



Second production of A Noise Within 2017-2018 Season

***The Madwoman of Chaillot* by Jean Giraudoux,**

Translated by Maurice Valency

Directed by Stephanie Shroyer

September 17 – November 11, 2017

Press Opening September 23

(Pasadena, CA – September 6, 2017) **A Noise Within (ANW)** presents the second production of its 26th season, 2017-2018, *The Madwoman of Chaillot* by Jean Giraudoux and translated by Maurice Valency. Directed by Stephanie Shroyer, the poetic, surreal, and comic fable features ANW favorite Resident Artist Deborah Strang as Countess Aurelia, the Madwoman herself, performing September 17 through November 11, 2017 (Press Opening September 23).

Oil is discovered under Paris, and Countess Aurelia and her kooky coterie are determined to drive away the evil corporate profiteers lying in wait. ANW Producing Artistic Director Geoff Elliott says the play is “A can’t-miss, rallying cry for those who crave a satisfying David vs. Goliath fable in the form of incisive, wildly comic theatre. Think Molière, Feydeau, Beaumarchais, Wilde.”

Shroyer returns to direct at ANW with the signature visually stunning aesthetic she brought previously to an acclaimed comedic take on George Bernard Shaw’s *You Never Can Tell* in 2016.

“Giraudoux loves to create the fantastic and imbue an otherworldly aspect to something very identifiable to us. He brilliantly challenges us with scenarios that seem fantastical, but make us question our actions if we were put in the same situation. What would you do if oil were discovered in your backyard? This play is so subtle, and so funny, and stays with you long after it’s over,” says Director Stephanie Shroyer.

Written in 1943, *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (*La Folle de Chaillot*) focuses in on three businessmen in Paris as they plot to destroy the City of Light, the center of culture, in order to unearth oil--located by The Prospector’s sense of smell--in the neighborhood. One character asks, “What would you rather have in your backyard: an almond tree or an oil well?”

These grandiose plans come to the attention of the Countess, The Madwoman of Chaillot, whose ostensibly dotty and eccentric exterior masks her practical worldly goodness and common sense. She enlists the help of her fellow outcasts: The Ragpicker, The Street Singer, The Sewer Man, The Flower Girl, The Sergeant, and various other oddballs and dreamers. These include her fellow madwomen: the acidic Constance, the girlish Gabrielle, and the ethereal Josephine.

At a tea party worthy of the other side of the looking glass, she brings together the spoilers of the earth and wreckers of its happiness. Lured by the scent of oil and undreamed-of riches, she sends them, one by one, into a bottomless pit that opens out of her cellar.

The humanity and striking relevancy to current affairs is what drew Elliott and Producing Artistic Director Julia Rodriguez-Elliott to bring *Madwoman* to ANW for the Fall 2017-18 season:

“This fall, all of our protagonists embrace love. They pay it forward, and by doing so make a positive difference to the lives around them. The Madwoman of Chaillot is in her twilight years, but she takes a stand for future, unnamed generations.”

Tickets for *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, starting at \$25, are available online at www.anoisewithin.org and by phone by calling 626-356-3100. A Noise Within is located on the corner of Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Villa Avenue at 3352 East Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107, just north of the Madre Street exit off the 210.

Variety said *The Madwoman of Chaillot* is “a healing fairy tale about the triumph of human kindness over the corruptive forces of evil.” Critic John Chapman in “The Best Plays of 1948-1949” noted, it was “rare, exhilarating, original and inspired ... an extraordinary mixture of hard-headed irony and *Alice in Wonderland* whimsy. Brooks Atkinson said in The New York Times, “original and inspired ... a wise fantasy by a man who had dreamed of an impossibly noble life and who criticized it with grace and compassion. Now we know how much light went out of the world when Jean Giraudoux died.”

In the late 1960s, as both the Vietnam War and protests against it escalated, *Madwoman* became both an American musical, entitled *Dear World* starring Angela Lansbury, with music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, and a film version, directed by and with a screenplay by Bryan Forbes from the Valency translation, starring Katherine Hepburn, Paul Henreid, Oskar Homolka, Yul Brynner, Richard Chamberlain, Edith Evans, and Donald Pleasence.

Jean Giraudoux, whose name appears graffitied on a Parisian wall in François Truffaut's 1959 film *The 400 Blows*, was born in Bellac, Haute-Vienne, where his father, Léger Giraudoux, worked for the Ministry of Transport. Giraudoux studied at the Lycée Lakanal in Sceaux and, upon graduation, traveled extensively in Europe. After his return to France in 1910, he accepted a position with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With the outbreak of World War I, he served with distinction and in 1915 became the first writer ever to be awarded the wartime Legion of Honour. He married in 1918 and in the subsequent inter-war period produced the majority of his writing.

He first achieved literary success through his novels, notably *Siegfried et le Limousin* (1922) and *Eglantine* (1927). An ongoing collaboration with actor and theater director Louis Jouvet, beginning in 1928 with Jouvet's radical streamlining of *Siegfried* for the stage, stimulated his writing. But it was his plays that gained him international renown. He became well known in the English-speaking world largely because of the award-winning adaptations of his plays by Christopher Fry (*The Trojan War Will Not Take Place*) and Maurice Valency (*The Madwoman of Chaillot*, *Ondine*, *The Enchanted*, *The Apollo of Bellac*).

The Madwoman of Chaillot cast includes Michael Sturgis as the Waiter, Armin Shimerman* as the Prospector, Wesley Mann* as the President, Apollo Dukakis* as the Baron, George Villas* as the Rag Picker, Jay Lee as the Street Juggler, Deborah Strang* as Countess Aurelia, Rafael Goldstein* as Pierre, Steve Weingartner* as The Sewer-Man, Susan Angelo* as Mme. Constance, Jill Hill* as Mme. Gabrielle, Veralyn Jones* as Mme. Josephine, and Richy Storrs in multiple roles. *denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association

Stephanie Shroyer is an Associate Professor of Theatre Practice and the Associate Artistic Director at the USC School of Dramatic Arts. She is a Los Angeles-based director, choreographer and actor. She has directed and/or choreographed at the American Conservatory Theatre, the Denver Center, the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, and locally at the Pasadena Playhouse, the Matrix, the Pacific Resident Theatre, A Noise Within, the Laguna Playhouse, the Odyssey, Stages, Antaeus, Alliance Repertory, 24th Street Theatre, The Met and Cal Arts. Shroyer has acted professionally at The American Conservatory Theatre, Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, the Denver Center and on film and television. Former Artistic Director of Pacific Resident Theatre, the company was honored with the Margaret Harford Award for Continuous Achievement from the LA Drama Critics. A two-time recipient of the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for her direction, Shroyer's other directorial and acting recognitions include Ovation and LA Weekly nominations, nine Drama-Logue Awards and a Garland Award.

Symposium, Conversations, Pay What You Can

The run of *The Madwoman of Chaillot* includes a pre-performance symposium on Wednesday, September 20 at 6:30 pm, post-performance conversations with the artists on Sunday, October 1 at 2:00 pm, Friday, October 20 at 8 pm, and Friday, October 27 at 8:00 pm, and a Pay What You Can performance on Thursday, September 21 at 7:30 pm.

More about the 2017-2018 season

The 2017-2018 Season is themed *Entertaining Courage*. In the fall, *The Madwoman of Chaillot* is preceded by *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, adapted by Mike Poulton, and directed by Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott (September 3- November 19, 2017), and is followed by *Mrs. Warren's Profession* by George Bernard Shaw, directed by Michael Michetti (October 8–November 18, 2017). Then ANW's holiday tradition continues for the sixth year with *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, adapted for the stage by Geoff Elliott, directed by Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott (December 1–23, 2017).

Shakespeare's *Henry V*, and *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry play in rotating repertory in early spring 2018, and the season closes with a revival of one of ANW's most popular productions, *Noises Off* by Michael Frayn. With the exception of *Noises Off* and *A Christmas Carol*, all of the season's plays make their debut on the A Noise Within stage.

"Regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum, we're certainly living in challenging, unprecedented times," says Geoff Elliott, "It seems like many people are trying to figure out what the path forward looks like. While we certainly don't have answers, we thought we'd face that national angst and fear head on by embracing courage and hope."

Elliott continues: "These plays all feature characters who make bold choices to do something—anything—in the face of disaster."

Julia Rodriguez-Elliott continues, "In addition to being very entertaining theatrical works, our plays examine courage from a variety of points of view, intimate and global, low-stakes and high-stakes: whether it's just about carrying on and going onstage while the set falls apart around them (*Noises Off*) or if it's for the ecological future of a Parisian neighborhood (*The Madwoman of Chaillot*)."

Geoff Elliott says, "This is a season that asks tough, if fascinating, questions about the nature of courage, and there are no easy answers. Spending time with these fascinating characters allows us to think about our lives, reflect and even be inspired by them."

About A Noise Within

A Noise Within, which celebrated its 25th Anniversary last season, was called “an oasis for those who love classic stories told in a classic way” by *The Los Angeles Times*, and is a leading regional producer based in Pasadena, CA. ANW’s award-winning resident company practices a rotating repertory model at their state-of-the-art, 283-seat performing space. This venue, established in 2011, has allowed ANW to expand its audience, surpassing its previous box office, subscription, and attendance records each year. In addition to producing world-class performances of classical theatre, the organization runs robust education programs committed to inspiring diverse audiences of all ages. Helmed by Producing Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, who hold MFAs from San Francisco’s American Conservatory Theatre, A Noise Within truly delivers CLASSIC THEATRE, MODERN MAGIC.
www.anoisewithin.org

Calendar Listing: *The Madwoman of Chaillot*

By Jean Giraudoux

Directed by Stephanie Shroyer

At A Noise Within, 3352 E Foothill Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107

Performances:

Sunday, September 17 at 2:00pm

Wednesday, September 20 at 7:30pm

(*Symposium* 6:45pm)

Thursday, September 21 at 7:30 pm

(*Pay What You Can*)

Friday, September 22 at 8:00 pm

Saturday, September 23 at 8:00pm (*Opening Night*)

Sunday, September 24 at 2:00pm

Sunday, October 1 at 2:00 and 7:00pm

(*Conversations* at 2pm)

Friday, October 20 at 8:00pm (*Conversations*)

Saturday, October 21 at 2:00 and 8:00pm

Thursday, October 26 at 7:30 pm

Friday, October 27 at 8:00pm (*Conversations*)

Sunday, November 5 at 2:00 and 7:00pm

Saturday, November 11 at 2:00 and 8:00 pm

Tickets and information:

Website: www.anoisewithin.org, Phone: 626-356-3100

Regular Prices: Single Tickets from \$25.00, Student Rush with ID an hour before performance \$20.00

Groups (10 or more): Adults from \$30/ticket; Students from \$18/ticket

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