad for all Reasons* (Queen Puddings), *Froth: Costumes (Froth)*, *Reading Hebron* (Factory Theatre), *Still Moon on Fire* (Solun Theatre and duMaurier Theatre, Harbourfront), *La Voix Humaine*, *Tartuffe*, *Les Fantastiques*, *Johnny Mangano and His Astonishing Dogs* and *Surprise! Surprise!*: Set and Costumes (Théâtre français de Toronto), *Through the Eyes: Costumes* (Nightswimming), *Murmel Murmel Mortimer Munsch* (The Grand Theatre), and *Twelfth Night: Costumes* (Dream in High Park, Canadian Stage Company). Dany Lyne has a M.F.A. from the University of Victoria and teaches theatre arts at the Ontario College of Art and Design.

John Millard (Original Music) has composed for the CBC, The National Ballet, Necessary Angel Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, The Canadian Stage Company, The National Theatre School, The National Film Board of Canada and Theatre Columbus. He was the leader and composer for The Polka Dogs. Awards for his original music include a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Theatre Columbus' *The Barber of Seville* and a Gemini for Joe Vismeg's film *In My Own Time*. Mr. Millard lives in Toronto with his wife Martha Ross and their daughter Lilly.

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by Wendy Lill

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February 25 - March 15, 1998

Directed by Richard Rose

Starring

John Cleland, Chris Heyerdahl,

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Love appears for Margaret in the form of Neil Currie, a proud, bagpipe-playing, gentle giant of a man, and her life, as hard as nails, is lifted up to become as lyrical and lilting as a Scottish song.

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The Company

Cathy Nosaty (Sound Design Re-mount) is a musician, composer and sound designer. Recent productions include original scores for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* for Manitoba Theatre for Young People, *Quills* for Manitoba Theatre Centre's Warehouse Theatre, *The Other Side of the Closet* for Young People's Theatre and *Random Acts*, directed by Alisa Palmer, for Nightwood Theatre. At GCTC, she composed the music for *Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* and, in the spring, will be providing music for the upcoming world premiere of *Pauline and Turgenev*. Other upcoming projects include the premiere productions of *Street of Blood* for Ronnie Burkett's Theatre of Marionettes and *The Betrayal* by Theatre Columbus.

Alisa Palmer (Director) is a director, writer and performer. She's delighted to return to GCTC after directing Alan Williams' *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Other recent works include directing the premiere of Diane Flacks *Random Acts* for Nightwood Theatre, *eleMental* and *Mad for All Reasons* for Queen of Puddings Music Theatre and the premiere and remount of Theatre Columbus *The Attic, the Pearls and 3 Fine Girls* for which she received a Dora nomination for Outstanding Direction. Alisa wrote and directed *A Play About the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo* for which she received a Chalmers Award for Outstanding new Play. She collaborated and performed in *Froth: A Spectacle About Shopping and Hysteria*, a Toronto Fashion District Happening and *The Bitch*, a biting comedy at the Toronto Fringe Festival. Upcoming Eugene Stickland's *Quartet* at Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace in February and a workshop of Caryl Churchill's *The Skriker* as part of the du Maurier World Stage Festival this April. Alisa Palmer is a co-conspirator of Froth Productions and the Artistic Director of Night wood Theatre.

Judi Pearl (Apprentice Stage Manager) is pleased to be continuing her apprenticeship at GCTC, where she has previously worked on *Les Belles Soeurs*, *Frida K.*, *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* and *2000*. Other stage management credits include Theatre New Brunswick's 1997 Young Company Tour and Odyssey Theatre's 1996 production of *Ondine*.

Watch for it!

February 25 - March 15

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"Her facial expressions (sent) the audience into fits of riotous laughter... moments of corpse-like stillness ... combined with Derbyshire's lanky body and any crazy hair, suggested the inspired stillness of Stan Laurel."

"Derbyshire has got to be one of the most original talents on the continent - hell, make that the universe." - The Georgia Strait

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The Painting in the Lobby

Swoon

by Eliza Griffiths

1994

oil on canvas/huile sur toile

81 x 106 cm

Courtesy of Kirsty Jackson and Michael Dennis

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A Theatre Columbus Creation

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