

THE PERFORMANCE

THIS PRODUCTION IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED IN PART BY KARL CITEK AND PATRICIA LOGAN

DIRECTOR'S NOTES By Scott Palmer

Sometimes you just need a little drag.

This has been a loooooong 8 months for us here at Bag&Baggage. The closure of The Venetian, the cancelation of *Noises Off*, the completion of the capital campaign, and two pretty hard hitting shows back to back at the start of the season – trust me, we have all needed a break from that very difficult work.

So, I was eager to get started on something completely different. And then we started rehearsals and I realized something: doing a *Farndale* show is, in fact, one of the hardest things I've ever done as a director (and I know it is incredibly difficult for the actors too). Not only do we have to create a play about terrible actors doing terrible theatre, but we need to do that extremely well. Not only do we have to invent a billion sight gags and puns and innuendos, but we have to do it in 6 inch heels, wigs, and stuffed bras. So much for taking a break from all of that hard work!

But, in all honesty, it is very fun. These performers are a joy to spend time with and to create with, and I am particularly thrilled that Patrick Spike gets to reprise his role as Pheobe; that Norman Wilson gets to do another show with us after so many years; that Jeremy Sloan gets to expand his B&B repertoire; and that Tyler Buswell gets a crack at doing a B&B style show. Arianne, of course, is no stranger to our audiences, but this role pushes her in a decidedly different and new direction, which is also a joy. The *Farndale* shows are actually more than just camp, over-the-top shenanigans. They are actually part of a long theatrical tradition in England– a tradition that I fell in love with during my time in Scotland.

Walter Zerlin (one of the two madmen responsible for the Farndale series) is said to have taken his inspiration for the worst community theatre troupe in history from his mother. Zerlin said, "My mother had been in a local drama group for years. I always remember seeing her in shows with other women playing men's parts, and all of them doing it dreadfully." After seeing one of his mother's best (meaning worst) performances, Zerlin concocted an idea to have a group of four English housewives, all of whom were abysmal actors, attempting to mount a very serious production of Shakespeare's Macbeth, and butchering it so badly that it simply transcended serious theatre into farce. And so it began...

All of the *Farndale Avenue* shows find their beginnings in a number of grand theatrical traditions, including Commedia dell'Arte, Shakespeare and Moliere, the ancient British version of Commedia known as "Italian Night Scenes" which involved highly energetic comedy and complex stage business, Harlequinades (which were the birth place of the term and style of Slapstick comedy); British-style Pantomime (or just "Panto"); Michael Green's "Coarse Acting" style; and modern day drag performances. I know, I know...it feels a little precious to say that this over-the-top farce has any kind of connection to grand theatrical traditions, but it is true....seriously.

This connection is particularly true of the British Panto tradition, which includes some of the funniest, most overblown characters you will ever see on stage. These "Panto Dames" – male comedians dressed up as hideously ugly women with names like The Widow Cranky – are a staple of English holiday traditions. Enormous handbags, dresses made of thousands of yards of chiffon, illfitting wigs, an inability to walk in heels, and grotesque makeup are the hallmarks of these stock British stage characters. They are a hilarious and beloved part of British holiday theatre...as crazy as that sounds.

And, if you really think about it, men have been playing women playing men (and doing it badly!) for thousands of years, and actors who are out of their depth have been attempting to portray Hamlet or Lady Macbeth or Willy Loman for generations. We have all been there. We all know the sheer terror and utter desperation that is born from being trapped in a theatre watching a truly terrible performance. What *Farndale Avenue* does so well, and so unapologetically, is to embrace this one great theatrical truth: really really really bad theatre can be really really great theatre...both cringe-worthy and hilarious.

So, welcome back to the Ladies of Farndale. There is no doubt you will all break a leg... figuratively and literally.

Happy Halloween, dahlings!

Scott Palmer, Artistic Director

DRAMATURGICAL NOTES By Carlee Whalen

"I have a special fondness for the second rate and the downright worthless."

-David McGillivray, co-author of the *Farndale Avenue*... series

What is "Coarse Acting"? Everything you need to know is in the aptly titled book *The Art of Coarse Acting*, written in 1964 by British humorist Michael Green. Most of Green's advice went like this: "*The Coarse Actor's aim is to upstage the rest of the cast. His hope is to be dead by Act Two so that he can spend the rest of his time in the bar. His problems? Everyone else connected with the production.*" The Art of Coarse Acting was an ode to amateur theatre, and Green's unrefined style caught on in the decades following his book's publication. Two of Green's "Course Acting" shows were performed at the Edinburgh Festival in 1977 and 1979, and there is no doubt that Walter Zerlin and David McGillivray were familiar with his work as they began creating the *Farndale Avenue* series, falling easily into this genre.

Another main "Coarse Acting" influence on Zerlin and McGillivray was *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (1969), the original sketch-comedy show that rocketed the British comedy group to fame in the 1970s and 1980s. The Pythons pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable in comedy for television and film, influencing many other performance groups over the years, including the very popular

Saturday Night Live.

The Murder Mystery genre which the ladies of Farndale take on in this show lends itself easily to "Coarse Acting": from the ridiculous foreshadowing, to the over-dramatic death scenes, and the classic "it was the butler" cliché, *Murder at Checkmate Manor* is the perfect playground for Zerlin and McGillivray's hallmark style. And because we're Bag&Baggage, we give you the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society with our own special twist, aiming to create a fantastic and hilarious experience for the audience that would make Zerlin, McGillivray, Michael Green, and all the Pythons proud. We hope you enjoy the show!

Carlee Whalen, Dramaturg

ABOUT BAG&BAGGAGE

Bag&Baggage is committed to unique interpretations and novel stagings of plays by the world's best-known authors. We seek to rethink and reinvigorate the most celebrated titles, to challenge the public to experience them in new ways, and to connect our work to the lives and experiences of our audiences. Founded by a Hillsboro native, Bag&Baggage believes that cultural experiences like live theatre play an absolutely crucial role in the health of our community.



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Bag&Baggage Productions presents

The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of

Murder at Checkmate Manor

By David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jr. Directed by Scott Palmer

This production is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

THE CAST

Mrs. Phoebe Reece	Patrick Spike [†]
Ms. Thelma Greenwood	
Mrs. Mercedes Blower	
Mrs. Felicity Fortesque	
Gordon, a Stage Manager	

CREW/PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Scott Palmer
Costume Designer	Melissa Heller
Scenic Designer	Megan Wilkerson
Lighting Designer & Technical Director	Jim Ricks-White
Sound Designer	Grant Thackray^
Stage Manager	Ephriam Harnsberger
Assistant Director	Cassie Greer
Assistant Stage Manager	Grant Thackray^
Props Master	Renée Zipp^
Dramaturg	Carlee Whalen^
Marketing Assistant	Tiffany Rousseau^

This performance runs approximately 2 hours with one 15-minute intermission.

Please remember: Turn OFF your phone, do not text during the performance, and photography or recording of this performance are strictly prohibited.

*Member of the Bag&Baggage Resident Acting Company, generously sponsored by David and Shirley Woodford

[†]Bag&Baggage Associate Artist

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract

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The 2017–2018 Season Presented by Ronni Lacroute

IAC ROUL

The 2017–2018 Season Sponsored by The Hillsboro Hops



This production is generously sponsored by Karl Citek and Patricia Logan

ACTOR & CREW BIOS



TYLER BUSWELL (FELICITY FORTESQUE)

Tyler Buswell is a set designer, actor, and proud Theatre Vertigo company member. Recent

acting credits include A Lovers Complaint (as The Seducer) and Bite Me a Little (as Georgie) at Post 5. Recent design credits include Willy Wonka, You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, Grease, and Women Behind Bars (Camp Manitou, Maine); A Maze and Assistance (Theatre Vertigo); School Dance and Hawthorne (Action Adventure); The Bomb-Itty of Errors (Broadwayworld Nomination-Best Set Design); and Stupid Kids (Post 5 Theatre), among others. He has worked as a scenic painter and carpenter at Oregon Children's Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre, Third Rail Repertory Theatre, and Portland Center Stage. He would like to thank Bag&Baggage for this awesome opportunity, and for their continued dedication to creating work that promotes diversity and equity in the arts.



ARIANNE JACQUES (GORDON)

Arianne holds a Bachelor's in Theater Arts from Oregon State University. This production falls on the 10th anniversary of her

first show with B&B: Macbeth in October 2007! Favorite shows from the last decade include: The Importance of Being Earnest (as Gwendolen); Twelfth Night (as Viola); Crimes of the Heart (as Babe); Julius Caesar (as Cassius); The Great Gatsby (as Jordan); Private Lives (as Sibyl): Our Country's Good (as Mary Brenham); Moby Dick, Rehearsed (as Stage Manager/Elijah); The Graduate (as Elaine Robinson); and most recently Romeo&Juliet (Layla&Majnun) (as Juliet/Layla). Arianne has been box officer for the company since 2011, and is now the Patron Services Manager for B&B. When she is away from the theater, Arianne spends her time reading, watching nature documentaries, helping out at Basilisk (her partner's awesome restaurant), and snuggling with her cats (Zoë & Ripley). Arianne would like to thank Jason and her mom & pop for their endless love and support.



JEREMY SLOAN (MERCEDES BLOWER)

Jeremy Sloan received his BFA in Music and Theatre from Portland State University and has been performing in the Portland Metro

area for over 15 years. He is thrilled to be an Associate Artist with Bag&Baggage this season. He last performed with Bag&Baggage in two of the three hit Christmas radio shows - *Miracle on 34th Street* and *A KBNB Kristmas Karol* (as Gilroy Gildersleeve AKA Patrick Paulson) - and performed with Liberace in *Cabaret Cupid*. He has treaded the boards of Anonymous Theatre Company, Broadway Rose Theatre Company, Clackamas Repertory

Theatre, Lakewood Theatre, Many Hats Productions, Mock's Crest Productions, Opera Theatre Oregon, Pixie Dust Productions, Portland Opera, Red Shoe Productions, Staged! Musical Theatre, and Stumptown Stages. Favorite roles include: Godspell (as Jeremy (himself)); You're a Good Man Charlie Brown (as Charlie Brown); Smokey Joe's Cafe (as Michael); La Cage Aux Folles (as Mercedes Bendz); and Plaid Tidings (as Frankie). When not onstage, Jeremy can be found urban hiking around downtown Portland, spontaneously breaking into a musical dance number, or drinking his favorite IPA. Many thanks to Scott, Cassie, our amazing crew and my fellow "ladies and gentleman" of the dramatic society. Get ready to laugh yourself to death!

PATRICK SPIKE



(PHOEBE REECE) A former Bag&Baggage board member, Spike, as his friends call him, holds a BA in theatre with emphasis in directing from

Western Washington University, and an MFA in directing from Humboldt State University. He has directed productions of *Educating* Rita, Love Letters, The Mystery of Irma Vep, and Dangerous Liaisons, and performed in The Importance of Being Earnest (as Lady Bracknel); The Farndale Avenue... Christmas Carol (as Phoebe Reece); and Parfumerie (as Sipos) for Bag&Baggage. Spike also recently directed Batboy, the Musical and Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks in California, and will be returning there to direct a production of Chicago this coming Spring. Spike is Marketing Director for Arts People ticketing and patron management software company used by Bag&Baggage. Spike relocated last year to Scappoose, OR with his husband Fernando and their three dogs.

NORMAN WILSON

(THELMA GREENWOOD) Norman is delighted beyond definition to be back at Bag&Baggage after a long

and sorrowful absence. He was last seen here as Alex Gal in Rough Crossing, and prior to that as Lucentio in Taming of the Shrew. Favorite roles include Aldolpho in The Drowsy Chaperone, Corny Collins in Hairspray and Skimbleshanks in Cats (all at Broadway Rose); Sir Robin in Spamalot and Charlie Davenport in Annie Get Your Gun (Lakewood Theatre): Rod in Avenue Q (Triangle Productions); Mendel in Falsettos (Live On Stage); and Madame George in Find Me Beside You (Many Hats Collaborations). Prior to migrating north in 2009, Norman lived and worked throughout Southern California at many theaters, most of which are no longer in business. Norman is not responsible for their demise. In his time off stage, Norman does little of any consequence, aside from walking his miniature pinscher, Godzilla, and posting pictures of food online. He would like to thank

you for supporting live theatre and encourage you to see him in *An Act of God* at Triangle Productions opening next month. It's going to be a religious experience.

CREW



CASSIE GREER (ASSOC. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & ASST. DIRECTOR)

Normally found in front of the lights, Cassie is thrilled to be sitting on the other side of the table with Scott, watching

the ladies (and gent) of Farndale do their thing! This is her 25th Bag&Baggage project since joining the company in the 2011-12 season, having appeared on stage in Julius Caesar (as Mark Antony); The Great Gatsby (as Daisy Buchanan); Brontë (as Charlotte Brontë); and the title character in Coriolanus, among several others. Cassie co-directed last winter's Parfumerie, in addition to assistant directing The Drowning Girls and The Crucible here at B&B; her other directing work has most recently been seen at Fertile Ground '13 and the San Francisco Fringe '14 (Cinnamon and Cigarettes): Spotlight Musical Theatre Academy (adaptations of A Chorus Line, The Drowsy Chaperone, Carrie, Godspell, Footloose, and The Aristocats); and B&B's touring production of A Christmas Carol in 2013. Cassie received her training in the BA Theatre program at Goshen College and the MFA Acting program at Florida Atlantic University, and is a certified Assistant Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework®. She wouldn't be here without Danny, and is incredibly grateful to her family and friends for their continual love, support, and energy.



EPHRIAM HARNSBERGER (STAGE MANAGER)

Ephriam completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Omaha, Nebraska at Creighton University. This is his ninth

production with Bag&Baggage. Productions include: Romeo&Juliet (Layla&Majnun) (SM); Brontë (SM): Parfumerie (SM): The Drowning Girls (SM); The Graduate (SM); Coriolanus (SM); Emma (ASM); The Best of Everything (ASM); The Lady Aoi (SM); Othello (SM); The South Omaha Stories (SM/AD); The Spitfire Grill (SM/AD); The Tempest (ASM); Compleat Works of William Shakespeare [abridged] (ASM); Titus Andronicus (ASM); Twelfth Night (ASM); Phantom (AD); Dames at Sea (SM); Almost, Maine (SM); Julius Caesar (ASM); and Comedy of Errors (ASM). Although he is usually found backstage he has also appeared onstage in Cabaret (as Emcee); Noises Off! (as Selsdon); and Urinetown (as Bobby). Ephriam is honored to work alongside the incredible company members of The Farndale...Murder... When he is not wandering about the stage Ephriam also enjoys cooking, camping, hiking, and

CREW BIOS

singing silly songs with his sisters. He would like to thank Bag&Baggage, Nik, Rosemary, and his parents.



MELISSA HELLER

(COSTUME DESIGNER) An eight-year Portland resident, Melissa splits her time between heading the costume shop and designing costumes at

Pacific University, and designing for local area theater companies. Melissa holds a B.S. in Apparel Design from Oregon State University, which is where her interest in costumes for theater began. She worked in the costume shop at OSU until she graduated in 2008 and moved to Portland to pursue her career in the apparel industry. Melissa reignited her passion for the costume design in 2010 when she began working with Oregon Ballet Theater. Since then she has designed for numerous production companies including Mt. Hood Community College; Broadway Rose Theater Company; St. Mary's Academy; Oregon Children's Theater: Portland Actor's Ensemble: and as the Resident Costume Designer for Bag&Baggage Productions and Pacific University. Her recent works include Romeo & Juliet and The Good Woman of Setzuan with Pacific University: Richard III. Caesar, Kabuki Titus, Lear, The Graduate, and Coriolanus with Bag&Baggage Productions; Charlotte's Web with Oregon Children's Theater; and Love's Labour's Lost with Portland Actors Ensemble. Melissa thanks Bag&Baggage Productions for this engaging partnership.



BETH LEWIS

(MANAGING DIRECTOR) Beth has over ten years of experience in theatre administration and management. She most

recently served as Managing Director of Curious Comedy Theater, Portland's only nonprofit comedy theater. She moved back home to the Portland area in 2013, after being in Los Angeles for five years working at The Pasadena Playhouse, where she ended her tenure there as their Annual Giving Manager. Before that, she lived in New York City, where she served as the Director of Development for The Looking Glass Theatre, and the Associate of Special Events for Sonnet Repertory Theatre. In addition to her work at Bag&Baggage, she is currently a board member of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance. She also holds a BA in Theatre from Connecticut College and is a Core Company Member of the Original Practice Shakespeare Festival.



DAVID MCGILLIVRAY (PLAYWRIGHT)

David McGillivray is an actor, producer, playwright, screenwriter, and film

Critic. Originally a critic for *Monthly Film Bulletin,* McGillivray wrote his

first film script, Albert's Follies, for friend Ray Selfe in 1973. Intended as a vehicle for The Goodies, who turned it down, the film was eventually released as White Cargo and starred a young David Jason in one of his earliest leading roles. McGillivray was soon involved in the British sex film industry, writing scripts for I'm Not Feeling Myself Toniaht (1975) and The Hot Girls (1974). two films produced by pornographer John Jesnor Lindsay. As would be the case with many of his films, McGillivray makes cameo appearances in both: in I'm Not Feeling Myself Tonight he is "Man at Party" who pulls Monika Ringwald's dress off, while in The Hot Girls he was given the job of doing an onscreen interview with Danish actress Helli Louise, who according to the synopsis in Cinema X magazine, talks to him about "working on a movie, and telling a few facts of life about screen nudity and enacting lesbian love scenes." In collaboration with Walter Zerlin Jr, McGillivray has written a number of plays, including The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society series of 10 plays spoofing local amateur dramatic productions. They are published by Samuel French Ltd.

ARTISTIC & DIRECT Scott rece

SCOTT PALMER (ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & DIRECTOR)

Scott received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Oregon, his Master's

Degree from Oregon State University, and completed his PhD Coursework in Theatre, Film, and Television studies at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Over the past 20 years, Scott has developed an international reputation for his approach to classical dramatic literature, and more specifically his work with major literary adaptations of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Scott has adapted and directed critically acclaimed shows for Glasgow Repertory Company, Toi Whakkari (the National Drama School of New Zealand), Salem Repertory Theatre, Oregon State University, and Bag&Baggage Productions. Scott was the Founding Artistic Director of Glasgow Repertory Company, Scotland's only Shakespeare-dedicated theatre company, as well as the Bard in the Quad Outdoor Shakespeare summer event at Oregon State University. Scott is a Hillsboro native and has served on the Hillsboro Arts and Culture Council and the Westside Cultural Alliance, and previously worked as the Trust Manager of the Oregon Cultural Trust. Thanks and love to his husband Brian.



JIM RICKS-WHITE (LIGHTING DESIGNER AND TECHNICAL DIRECTOR) With over 30 years in theatre,

Jim is pleased to be part of the staff here at Bag&Baggage,

adding Vault Manager to his duties as

Technical Director and Lighting Designer. Jim has worked professionally as a Production Stage Manager and Stage Manager (Civic Light Opera Seattle, Spokane Interplayers, Stumptown Stages); Technical Director, Lighting and Set Designer (Innovation Theatreworks, Tower Theatre, Portland Actors Ensemble); Properties Artisan and all-around Theatre Tech (the list goes on and on...) — in venues as small as 99-seat black box theatres, and as large as the Olympic Stadium for the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics. Basically, he has yet to meet a theatre tech job he didn't like - or at least enjoy! Jim also teaches technical theatre at PCC Sylvania and has held numerous administrative positions in theatre during his career. In his free time, Jim loves to travel, explore great food and enjoys working off steam swinging a German longsword or Military saber at his local HEMA gyms, Indes Western Martial Arts and NW Armizare. Jim looks forward to being able help to nail down some good storytelling and bring the 2017-2018 B&B season to light!



MEGAN WILKERSON

(SCENIC DESIGNER) Megan holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Design for the Theatre from the University of Texas at Austin, and is a member of

United Scenic Artists Local 829. Besides being the Resident Scenic Designer for Bag&Baggage, Megan is also a Resident Artist at Artists Repertory Theatre in Portland, and an Ensemble Member at Rivendell Theatre in Chicago. Megan was a recipient of Chicago's After Dark Award in Scenic Design for her "thoroughly creepy" set for Marisa Wegrzyn's Psalms of a Questionable Nature with Rivendell, and was nominated for a Drammy Award for her design for The Children's Hour at deFunkt theatre in Portland. Her Design work has also been recognized by The Chicago Tribune, The Austin Critics Circle, The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the South Eastern Theatre Conference. and The United States Institute for Theatre Technology. Regionally she has worked with The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre, The New Conservatory in San Francisco, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Broadway Rose, Teatro Milagro, deFunkt Theatre, Next Act Theatre, The Skylight Opera, First Stage Children's Theatre, The Michigan Opera Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and the Portland Opera. She has taught Theatre, Design, and Art courses at Lewis & Clark College, The University of Portland, Michigan State University, The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, St. Norbert College, Randolph-Macon Women's College, Carroll University, Central Michigan University, the Milwaukee High School for the Arts, and The University of Minnesota in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

CREW BIOS (CONTINUED)



WALTER ZERLIN JR. (PLAYWRIGHT)

Walter Zerlin Jr. was probably the only English barrister who regularly dragged up, tap-danced, and conjured professionally

on stage. For 25 years, Zerlin and David McGilivray wrote plays together, among them 10 in the *Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society* series.

These were comedies in which an amateur dramatic society murdered Shakespeare, Dickens, and Gilbert and Sullivan. They have been performed around the world. Zerlin also appeared in roles he wrote for himself, memorably as a lady pianist thumping out songs from *The Sound Of Music*, prior to a performance of *Macbeth*. In *Running Around The Stage Like A Lunatic* (1980), which won an Edinburgh Festival Fringe award, he played all

17 parts. In real life, he was a barrister, mostly in the west midlands, and his geniality could soften the hardest judicial heart. He was also a legal adviser on *A Fish Called Wanda* (1988) – Zerlin had defended John Cleese over a parking offense – and the actor later recommended him to help Marlon Brando in courtroom scenes for *A Dry White Season*. The court was not a substitute for the stage, but Zerlin brought his tireless ebullience to both.

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