

~ COUNTDOWN TO 100 ~

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2009

*“This is going to be a festive night –
from the smell of it...”*

A DELICATE *BALANCE*

BY EDWARD ALBEE

Directed by Barbara Larose

In this, Alumnae Theatre’s 90th season, we are starting a countdown to 100, by remounting each year a play from one of our previous decades.

The “Countdown to 100 play” this season is Edward Albee’s **A Delicate *Balance***. Albee won the first of his three Pulitzer Prizes in 1966 for the original production, and the 1996 Broadway revival earned two Tony Awards. This tale of a tense weekend when a wealthy suburban couple reluctantly plays host to their much-married daughter, the wife’s alcoholic sister and a pair of friends who’ve left their own home in unexplained terror, contains Albee’s trademarks of improbable situations mingled with utterly realistic characters.

Director **Barbara Larose** is an Albee fan – in 2004 she directed his classic *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (starring **Tricia Brioux** and **Mark Whelan**) for Alumnae, as well as a Toronto Fringe production of *The American Dream* (featuring Brioux and **Dinah Watts**). “Albee has said that he is an optimist,” Larose says, “because all his plays begin with the possibility that people can communicate, but – it just doesn’t seem to work out!” Of **A Delicate *Balance***, she notes that “Albee has one foot in the naturalism camp, and one foot in absurdism. It’s full of dark, knife-edged comedy, with a slightly eerie feeling, and it’s a cautionary tale of people not living life to the fullest.”

Previously produced at Alumnae Theatre in February 1983, the new 2009 production features **Dinah Watts** and **Mark Whelan** as unwilling hosts Agnes and Tobias, **Patricia Hammond** as their unhappy daughter Julia, **Tricia Brioux** as Agnes’ drunken sister Claire, and **Rob Candy** and **Carol McLennan** as the fearful friends Harry and Edna.

Marysia Bucholc’s set, with its overbearing proportions, double wall and towering liquor bar, expresses an indeterminate sense of threat, the tension between façade and reality, and references the tipping balance of the play’s title. With the use of blue tints and a play of light and shadow, **Paul Hardy**’s lighting design highlights the both the complacency and dawning sense of fear that permeates the play. **Angus Barlow**’s original sound design further augments these themes through a kind of quiet visceral resonance. Costume designers **Jennie Grimard** and **Lynda Yearwood** highlight the personalities of each character with textured, tailored clothing true to the mid-60’s period, but a muted colour palette that reflects the underlying conservativeness and conformity of their well-to-do society.

The Details - *A Delicate Balance*:

- Running Time:** approx. 2 hours 15 mins, + one 15-minute intermission
Opening Night: Friday September 25, 2009
Performances: Friday September 25 - Saturday October 10, 2009
Schedule: Wednesday - Saturday 8:00pm; Sunday matinée at 2:00pm
Tickets: Wednesday 2-for-1; Thursday, Friday & Saturday \$20; Sunday PWYC
Location: Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley Street, Toronto
Box Office: 416-364-4170, box 1 email reservations@alumnaetheatre.com
Box Office opens one hour prior to each performance
Please note: Box Office does not accept credit or debit cards

Production photos for **A Delicate Balance** will be available for download on Alumnae Theatre's Media page at www.alumnaetheatre.com/media.html by September 11.

Read the blog at alumnaetheatre.wordpress.com/a-delicate-balance

Check Facebook Event: **A Delicate Balance**

For more information or to set up an interview please contact Tina McCulloch at 416-967-4416 or contactus@alumnaetheatre.com

Alumnae Theatre Company has been producing thought-provoking, challenging and rarely-performed plays since 1919. Check our website at www.alumnaetheatre.com for press releases, production photographs, and a retrospective on how Alumnae Theatre shaped Toronto's theatre scene since 1919.

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