

# TARRAGON THEATRE

## 32<sup>nd</sup> SEASON 2002-2003

“Tarragon Theatre has skimmed the cream of Canadian playwrights for its 2001-2002 season.” **Robert Crew, *Toronto Star*, 2001**

“What a miracle the Tarragon is, really.”  
**David MacFarlane, *Globe & Mail*, 2000**

“Tarragon [has] the key position at the centre of Canada’s theatrical stew.”  
**Mira Friedlander, *Globe & Mail*, 1997**

### **About Tarragon Theatre**

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Tarragon Theatre was founded in 1970, Bill Glassco was Artistic Director until 1981; Urjo Kareda was Artistic Director until his death in December, 2001; Richard Rose became Artistic Director at the beginning of the 2002-2003 season.

### **Tarragon Achievements**

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Over 175 Canadian premieres by such celebrated and award-winning playwrights such as David French, James Reaney, George F. Walker, Judith Thompson, John Murrell, John Krizanc, Don Hannah, Joan MacLeod, Wendy Lill, Morris Panych, Jason Sherman, Guillermo Verdecchia, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Daniel Brooks, Diane Flacks, Richard Greenblatt, Ted Dykstra, Ken Garnhum, Michael Healey, Jonathan Wilson, Morwyn Brebner, Mavis Gallant, Kristen Thomson and a host of others.

Tarragon is the foremost producer, in English Canada, of translated plays from Québec, most notably the work of Carole Fréchette and Michel Tremblay.

Plays developed and produced at Tarragon have on many occasions, toured nationally and internationally; they have also been widely published, broadcast and filmed. Tarragon has received more than 200 Dora Award nominations, many nominations (and winners) for the Chalmers Canadian Play Award and many nominations for the Governor General’s Award for Drama (winners include Judith Thompson, Joan MacLeod, Guillermo Verdecchia, John Krizanc, Jason Sherman and Morris Panych, all for Tarragon plays). Tarragon has received the Lieutenant Governor’s Award 4 times in the past 6 years.

Each season over the past 6 years, the number of people subscribing to the Tarragon has grown by an average of 15%. In the 2002-2003 season Tarragon has 4,090 subscribers. Tarragon is deficit-free.

The Urjo Kareda Playwrights Endowment Fund, named to honour Urjo’s commitment to Canadian theatre, stands at \$1 million. Income from the fund is used to assist playwrights while they are writing their plays.

## **Tarragon Programs**

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Seven or eight major productions in two theatres each season. In the 2001-2002 season, there were eight productions (339 performances) with 49,854 paid attendance.

Playwrights Unit (since 1982). As many as 7 playwrights, with works-in-progress work individually and collectively with the artistic director and the associate artistic director over the course of a year. These plays are given a public reading during Play Reading Week, held in mid-December.

5 playwrights-in-residence.

Young Playwrights in Schools Program – co-op credit program provided in conjunction with Toronto District School Board.

Tarragon Theatre/George Brown College New Play Development Project – a Tarragon playwright will write a play to be workshopped by second year acting students at George Brown College in order to give the students a sense of the development process and their role as actors within it.

Spring Arts Fair (since 1985): an extraordinary free celebration of the performing arts, presented in spaces throughout the interior and exterior of Tarragon Theatre.

OutReach programs aimed at youth including Spring Training Project, Young Playwrights Unit, *Under 20 for Under 20's* playwriting contest, high school and post-secondary co-op placements.

OutReach programs aimed at educators including Teacher Nights and educator workshops.

Apprentice programs in arts administration and stage management.

## **Tarragon Special Services**

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Over 500 scripts professionally read and assessed annually without charge. Student and senior matinees. Teachers provided with a complimentary study guide. Pay-What-You-Can performances every Sunday afternoon. Costume and prop rentals for professional and community companies. Wheelchair accessibility throughout facility. Complimentary tickets donated to community and social service groups for fundraising events.

# TARRAGON THEATRE

## study guide



a co-production with Centaur Theatre, Montreal

**Starring: Diana Donnelly, Patricia Hamilton, Robert Persichini, Dixie Seatle**

**Directed by Diana Leblanc  
Set design by Guido Tondino  
Costume design by Jan Cogley  
Lighting design by Steven Hawkins  
Assistant director: Graham Cozzubbo  
Stage Manager: Wendy Rockburn**

**December 27, 2002 – February 2, 2003**

## About the *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* study guide

This study guide has been created so that your theatre experience at Tarragon is a fulfilling and engaging one. We hope that it will help create discussions, generate ideas and prompt many questions.

The *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* study guide was coordinated by Mary B. Wood with contributions from Cheryl Perrotta, Ryan Cleary and Deanna Di Lello, Kristen Van Alphen and Mary B. Wood from Tarragon's **OutReach** department.

Special thanks and acknowledgements to Andy McKim.

The *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* study guide is divided into the following sections:

1. **Themes** and **theatrical elements** in *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*.
2. **Additional resources** including information about Richard Strauss, *Salome*, the Parti Québécois and other plays by Michel Tremblay.
3. **Pre show lesson plans** for your class grounded in the Dramatic Arts curriculum.
4. **Post show lesson plans** for your class grounded in the Dramatic Arts curriculum.

We encourage you to contact Mary B. Wood should you have any questions or comments at (416) 536-5018 x243.

## Impromptu on Nuns' Island

*"I'd rather get shot down in action, risking everything, than just peter out, by playing safe."*

**Patricia Paquette**

Michel Tremblay's new work, *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*, is a tour-de-force about art, artists, life and Canadian politics. The following will provide insight into Michel Tremblay's **artistic process** while creating *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*, information about topics vital to the understanding of the play (including *Salome*, the Parti Québécois, etc.), various themes and character development.

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### About the Playwright

Michel Tremblay, a native of Montréal, Québec, was an ardent reader early on and began to write, in secret, as a teenager. In 1959 he entered the "Institut des arts graphiques" (graphic arts institute), following in his father's footsteps as a printer and linotype operator. He worked as a linotypist between 1963 and 1966 while composing his first play, *Le Train*, which won first prize in the 1964 competition for young authors sponsored by Radio-Canada (CBC). The play was performed twice. In 1966 he published his first novel, *Contes pour buveurs attardés* and produced, a work in one act called *Cinq* which was performed in 1966. *Cinq* would be reworked to become *En pièces détachées*. In these early works he incorporated aspects of his own life and the lives of his family and friends. There is still speculation about how much of his "Le Plateau" (formerly a working class neighbourhood in Montréal) plays and characters like Édouard, Thérèse, Albertine and Marcel are based on his actual relatives.

On a Canada Council grant, Tremblay went to work in Mexico and wrote a fantasy novel, *La cité dans l'oeuf* and the first of his gay works *La Duchesse de Langeais*, a monologue about a transvestite (Édouard, who appears in many other works of drama and fiction) who uses quick wit and panache to survive a humdrum life.

He had, by this time, struck up a friendship with the young André Brassard who had run into him at theatres around town and with whom he would occasionally walk home after a play, discussing theatre all the way.

In 1968, *Les Belles Soeurs* received a public reading at the "Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques" and was picked up by Yvette Brind'Amour, artistic director for the Théâtre du Rideau Vert. This production changed the course of French Canadian theatre history. A debate followed as the play incorporated joul (Québécois slang) and a lot of swearing. As well, the characters were working class Montréalers who dared to discuss the role of women in Québec society, immigration, sex and abortion.

Since *Les Belles Soeurs*, professional productions of Tremblay works are practically an annual affair. Tremblay's plays are performed in revival, on tour, and in English translation. A year has not passed since 1968 where several professional companies in Canada perform his works. In 1999, he received a Governor General's Award and, in 2000, *Encore une fois, si vous le permettez* (*For The Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*) won a Chalmers Award and a Dora Mavor Moore Award.

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## About the Play:

### Setting:

The play is set in Montréal in the spring of the present day. The action takes place in the penthouse of opera singer Patricia Pasquetti (aka Patricia Paquette) which is located in the exclusive Montréal suburb of Nuns' Island, known for its fashionable condos.

### Synopsis:

Patricia Pasquetti has unexpectedly flown back to Montreal from an engagement in Paris. She has hit a false note during the grand finale of *Salome* by Richard Strauss. Although the audience ignores the mistake, the false note is the beginning of the unravelling of her career. In an attempt to override the event Patricia demands that her long-time accompanist, Richard, fly to Paris where she stages a last minute concert. Upon her return to Montreal Patricia finds both her daughter Michelle, an aspiring actress and mother Estelle, a grand dame of Québec theatre determined to confront her self-deceptions. Richard is also interested in confronting Patricia about the treatment he receives from her and seeks out a therapist to bolster his confidence. As the play opens the audience is treated to scenes between Patricia and Michelle intertwined with those of Richard and his therapist, allowing us to view concurrently two perspectives on the same events.

Throughout the play we are witness to a generational crisis, an artistic crisis and an exploration of the last forty years of Québec's political and cultural life. It is a play about artists, family, and cultural politics.

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## Character outlines

### **Estelle Bergeron:** late sixties

Estelle is the matriarch of the family. Her nature is condescending and sometimes even cruel. She is a professional actor, and has a successful career in her native Québec.

### **Patricia Pasquetti:** late forties

Patricia changed her last name from Paquette, to the more Italian sounding Pasquetti in order to reflect her international opera career. In the last couple of years she has been receiving less than favourable reviews (and some suspect that her voice is breaking at a slightly early age). She deludes herself and her family by pretending that she has many years of international opera singing left. She loves her daughter but not always available to her as she spends so much time performing in operas around the world like Berlin, Florence and Paris.

### **Michelle Paquette:** late twenties

Michelle supports her mother (Patricia) and tries to help her cope with the fact that her opera career is coming to an end. She is an emerging French Canadian actor in her own right.

### **Richard:** early forties

Richard is Patricia's piano accompanist. He refers to himself as "a famous diva's pet poodle", because of Patricia's inconsiderate treatment of him. Richard spends much of the play in his psychiatrist's office, complaining about Patricia and saying how he wishes he could confront her.

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## Themes and Ideas in *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*

Although his plays are often set in Montréal and about French Canadians, Michel Tremblay's themes speak to Canadians of all regions and cultural backgrounds. In *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* he presents us with three generations of artists. All of them dynamic, all of them troubled,

these characters examine the issues of art and politics while simultaneously looking for approval and acceptance.

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## Family Dynamic

*"We live on different planets, Ma."* Michelle

There is nothing quite like the conflict that occurs when a family is portrayed on stage. In *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* Tremblay examines the complex, and slightly dysfunctional, mother-daughter relationship.

When Michelle's television show rehearsals prevent her from picking up Patricia at the airport, Patricia is more concerned with her public image (how it looked because no one was there to greet her) than disappointment in not seeing her daughter. She never inquires about her daughter's life despite the fact that she has not seen her in eight months.

While Estelle is honest with Patricia, she is rarely considerate of her feelings. She tells her that acting is a far superior art form to opera where *"...all you know how to do is make faces, wave your arms and hit pretty notes! Even when you get to work with great directors, you can't pull it off because you're not interested!"*

The only relationship that seems moderately healthy is the one shared between Estelle and her granddaughter Michelle. Unlike Patricia, Estelle has watched Michelle perform since theatre school and exclaims that it would be an honour to perform with her.

Despite their over-bearing nature, there is still love between the three women. Their concern for each other is deeply felt, although not always appropriately expressed.

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## Points of View

Dramatic conflict arises from two opposing points of view. In *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* this is evident in the scenes of Patricia and Richard where both simultaneously recount their versions of the events in Paris or in scenes between Michelle and Patricia when they argue the value of acquiring international success or continuing the fight for Quebec separatism. However, *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* also offers the audience a rare opportunity to hear three points of view articulated. The final third of the play allows Estelle to weigh in on matters of family, career and politics and she offers a perspective that is different from both her daughter and granddaughter. This is a valuable conceit, which underscores that solutions for complicated situations – such as family or politics – are rarely black or white. By having three opinions the audience is relieved of taking sides and can enter the exchange of ideas with opinions of their own.

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## Low Self Esteem

Both Patricia and Richard suffer from low self-esteem, though each deals with it in a different way.

A confident person would not need to draw attention to their accomplishments, but as Michelle points out to Patricia, *"...you really lay it on when you're with your old friends, rubbing their noses in your great fame, you dazzle them with all sorts of supposedly innocent anecdotes, that you only tell to remind them, the Montréal nobodies, that you hang out with the greats in this world..."* Public approval means so much to her that rather than return to Montréal to visit her family, she only returns to escape bad reviews.

Richard has worked for Patricia as a musical accompanist for years and yet is completely intimidated by her. He keeps all of his frustrations to himself and even hesitates to answer one of Estelle's questions until he receives approval from Patricia. His condition is so severe that he decides to go into therapy in order to deal with it.

Could you be completely satisfied in your line of work if you never received praise from the co-workers, the public, friends or family?

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## Illusion/Delusion

Of the four characters present in the play, no one is a greater victim of self-delusion than opera diva Patricia. Despite her age she insists that she can sing the roles she once did and while achieving worldwide acclaim. In an attempt to recover from a poor performance in Paris, Patricia stages an impromptu recital. When recounting the event, her accompanist Richard says, *"I think she experienced the evening she wanted to experience, but not the one that took place..."*

Her mother, Estelle confronts her about her delusion saying, *"You can deny it till the cows come home, but we have ears. No matter how hard you try to disguise the notes you can't hit anymore, and pass them off as emotion, interpretation or an actress' whim, the truth is you can't hit the damn notes, anymore, period!"*

Though silently admitting her lack of public attention, Patricia is still under the illusion that she can revitalize her career and leaves Montréal to go back to France when she is not happy with the reception she receives at home.

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## Aging

Age and aging are prevalent themes in *Impromptu on Nun's Island*. Tremblay sets forth the observation that a dearth of roles exists for older performers and as a society we tend to get rid of our performers too early.

For Patricia, her craft requires her to play a variety of juvenile roles in order to be a principle performer. Patricia herself remarks that very few opera singers her age would still feel comfortable taking of their clothes to dance the "dance of the seven veils" in Salome. When her voice cracks signalling, along with recent reviews, that she is aging and her voice is tiring, Patricia is offered the role of the mother in the following season's Salome – a role she describes as being sung by those on their way out. To combat the notion that she is aging, she chooses in her concert to sing a variety of arias by very young characters to show she can still hit all the notes.

Estelle also claims that one reason she has been offered a role, as the mother of Michelle, in a television show is because she does not look her age. But she also admits that she does not have a shortage of work and certainly does not show any signs of retiring. It is interesting that the most powerful character in the play, the one who can subdue Patricia, is her mother. Tremblay has written a strong part for an older actor thereby responding to his own observation and strengthening the argument by putting his words in the mouth of a fiery grand dame.

In a recent interview playwright Michel Tremblay says, *"I talk about getting old...and being got rid of too early. I've never seen in my life an artist who dreamt of taking his leave at 55. 'Freedom 55' doesn't exist for an actor."*

As our demographic ages and more seniors live healthy, active lives, do our artistic creators have a responsibility to reflect this in their work?

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## Intertwining scenes between Richard and Patricia

As Richard talks to his therapist (no actor represents the therapist, thus allowing Richard to engage the audience by speaking directly to them) Patricia is in her penthouse conversing with daughter Michelle. In some instances Richard delivers lines just after Patricia either repeating what she has said, or presenting his view of events. Patricia and Michelle cannot hear what Richard is saying.

This dramatic effect parallels Patricia and Richard's relationship. It emphasizes Patricia's inability to hear or listen to Richard's needs and it highlights Richard's inability to speak directly to Patricia in order to establish an honest relationship with her.

Actor Dixie Seattle, who plays Patricia says, "*In several scenes Robert Persichini and I don't look at each other, so I've had to develop a strange, ethereal connection with him. I have to sensitize myself to him through the air. Maybe it's a little insight into the way Richard and Patricia synchronize when they make music together.*"

**Richard**

*The whole thing was terribly sad, actually...*

**Patricia**

*In less than two hours, I had erased everything!*

**Richard**

*Terribly sad...*

**Patricia**

*I cleared my name, my voice, my art...*

**Richard**

*It think she experienced the evening she wanted to experience, but not the one that took place...*

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## Identity

Defining Canadian identity, and our search for identity, is a major theme in Canadian art and literature. *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* is no exception.

### Personal Identity

The image Patricia projects is one of an opera diva. In truth, she is a B-list star who lacks personal confidence. The importance she places on her reviews suggests that she is dependent on others to define who she is.

Is our identity based on how we see ourselves, or how others see us? Can we choose our own identity?

Michelle claims that she had very little to do with developing her own identity. "*I never reached a point in my life when I said to myself: this is what we should believe in, this is how things should be, you drilled it into me without my asking!*" The political ideals that Michelle holds serve as a reminder to Patricia of who she used to be.

It is interesting that both Michelle and Patricia struggle for identity while nursing careers (acting and opera) that constantly require them to change who they are.

## Québec Identity

Québec has constantly struggled with trying to keep its individuality while still being a part of the greater nation that is Canada. Just as the characters in the play struggle for recognition and approval of who they are, so do the cultures within English and French Québec.

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## The Role of the Artist in Canada

Montréal playwright Michel Tremblay uses *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* as a vehicle to explore the role of the artist in Canada. All four characters in the play are artists.

### National vs. International Success

*"You can't be a real star in a town like Montréal, face it!"* Patricia

All four characters are making a professional living as artists and yet they disagree as to a definition of success.

#### Estelle

Though in her sixties, Estelle continues to act rather than retire. She would enjoy long runs in London and Paris but admits that the fast paced life style of an international opera singer is not for her. Working in Montréal satisfies her as a person and as an artist.

#### Patricia

Patricia cannot fathom the idea of grounding herself in Montréal. At one point she turns to her daughter saying, *"It's so small here, Michelle, nothing ever important happens here! Nothing makes a difference! Culturally or otherwise! Everything important happens somewhere else, comes from somewhere else!"* Success, she believes, comes only at an international level.

#### Michelle

Michelle has never been spotted by an international director, but that does not impede her from enjoying her work as a Montréal actress. For her, success does not need to include international fame, but rather the personal satisfaction of creating a new play.

#### Richard

Richard earns a living as an accompanist at the Music Conservatory and at McGill University but goes running to Patricia whenever she calls for his help. Although he does not mention success directly in the play, he expresses the personal satisfaction he receives when accompanying her saying that it's *"...a fascinating state..."*

Is there anyone who we, as Canadians, acknowledge as stars but who are unknown to the rest of the world? There is a sense in our culture that we only respect our Canadian stars if they succeed on an international level. Why do you think that is?

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## Politics and Art

Like politicians, successful artists can be dominant figures in the public eye. But unlike those who run for office, artists may not wish to share their political views. Especially in Québec, where national versus separatist politics heightened in the 1980 referendum, many artists took active part in the public debate.

Tremblay plays the political debate divulging that Estelle was awarded the Order of Canada but refused to accept it (therefore showing her independent bias).

*When Québec gives you a medal, they expect you to stay on their side, even if you no longer live here, and it's the same thing in Ottawa, they do it so you'll change sides, or because they believe you already have!* **Estelle**

Estelle does not like to be considered – in her mind – a political pawn and states that acting can do without politics.

Michelle disagrees indicating that the artist has a responsibility to society and should be actively political.

Do you agree that artists have a responsibility to be political in the public eye? Can a celebrity's political view influence the general public? Why or why not?

A parallel exists between art and politics. The characters share a common need to reach an audience, yet they disagree as to which art best achieves that goal. This reflects the greater political debate between Québec sovereigntists and federalists. Both sides disagree as to which would best cultivate Québec's "distinct culture".

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## Private Life vs. Public Life

Patricia has strict codes of action when behaving in public. When she is in France she speaks Parisian French rather than her native Québécois (sometimes called joul, the difference is in accent and colloquial expressions). She is also snobbish when appearing in public in order to keep up her opera diva image. *"If you're too nice, you're human, and a diva is supposed to be anything but human!"*

When discussing politics Estelle makes it very clear that, *"I'm with my family, with my daughter and granddaughter, and a musician who can hardly wait for me to leave so he can relax, because I terrify him! But I'd never have this conversation in public!"*

Richard talks to his therapist in private specifically because he can't talk directly to Patricia.

Do we have similar roles that we feel compelled to portray in either our public or personal life? Why do we do this? What motivates us?

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## Critics and their reviews

*"Like all best critics, he was a teacher. He didn't declaim, he instructed, which is why reading something he wrote always left you feeling wiser".* John MacFarlane on Urjo Kareda.

### The Role of the Critic

Since art is created from such a personal place, it is sometimes difficult for an artist to look at their work objectively. Critics can serve as an outside eye in helping to pinpoint where a production has succeeded and where it failed. However, due to the increase in ticket prices reviews can often be the deciding factor in whether or not to see a play. This can result in a production finding financial success or ruin depending on the nature of their reviews. This is a substantial amount of power allocated to handful of people who do not always reflect the needs of that shows' audience.

### Role of the Reviews in *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*

Patricia takes her reviews very personally since her public image is as important to her as her singing talents. Good reviews are faxed and emailed to family members while bad reviews are criticized. Her attitude towards her reviews shows her desperate need for public approval and her ongoing mission to project herself as an opera diva.

## Role of Reviewers Today

Critics review all art forms in the press. The question is, can reviewers be completely objective given that art is very interpretive and often based on personal taste? Some newspapers hire reviewers without any previous experience. Should a minimum standard be set for reviewers to guarantee that they are qualified to do their job? Can one reviewer be expected to be the cultural voice in a multifaceted city like Montréal or Toronto?

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## Elements of Design

### Set and Lighting Design

Usually, before rehearsals begin the designer meets 3 or 4 times (for a period of 4 to 8 hours) with the director. The designers and director thoroughly discuss the play to ensure all parties share a similar vision of the play, and explore how this vision will be represented through design.

***It will be interesting to take notice of the following:***

- Where on the stage certain scenes take place;
- How scenes are blocked;

The set design of ***Impromptu of Nuns' Island*** is proscenium in style (the fourth wall). The set represents both Patricia's penthouse condo and Richard's psychiatrist office.

Richard plays with the theatrical "fourth wall" convention in the scenes where he converses with his psychiatrist. He addresses his psychiatrist when in reality he is directly addressing the audience, thus allowing the audience to be further involved.

The set is varied with different levels, several entrances and exits and stairs leading to separate rooms. This allows the director to play with blocking using levels and tableau effects to illustrate power dynamics and sense of status.

The colour of the set is primarily off white. This resonates a sterile uninvited quality (Patricia hasn't been home in 8 months) of her Montréal pied à terre.

The pieces of furniture are delicate European period pieces (either authentic or replica), to further accentuate Patricia's international status and career. Large soapstone sculptures are mounted with special lighting to highlight Patricia's sophisticated interest in the fine arts.

### Lighting:

Lighting helps reinforce place, time, mood and atmosphere.

### Place

In *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* the stage is divided into Patricia's penthouse and Richard's psychiatrist's office. Though the lights are primarily up on the entire stage, lighting is used in specific sections to draw our focus from one area of the stage to the other. For instance, in one scene Richard leaves the office and the lights are dimmed. Later the lights are brought back up and the office is now an extension of Patricia's apartment.

### Time

The script does not dictate a specific time of day, but we can assume the play moves from afternoon to evening because of the designer Steve Hawkin's lighting. Characters turn on lamps in Patricia's apartment in order to counter the fading sunlight. As well Patricia had just returned from Paris and most European flights arrive in Montréal in the late morning or early afternoon.

### **Mood/Atmosphere**

During the play, Patricia and Richard describe how “magical” it is when they make music. Lights fade on the set and are focused on Richard and Patricia. This echoes a line of Richard’s, “...*Everything disappears, completely, like in a fog...*” The lighting helps bring the audience to their state of being.

Coloured gels can be placed in front of lights in order to produce either warm or cool hues. Warm hues, such as yellow, orange and red, are used to evoke a happy atmosphere. Cool hues, such as blue and purple, make for a sadder setting.

Watch during the production to see when the designer has chosen to use happy or sad hues. Were the choices effective in creating the right mood for the scene?

### **Costume Design**

When designing costumes, costume designer Jan Cogley considers several elements as part of the costume creation.

#### **Research**

Through discussion with the director, the costume designer will decide on the aesthetic together. If the play is contemporary, designers look to current fashion magazines and stores for research.

#### **Looking at the Script**

The designer also works from indications within the play’s script. For example, Estelle refers to her expensive fur coat so the character should be wearing a fur coat during the performance.

#### **Practical Considerations**

Designers must also think practically when creating. Costumes need to: allow the actors to move about the stage as required; remain effective under certain lighting; and be created within the designer’s allocated budget.

#### **Artistic Choices**

The designer studies the script and looks for hints about the characters’ personality and then makes artistic choices for the colour of the costumes, their shape, and the fabrics to be used.

**Richard** wears all brown save a scarf (which is brown, red and gray). These solid earth tone colours reinforce his melting into the background while usually going unnoticed by Patricia.

**Patricia**’s role as opera diva is reflected in her costuming. She wears classic black with heels and jewelry. Rather than wear a coat, she places a black and red shawl around her shoulders. On one arm she wears a several bracelets that jingle when she walks; symbolic of her need for attention. She wears the sides of her hair up similar to her daughter, Michelle, illustrating her need to appear younger than she is.

Unlike her mother, **Michelle** dresses in a more casual manner. She wears jeans, a red shirt, and brown shoes. During the course of the play she removes both her shoes and socks, further illustrating her sense of ease with her environment and herself.

**Estelle** enters in a magnificent fur coat. Underneath however, she is just as casual as her granddaughter, wearing jeans, a purple top and a red and gold scarf. She is comfortable and classy all at the same time. This is representative of her need to be herself and not worry about how others perceive her. Her fur coat also resonates the traditional Canadian, nationalistic dress.

## Additional Resources

### The impromptu genre:

18<sup>th</sup> century French playwright, Molière, wrote and produced two short discussion plays in 1663: *La critique de l'école des femmes* (*The School for Wives Criticized*, 1739) and *L'impromptu de Versailles* (*The Impromptu of Versailles*, 1739). These followed the impromptu style, a theatrical device, which emphasizes discussion of ideas as a vehicle for drama.

### Salomé

By Elizabeth Lee

In Christian mythology, Salome was the daughter of Herodias and stepdaughter of Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee in Palestine. Her infamy comes from causing St. John the Baptist's execution. The saint had condemned the marriage of Herodias and Herod Antipas, as Herodias was the divorced wife of Antipas's half brother Philip. Incensed, Herod imprisoned John, but feared to have the well-known prophet killed. Herodias, however, was not mollified by John's incarceration and pressed her daughter Salome to "seduce" her stepfather Herod with a dance, making him promise to give her whatever she wished. At her mother's behest, Salome thus asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Unwillingly, Herod did her bidding, and Salome brought the platter to her mother.

The popular story made for excellent subject matter in artwork of Gustave Moreau and Aubrey Beardsley, and revisions of Salome appear in literature. Oscar Wilde wrote his one-act play *Salomé*, originally written in French, to shock audiences with its spectacle of perverse passions. The censor stopped rehearsals because of the use of biblical characters, though the play did go on to be published in 1893 with an English translation following in 1894, including the famous illustrations of Beardsley.

Wilde's play became the source and inspiration for Richard Strauss's one-act opera also named *Salomé*, first produced in 1905. Herod's lust for Salome is emphasized, which Salome uses to gain her wishes by performing the famous "Dance of the Seven Veils." Salome, in turn, desires to have John the Baptist -- a new interpretation of the original myth. In the end, the only way Salome may have any part of John, quite literally, meant that she must demand his head be given to her. Salome fulfills her passion by kissing the dead lips of John's decapitated head, who had previously rejected her. This new and more familiar version of Salome depicts her as a seductress of her stepfather and a murderer of a saint, thereby becoming a symbol of the erotic and dangerous woman, the femme fatale.

### Richard Strauss

In 1905, with *Salome*, Strauss found operatic immortality as the composer of the most scandalously sensational stage production of his era. The decadence and obsessed eroticism astonished fin de siècle audiences. A Metropolitan Opera production opened one evening, closed the next, in reaction to public outcry. At the world premiere in Dresden, the first Salome, Marie Wittich, protested the staging of the infamous "Dance of the Seven Veils." "I won't do it," she exclaimed, "I'm a decent woman." And, for some years after it was traditional for a ballerina to perform the dance role as a double for the principal soprano.

While the pulpit and public registered their varied angry appraisals even the Kaiser of Germany, Wilhelm II, predicted "damage" to Richard Strauss' career and reputation. Ever the businessman, Strauss noted that over the next several years, as new productions of *Salome* continued to open before curious patrons around the globe, the "damage" provided funds to build a substantial villa at Garmisch.

### Maria Callas

Professional name of Maria Anna Sofia Cecilia Kalogeropoulos (1923-77), American operatic soprano, the preminent prima donna of her day, and the first modern soprano to revive forgotten operas of the bel canto repertoire. Born in New York City, she moved to Athens at age 13, making her first major appearance there in 1941 as *Tosca*. Callas began her career in dramatic roles such as Isolde, Brünnhilde, and Aida. After 1949, encouraged at the La Scala opera by her mentor, the Italian conductor Tullio Serafin, she turned toward coloratura bel canto roles; they included *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and many roles in long-unperformed operas. Praised for the distinctive colour of her voice, her dramatic presence, and her careful musicianship, she sang principally at La Scala, the Rome and Paris operas, Covent Garden in London, and the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

## Québec Separatism

Québec separatism has been at the centre of Canadian politics for over 30 years. The following paragraph can only begin to introduce its concepts and movement that are an integral part of our Canadian history.

In the 1960s Québec experienced a growing movement to establish it as a separate French-speaking nation. The Parti Québécois (devoted to separatism) won the 1976 provincial election and passed several measures to strengthen the movement. Under a controversial law adopted in 1977, education in English-language schools was restricted to children of English-speaking Québeckers. The charter also changed English place names and instituted French as the language of business, court judgments, laws, government regulations, and public institutions.

Although the separatist party retained power, a referendum to make the province an independent country was rejected by the Québec voters in 1980.

In 1987 the Meech Lake Accord recognized Québec as a "distinct society" and transferred extensive new powers to all the provinces. Québec promised that it would accept the 1982 constitution if the Accord was approved by all the rest of the provinces. The House of Commons ratified the Meech Lake Accord on June 22, 1988, but the Accord died on June 23, 1990, after Newfoundland and Manitoba withheld their support. A new set of constitutional proposals hammered out by a parliamentary committee was agreed upon in 1992. They called for decentralization of federal powers, an elected Senate, and special recognition of Québec as a distinct society. In a referendum held in October 1992, Canadians decisively turned down the constitutional changes. Québec voters narrowly rejected secession from Canada in a 1995 referendum.

***We encourage you to look at the following resources to further your understanding about Québec.***

### **Academic:**

*Events Issues and Concepts of Québec History* by Claude Bélanger, Department of History  
Marianopolis College, Montréal

<http://www2.marianopolis.edu/Québechistory/events/nat-all.htm>

### **Dramatic:**

*Plan B* by Michael Healey

Synopsis: High-level meetings to negotiate the departure of Québec from Canada are charged by personal impulses toward seduction and betrayal, union and division, intimacy and distance.

## René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois

To many Québécois, René Lévesque remains synonymous with the elusive dream of sovereignty even a decade after his death. The former Parti Québécois premier, who died of a massive heart attack on Nov. 1, 1987, continues to loom large over Québec politics. "The sovereigntist movement owes him everything," said Louis Balthazar, a Laval University political scientist.

"Before him the movement was a bunch of ideologues..... but he gave it credibility." After founding the Parti Québécois (PQ) in 1968, Lévesque persevered through two general election defeats before leading the separatist party to power in November 1976 -- one of the most momentous events in Canadian history. Lévesque was revered for his passion and connection with ordinary people, which helped him get re-elected in 1981 -- a consolation prize from Québécois -- after his crushing referendum loss a year earlier. Daniel Latouche, who served as a senior adviser to Lévesque, said Québécois recognized themselves in the balding and dishevelled man's down-to-earth demeanour. "He lost a lot of elections," Latouche said. "Francophones can identify with someone who has lost." Even many federalists had a soft spot for Lévesque because they believed he would not trample on basic democratic principles to achieve his political objectives. Since his death, separatists have carefully cultivated the image of Lévesque as sovereignty's spiritual father. Former premier Jacques Parizeau regularly makes pilgrimages to his grave on Nov. 1, while his successor, Lucien Bouchard, frequently invokes Lévesque's memory. His posthumous canonization by separatists has created a powerful political symbol. "Lévesque made Québécois understand that they were capable of running their natural resources, their businesses and their future," said Chevrette, now in Bouchard's cabinet. As a liberal cabinet minister in the 1960s, Lévesque spearheaded the nationalization of Hydro-Québec. He was a key figure in the province's Quiet Revolution, which transformed Québec into a modern society. He was one of Québec's greatest visionaries and one of its greatest communicators, Chevrette said of Lévesque, a TV journalist before entering politics.

## Plays by Michel Tremblay

### Albertine in Five Times

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** The story of one woman at five stages of life. The older ones warn the younger of what is to come while the younger are full of passion and hope.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1985 by the Tarragon Theatre, Toronto.

### Berthe

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** The ticket-taker at a chic cabaret spends her time dreaming of the life of a great actress, a life she longed for but never attained.

**Contained In:** *La Duchesse de Langeais and Other Plays*

### Bonjour, la, Bonjour

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Serge returns from Europe to confront his family, the kinds of love they offer him and the kinds of love he needs from them.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1975 by Tarragon Theatre, Toronto.

### Damnée Manon, Sacrée Sandra

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Two interweaving monologues on religion and sex from characters who eventually realize that they have been "invented" by the author.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1978 by Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax.

### En Pièces Detachées

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Helene is a waitress in a snack bar because she can't make it as a cocktail hostess. The frustrations of her life are matched by those of her good-for-nothing husband, neurotic mother and high-strung daughter.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1973 by the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg.

### For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** The playwright's homage to his colourful, down to earth mother who nurtured his imagination, his reclusive reading habits and his love for the theatre and the arts. In a compelling balance of humour and poignancy, Tremblay offers glimpses of himself and his mother at five different stages of their lives together.

**First Production Info:** First produced in 1998 at Centaur Theatre, Montreal.

### Forever Yours, Marie-Lou

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Leopold, Marie-Louise and their daughters Carmen and Manon are unable to communicate their frustration and longings, trapped in the web of the traditional family cell.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1972 by Tarragon Theatre, Toronto.

### Gloria Star

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Backstage at the Coconut Inn cabaret the artists gossip about one another and await the appearance of the "star."

**Contained In:** *La Duchesse de Langeais and Other Plays*

### Hosanna

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Hosanna is a man dressed as a woman dressed as Elizabeth Taylor dressed as Cleopatra, returning to his apartment after being disgraced by those whose approval he desperately sought.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1974 by Tarragon Theatre, Toronto.

### Johnny Mangano and his Astonishing Dogs

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Carlotta forces Johnny to confront what he is: the inept trainer of a third-

rate dog act.

**Contained In:** *La Duchesse de Langeais and Other Plays*

### **La Duchesse de Langeais**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** At the age of sixty, a transvestite faces disappointment in love.

**First Production Info:** First produced in 1969 by Les Insolents de Val d'Or.

**Contained In:** *La Duchesse de Langeais and Other Plays*

### **La Maison Suspendue**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** It is Victoire's anger at being forced away from the family home and her sorrow at being separated from her dreamy, impractical, fiddle playing brother that fuel the machinery of eighty years of family relationships.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1990 by the Canadian Stage Company, Toronto.

### **Les Belles Soeurs**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Germain wins a million trading stamps and invites her friends and relatives over for a pasting party during which the frustration, bitterness and poverty of their lives is revealed.

**First Production Info:** First produced in 1973 at the St. Lawrence Centre, Toronto.

### **Marcel Pursued by the Hounds**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Examines how our "innocent" childhood games and fantasies come back to haunt us in adult life, full of the dangers and realities that were invisible to us as children.

**First Production Info:** First produced in 1997 at Factory Theatre, Toronto.

### **Remember Me**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Two ex-lovers meet and compare and confess their fears and disillusionments.

**First Production Info:** First produced in 1984 by the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg.

### **Sainte-Carmen of the Main**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Carmen returns to the rodeo after studying yodelling in Nashville. She begins to write her own songs but is brutally murdered. The show goes on, with her rival playing the lead; cultural identity becomes an aberration in time.

**First Production Info:** First produced in 1978 by the Tarragon Theatre, Toronto.

### **Surprise, Surprise**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** Jeannine has arranged a very surprising surprise party for Madeleine. Laurette phones the wrong Madeleine and ruins her plans.

**First Production Info:** First produced in 1975 by Toronto Arts Productions.

**Contained In:** *La Duchesse de Langeais and Other Plays*

### **The Impromptu of Outremont**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** The four Beaugrand sisters meet once a year. Three of them live in their native Outremont, trapped by time, the choices they have not dared to make, and by the position that society has foisted upon them.

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1980 by Tarragon Theatre, Toronto.

### **The Real World?**

**Style:** Drama **Synopsis:** An earnest young playwright uses his very real family conflicts to create a parallel reality - but does he have the right to expose his family's ghosts?

**First Production Info:** First produced in English in 1988 by the Tarragon Theatre, Toronto.

**for more information contact the Playwrights Guild of Canada at [www.puc.ca](http://www.puc.ca)**

## ***Impromptu on Nuns' Island* lessons at a glance**

### **1) Pre-show Lesson 1 - Exploring role through conflict – Individual/Group Work**

This lesson is a way to engage students in role playing, help them discover that conflict is the root of all drama and understand the importance of commitment to character in their pursuit of an achievable objective.

### **2) Pre-show Lesson 2 – Performing with a minimal script – work in pairs**

Prior to viewing the show, students work in pairs on an excerpt of the *Impromptu of Nuns' Island* script. Through different directions by the teacher, students are asked to play the scene in a different manner and interpretation each time. Students thus explore clues into character building based on the script. They will perform the short scenes in front of their peers and compare their work with the performance when they see the play.

**ASSESSMENT: Teacher observation  
Journal reflection**

### **3) Post-show Lesson 1- Developing a Theatre Review – Individual/Group Work**

Following viewing the show, students will fill out an evaluation sheet that asks them to consider the elements of theatre design used in *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* and to describe their effectiveness. Using reviews of the show, students will then explore the components and criteria of the review. Using this as a foundation and using criteria developed in class, students will draft and create their own reviews using the writing process with consideration to the details of the play. A final presentation through the mediums of a radio or TV talk show will be used.

**ASSESSMENT: Performance Presentation  
Rubric**

### **4) Post-show Lesson 2 – Group Character Role Play – whole class group work**

Following the viewing of show the teacher leads the class in a whole group role play. Students take on the role of characters from the play (on stage), referred to in the script or imagined. Teacher leads the entire class in role for the duration of the period.

## Pre Show Lesson Plan 1

### Exploring role through conflict

#### Expectations:

- *Analyse the connections between the theatre, themselves, and society*
- *Explain how the portrayal of roles and characters in drama is connected to their personal experiences, to universal truths, and to specific aspects of the human experience*
- *Explain how the portrayal of roles and characters in drama is connected to their personal experiences, to universal truths, and to specific aspects of the human experience*

**Ontario Dramatic Arts curriculum**

#### Warm-up:

- Divide students into pairs
- Students decides who is A and who is B
- All the A's in the class form an "inner circle" facing towards the "outer circle" of B's
- A's talk to B's for a minute about themselves
- A's move one person to the right
- B's talk to the new A partner for one minute about themselves
- Then B's talk to A's about themselves but in the voice (in the role) of how their mother/father/guardian would talk about them
- Now's A's talk to B's in the voice (in the role) of how their mother/father/guardian would talk about them

#### Questions:

- What surprised you speaking in role about yourself from a different perspective?
- Did you learn anything new about yourself?

Emphasize the importance of being able to step completely into someone else's shoes when performing in role. This means not only physical changes (in voice or movement) but changes in perspectives and attitudes that may be dissimilar to your own.

#### Activity:

***Impromptu on Nuns' Island*** illustrates among many things, the classic conflicts between parents and children (through three generations). The following activity is a way to engage students in role playing, help them discover that conflict is the root of all drama and understand the importance of commitment to character in their pursuit of an achievable objective.

- Distribute paper to each student. Ask each student, working individually, to write about a conflict at home, with friends or at school. Some suggestions may be curfew time or doing the dishes etc. Remind students to try and be honest in their scenario because the truth will always resonate, speaking to something in all of us.
- Collect the scenarios involving conflict and pick out appropriate ones to be performed in class
- Ask for student volunteers (or delegate students) to play certain roles to act out the scenario. Remind them to try and stay in role while doing their best to reach their objective and in some cases compromise.
- Teacher should feel free to "coach" the students as they perform the improvised scenes
- After each scene ask the audience what they liked about the scene and what surprised them about the scene.

#### Journal

- What did you learn about role playing today? Be specific, give examples.

## Pre show Lesson Plan 2

### Script Analysis through performance in *Impromptu of Nuns' Island*:

#### Expectations:

- Demonstrate an understanding of subtext, motivation, and status in the development of a character
- Interpret and present a dramatic text

Ontario Dramatic Arts curriculum

#### Warm-up:

- Lead the students in a physical warm-up to prepare them

#### Materials:

- ✓ Minimal script excerpt from *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*.

#### Activity:

- Divide the students into **groups of two**
- Distribute minimal script from *Impromptu of Nuns' Island* faced down (please see attached scripts)
- Ask the students to decide who is character "A" and who is character "B" without looking at the script
- Once they have established the characters allow the students a few minutes to read the scripts

**You can use several coaching techniques for the students to work through the script. Allow a few minutes after each direction for them to rehearse and perform to each other. Pick one or two groups to present each variation in front of the class.**

1. **A** speaks very calmly while **B** is very agitated
2. Ask them to pick **3** places to **pause** within the script
3. Ask them to practice the script with **A** yelling and **B** whispering
4. Perform it with **B** standing and **A** sitting down (and vice versa)

Ask the students to perform the minimal script and continue performing into an extended improvisation

- Did performing the text in different ways give you insights into the character?
- What were they?

#### Journal:

Some questions that students can explore to greater depth in a journal format include:

- 1) Which gender were the characters? Two males? Two females? A male and a female?
- 2) Why do you think that?
- 3) What evidence in the script supports your assumptions?

Looking at *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* minimal script:

- 1) What is the nature of the characters' relationship?
- 2) What will be an actor's challenges in performing this scene to an audience?

#### Extension Possibilities:

- After seeing *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* the students can compare and contrast their scene analysis with the performance they attend
- Were the acting choices similar? Did it give the students an insight into the scene?

***Impromptu on Nuns' Island***  
minimal script

- A:** ...You didn't get the living room repainted, like I asked you?
- B:** ...you asked me last week!
- A:** It was longer ago than that!
- B:** Let's say two weeks ago....
- A:** I've always hated that café au lait.
- B:** You're the one who wanted it, you nagged for weeks!
- A:** Well, I don't want it anymore.
- B:** You'd seen it somewhere..... at Patrick Dupont's, I think –
- A:** Patrick Dupont always had lousy taste.
- B:** That's not what you said then –
- A:** Forget what I said then, and have it done pearly grey, like I asked you.
- B:** You wanted apricot pink!
- A:** I never said that!

## **Post Show Lesson 1**

### **Developing a Theatre Review**

#### **Expectations:**

- Review drama and dance performances, orally or in writing, critiquing the use of elements and techniques in the particular genre of the piece;
- Evaluate the overall effect of a performance in drama and dance, analyzing the key elements;
- Identify and discuss the qualities and skills needed to create and perform productions in drama and dance.

#### **Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum**

- Organize information and ideas creatively as well as logically, using paragraph structures appropriate for their purpose (e.g., paragraphs structured to develop a comparison or establish a cause-and effect relationship);
- Use a wide variety of sentence types and sentence structures, with conscious attention to style;
- Produce media texts using writing and materials from other media (e.g., a video documentary).

#### **Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum**

#### **Materials:**

- ✓ Post Show review sheet (see attachment)
- ✓ 2 or 3 reviews of the play from the local newspapers

#### **Assessment:**

- Evaluation (checklist)
- Rubric
- Performance Presentation

#### **Before the Lesson:**

Before the lesson students will have already seen the play and have filled out a copy of their 'Evaluation Sheet' of the play.

#### **Body:**

- Read the reviews of the play to the class and examine them carefully. Students will then respond to the reviews by doing the following:
  - In a statement or two, summarize each of the reviewer's overall impressions of the play.
  - List the criteria used by each critic in the order in which they appear in the review.
  - Do you agree with their opinions? Explain why or why not.
- Using the criteria developed in class (Rubric), students will then write their own theatre review of the play.
  - As in an essay, students need to begin with a clear statement of their thesis, i.e. their opinion of the play.
  - Cite specific examples from the play to support their point of view.
- When the review have been suitably developed (this may take a few classes using the writing process), students can then be asked to imagine they are broadcast theatre reviewers who will be reviewing *Impromptu on Nuns' Island* on either radio, or television. Students will have to:
  - Decide whether they will broadcast their review on radio or television. They must remember that the television reviewer can

enhance the segment with visuals from the show whereas on the radio, the reviewer must create “pictures” in words.

- Prepare the script for their review (either radio or television) for presentation to the class.
- Videotape or tape record their review or present “live” to the class.

**Closure:**

Present their presentations to the class.

## Performance Review Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the play about?
2. What is the time and setting of the play?
3. Who are the characters involved?
4. When you entered the theatre, what did you first notice about the set design? What clues did this give you concerning the production?
5. What do you believe were effective choices concerning the set design? What were choices that you disagreed with? Why?
6. How was lighting used in the production? Describe its use during the play (special effects, creation of mood, etc.) What colour choices were predominate during the production and why do you think these choices were made?
7. How did costume design enhance the production? Were choices made that seemed to make sense with the setting, time period, and character?
8. What did you consider to be strong elements of character development during the show? Did the choices that actors made, make sense?
9. What were weak elements in character, and what made you feel that they were weak and not deliberate choices?
10. When all the elements are put together, what did you find strong/ weak about the production?

### Sample Rubric for Theatre Review

Knowledge/ Skills	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	<b>The Student:</b>			
<b>Provides a clear statement of their thesis, i.e., their opinion in the play and cites specific examples from the play to support their point of view.</b>	-rarely communicates with clarity and precision in the statement of their thesis - provides analysis that show limited understanding, and does not give evidence to support opinions	-sometimes communicates with clarity and precision in the statement of their thesis - provides partial analysis, and gives some evidence to support opinions	-usually communicates with clarity and precision in the statement of their thesis - provides complete analysis, and gives sufficient evidence to support opinions	-consistently communicates with clarity and precision in the statement of their thesis - provides complete analysis, and gives well-considered evidence to support opinions
<b>Is able to make reference to at least three elements of design used in the production.</b>	- applies few of the skills, concepts, and techniques taught - rarely gives explanations that show understanding of the concepts	- applies some of the skills, concepts, and techniques taught - sometimes gives explanations	- applies most of the skills, concepts, and techniques taught - usually gives complete or nearly complete explanations	- applies all (or almost all) of the skills, concepts, and techniques taught - consistently gives complete or nearly complete explanations
<b>Is able to make insightful and clear opinions concerning character development, i.e., strong and weak choices made by the actor.</b>	- analyses and interprets work only with assistance - rarely uses appropriate symbols and terminology	- analyses and interprets work only with frequent assistance - sometimes uses appropriate symbols and terminology	- analyses and interprets work with occasional assistance - usually uses appropriate symbols and terminology	- analyses and interprets work with little of no assistance - consistently uses appropriate symbols and terminology
<b>Is able to use a variety of organizational structures and patterns to produce coherent and effective written work; Is able to revise, edit, and proofread to produce final drafts using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.</b>	- rarely uses a variety of organizational structures to produce coherent written work - is able to revise, edit, and proofread to produce final drafts using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation only with assistance	- sometimes uses a variety of organizational structures to produce coherent written work - is able to revise, edit, and proofread to produce final drafts using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation with frequent assistance	- usually uses a variety of organizational structures to produce coherent written work - is able to revise, edit, and proofread to produce final drafts using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation with only occasional assistance	- consistently uses a variety of organizational structures to produce coherent written work - is able to revise, edit, and proofread to produce final drafts using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation with little or no assistance

## Post-Show Lesson Plan 2

### Whole Group Role Play based on *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*:

#### Expectations:

- Demonstrate an ability to stay focused in a role
- Ability to create willing suspension of disbelief

Ontario Dramatic Arts curriculum

#### Warm-up:

- Review with students the important elements of creating a whole group role play:
  1. maintaining focus
  2. maintaining the physicality of your character throughout the role play
  3. sustaining the vocal quality of your character during the role play
  4. ability to take on, and commitment to, your characters' attitudes and beliefs

#### Activity:

- The class sits in chairs forming a circle
- The teacher tells the students that they will be taking part in a whole group role play based on the characters from *Impromptu on Nuns' Island*
- Teacher says that he/she will leave the room and when he/she returns it will be in role
- The teacher enters in the role of "**mediator**". Patricia Pasquetti's daughter and mother have called the mediator in because they are worried. They are concerned with Patricia's abrupt departure to Paris and her state of delusion whereby she refuses to come to terms with her flailing opera career.
- In this group are gathered Patricia's friends, family, colleagues and others (as imagined) to discuss her situation.
- Encourage the students that varying opinions help create conflict and will liven the role play
- Students then begin the role play.
- The teacher intervenes with probing questions to further the debate.
- It is important to make sure that each student participates and if some central characters (like Richard or Michelle) do not appear in the role play (after ¾ of the class has participated) the teacher can interject with phrases like, "*I understand that Richard is here. Richard we'd love to hear from you when you are ready.*"

#### Journal:

Some questions that students can explore to greater depth in a journal format include:  
What surprised you about your character? List two things and give examples.  
What was your favourite part of the role play? Be specific. Give examples.