

"Misalliance" to open; sponsored by Theatre Department

February 23, 1987

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SHAW'S "MISALLIANCE" TO OPEN MARCH 6 AT UCSD

The vivid, pithy language and outrageous humor of George Bernard Shaw will prevail during the mid-March run of "Misalliance" at the Mandell Weiss Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of the University of California, San Diego.

This extravagant comedy, running March 6-8 and 11-14, will be directed by British guest artist Robert Robinson and performed by graduate students in UCSD's Department of Theatre Professional Training Program. Curtain time is 7 p.m. on Sunday and 8 p.m. all other performances.

"Although the play's themes are serious, its expositions are almost farcical," Robinson explains. "Shaw believed one could teach more through laughter than earnestness. 'Misalliance' is the quintessential discussion or debate play. It wouldn't work unless it were full of humor."

"Misalliance," as its title infers, deals with human relationships which, by their very nature, are likely to be discordant. Set in the conservatory of a gracious English country home in 1909, the play explores the embattled relationship between parent and child and the prickly nature of an engagement that will unite middle class with upper crust.

But Shaw gives both themes a wry twist. Rather than belaboring the difficulties of child and parent, he illuminates instead the success children so often have in relating to other people's parents.

He also turns marriage between classes on its head. In this instance, Robinson comments, "it is the middle class who are very nervous about marrying into the upper class, instead of the other way around. Shaw's middle class don't really want the aristocracy around."

Born in Dublin in 1859 and buried in England in 1950, Shaw was a prolific dramatist, a literary critic, an outspoken champion of Socialism and winner of the 1925 Nobel Prize for Literature. He was an authority on Wagner, Mozart, Ibsen, Marxism, politics, Christianity, saints and martyrs, family planning, family life, prostitution, vaccination, vegetarianism, theatre design, and numerous other topics.

In the program notes for the UCSD production, Robinson describes the playwright as "uniquely Irish in his musicality, his extravagance with words and elegance in arranging them; and uniquely English in his down-to-earth practicality, his sense of order and justice, his doggedness, and one might say it, the exaggerated expectation that words once uttered or transcribed, will automatically translate into action."

Robinson has directed "Misalliance" twice before, but this is the first time he has staged it with an American cast. He expects the UCSD production to take on an entirely different flavor.

"These are very talented, thoughtful actors who are not bound by the Shavian tradition. They see things that British actors wouldn't see. And Shaw can take that kind of treatment. The man was a theatrical revolutionary and radical. He would be horrified to think his works had become museum pieces," Robinson said.

Robinson's theatrical career began in 1954 when he played modest roles in "Richard III" and "All's Well That Ends Well" in the inaugural year of the Stratford Festival in Ontario. The season, directed by Tyrone Guthrie, starred two of theatre's best, Sir Alec Guinness and Irene Worth.

Following Stratford, he obtained scholarships to the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. After nearly twenty years on London stage and screen, he shifted into directing.

His directing engagements have taken him into theatres throughout the world. Among the many and varied pieces he has staged are "Becket" at the Gateway Theatre in Edinburgh, "Love's Labor Lost" at the Thorndike Theatre in Leatherhead, England, "The Man in the Glass Booth" at the National Theatre in Nairobi, Kenya, and "Side By Side By Sondheim" at the Bronfman Centre in Montreal.

He has worked in the United States for five years, staging productions at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco, the Drama Studio in Berkeley, the Actors' Guild in Tacoma, Wash., Playhouse on the Square in Memphis, Tenn., Theatre 40 in Beverly Hills, the Eugene O'Neill Centre in Connecticut, and the University of Southern California, among a host of other theatres.

"Misalliance" is the exhibition piece for third year acting students in UCSD's Masters of Fine Arts program. The cast includes Peter Carlton Brown, Brad Cottrill, Julie Briskman, Veronica Henson-Phillips, Tom Santos, Randy Braunberger, Eugene Nesmith, Maria Louise Porter, and Shishir Kurup.

Victoria Petrovich is scenic designer; Suzanne Cranfill, costume designer; Randa Rai Slack, lighting designer; and David Leyton, sound designer. The stage manager is Cari Norton.

Tickets for "Misalliance" are \$5 (student) and \$9 (general), available at the Mandell Weiss Center Ticket Office, the UCSD Student Center Box Office, the ARTS/TIX booth in downtown San Diego and all TicketMaster outlets. For information and charge-by-phone, call 534-4574.

UCSD Theatre presents

MISALLIANCE

A Debate in One Sitting

By George Bernard Shaw

Director: Robert Robinson

Scenic Designer: Victoria Petrovich Costume Designer: Suzanne Cranfill Lighting Designer: Randa Rai Slack

Sound Designer: David Leyton

Stage Manager: Cari Norton

CAST:

JOHNNY TARLETON - Peter Carlton Brown

BENTLY SUMMERHAYS - Brad Cottrill

HYPATIA TARLETON - Julie Briskman

MRS. TARLETON - Veronica Henson-Phillips

LORD SUMMERHAYS - Tom Santos

MR. JOHN TARLETON - Randy Braunberger

JOEY PERCIVAL - Eugene Nesmith

LINA SZCEPANOWSKA - Maria Louise Porter

MR. GUNNER - Shirshir Kurup

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