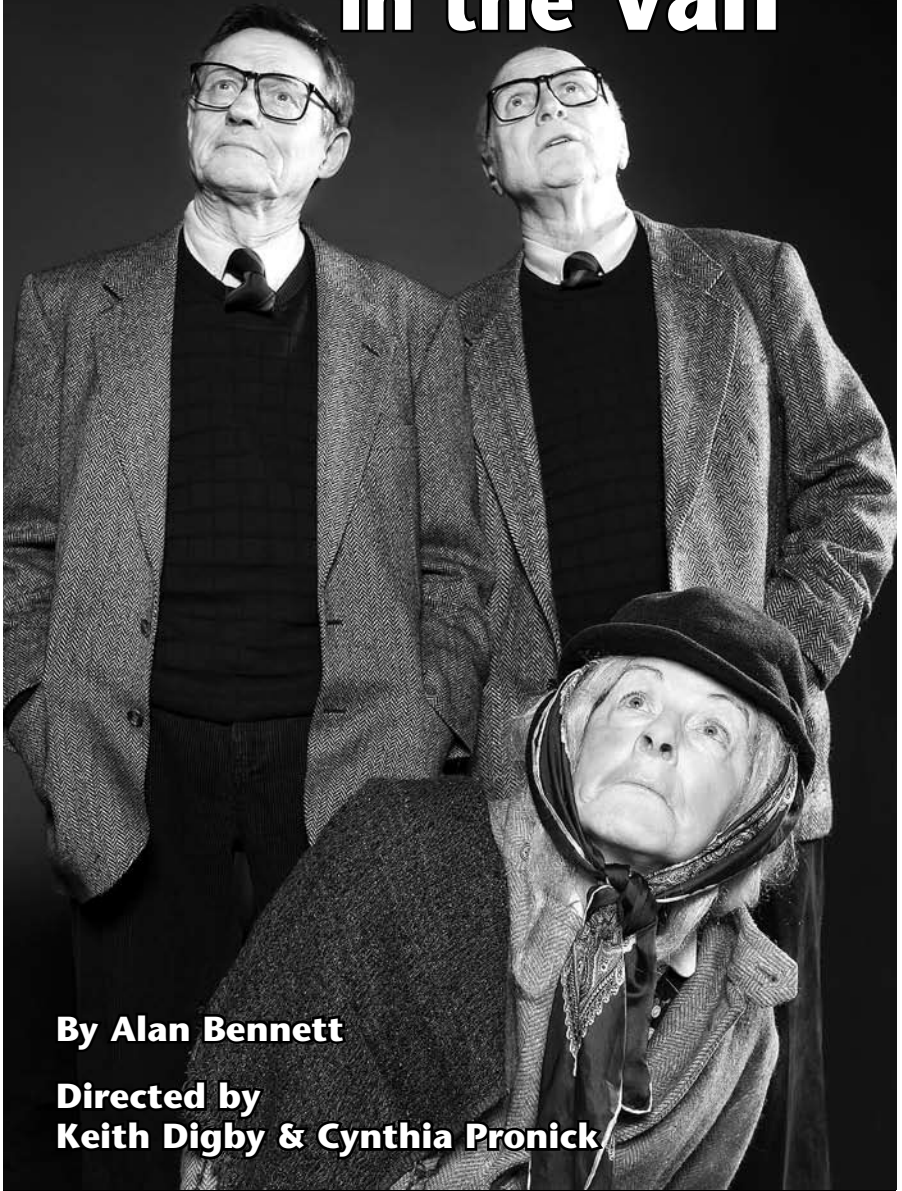


VICTORIA THEATRE GUILD PRESENTS

The Lady in the Van



By Alan Bennett

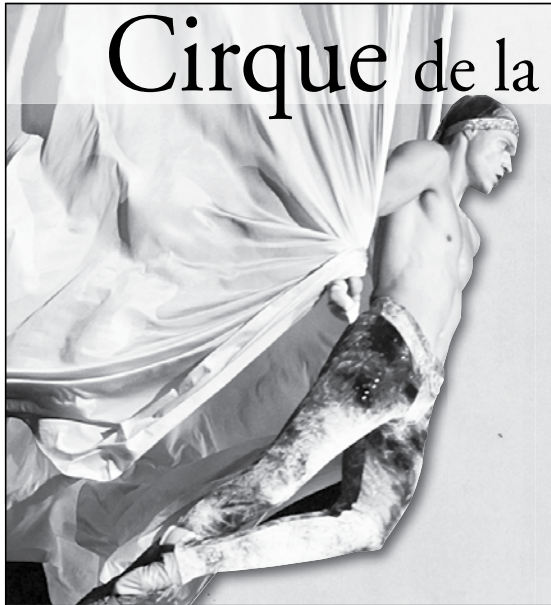
**Directed by
Keith Digby & Cynthia Pronick**

March 2 - 19, 2011

Langham Court Theatre



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Directors' Notes

This is the fifth play that we have directed for Langham Court Theatre (*Arcadia*, *The Dining Room*, *Racing Demon* and *Pack of Lies*) and each one has been a joy. *The Lady in the Van* is proving equally rewarding to direct. The story of the play is, remarkably, a true one. For fifteen years, an older lady lived in a Bedford van parked in the driveway of one Alan Bennett, playwright. In explaining how Miss Shepherd was able to live on the neighbourhood streets for so long, Alan Bennett said, "There was a gap between our social position and our social obligations. It was in this gap that Miss Shepherd was able to live."

Onstage, we meet the lady, Miss Shepherd, a woman with pride, despite her destitute situation, and admirable resilience. We also meet two versions of Alan Bennett: the Alan Bennett whom we see experiencing life with Miss Shepherd, and the Alan Bennett whom we see creating the play. This enables the playwright to explore not only the lady's amazing character and life, but also his own response to her often irritating absurdities and outrageous demands. He clearly struggles with how much he *should* intervene and how much he *wants* to intervene. The question the play addresses is how far can we, should we, do we extend charity? What is our personal responsibility to the homeless?

Once again, we feel blessed with a talented cast, design team and crew, all thoroughly up to the job and committed to the process... we hope that you enjoy the results of their labours.

Keith Digby & Cynthia Pronick

Victoria Theatre Guild
presents

The Lady in the Van

by Alan Bennett

March 2 – 19, 2011
Langham Court Theatre

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Directors	CYNTHIA PRONICK KEITH DIGBY*
Producer	PETA MACKENZIE
Stage Manager	SARAH INNES
Set Design	BILL ADAMS
Lighting Design	C. STEPHEN SMITH
Costume Design	JANINE METCALFE
Sound Design	ALAN MACKENZIE
Props Master	PAUL GILLAN

Cast

SYLVIA RHODES	Miss Shepherd
TONY CAIN	Alan Bennett
ROGER CARR	Alan Bennett 2
LESLEY GIBBS	Mam
MICHAEL ROMANO	Rufus
LORENE CAMMIADE	Pauline
WENDY MERK*	Social Worker
BARRY GRIMSHAW	Underwood
PHIL GIBBS	Fairchild
PAUL BERTORELLI	Doctors
MICHAEL KING	Interviewer/Ambulance Driver
ALEX CARROLL	Lout

Scenes:

The play is set in Alan Bennett's house and garden, Camden Town...
and in his memory.

There will be one 15 minute intermission

* Appearing by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

Production Team

Assistant Stage Manager	HEATHER CASSELS
Asst. Lighting Designer	GREG SMITH
Lighting Operators	CAROL ANNE MOORE, ELIZABETH WHITMARSH
Sound Operators	ALAN MACKENZIE, ERIC GRACE, SYLVIA FARR, ROBERT CROMWELL
Props Assistant	SHIRLEY ROUTLIFFE
Set Construction	BILL ADAMS, BOB CLARK, GREG LANGHAM, BARRY GRIMSHAW, BOB GOTH, GORDON ALEXANDER, JULIUS MASLOVAT
Set Painters	BILL ADAMS, JOHN SMITH
Asst. to the Costume Designer	JEAN DE CARTIER
Dresser	VINNIE CHADWICK
Costume Assistant	ERICKA HEAL

Theatre Manager	Denise Brown
Facilities Maintenance	Dick Newson
Technical Director	Alan MacKenzie
FOH Managers	Pearl Arden
Bar Manager	Laura Clutchey
Costume Manager	Ned Lemley
Properties	Jean Topham, Carol-Anne Moore, Sally Crickman
Newsletter	Corinna Gilliland
Arts Coordinator	Jeani Reynolds
Program Coordinator	Linda Billings
Custodian	Pauline Quinlan
Photographer	David Lowes
Intro Writer	Fran Patterson

Theatre Team

Admin/Box Office 250-384-2142
Costume Loft 250-384-2025
Fax 250-384-1293
Mailing Address
805 Langham Court
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email: boxoffice.langhamcourt@shaw.ca
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David Hardwick - VOS Costume Loft

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**KEITH DIGBY***Director*

Keith has worked at the top levels of professional theatre in Canada, including a season at The Stratford Festival, Ontario. In Edmonton, Keith worked at the Citadel Theatre, and created The Phoenix Theatre. At Theatre 3, he directed the award-winning premiere of Sharon Pollock's internationally acclaimed drama, *Blood Relations*. In Victoria, he spent six seasons as Artistic Director of The Bastion Theatre. Keith recently completed a well-spent decade and a half teaching at Mill Bay's Brentwood College. Now, he spends time writing screenplays, teaching screenwriting, and exploring vineyards in the South of France.

Production Biographies**CYNTHIA PRONICK***Director*

Cynthia's onstage credits at Langham include several lead roles, her favourite of which is Annie in *The Real Thing*. She spent one summer onstage in *It Runs in the Family* with Capital Comedy, and glimpsed the future playing a 75 year old woman in *The Foreigner* with Bard at Brentwood in 2010. Directing credits include: *Come Back to the Five & Dime*, *7 Stories*, *Waiting for the Parade*, and *Les Belles Soeurs* at Brentwood College. Co-directing with Keith began with *Arcadia* in 1996, and has since included *The Dining Room*, *Racing Demon*, and *Pack of Lies*.

**PETA MACKENZIE***Producer*

Peta is very happy to be working with so many old friends, Roger, Sylvia and Barry, and she welcomes some newer faces to the stage as well. Her most recent production was costume co-coordinator for *The Laramie Project* and co-producing *Grease* and *The Wizard of Oz* for VOS last year.

SARAH INNES*Stage Manager*

This is Sarah's sixth show at Langham since becoming a member three years ago and she is happy to be back in the booth working with a very talented group. Special thanks go to her ASM, Heather, and the backstage crew, many of whom are relevant newcomers to this theatre. As well, many thanks to Keith and Cynthia for allowing her on their journey in bringing Alan Bennett's story to life - it has been such a rewarding experience. She hopes you enjoy the final results.

**BILL ADAMS***Set Design*

After designing scores of sets over the years, Bill appreciates a design challenge; something out of the ordinary. *The Lady in the Van* represents an interesting challenge. It's basically a memory play in which the physical space fades in importance compared to the larger-than-life character of 'the lady in the van'. I wanted the set to be somewhat ephemeral and shape-shifting; not representing anything in particular at all. The only set pieces that have true substance are the van and the desk. The characters carry the play; the set is merely a memory cloud upon which they relate and relive this fabulous story. Other memorable sets by this designer include *Jacques Brel*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Enchanted April*.

C. STEPHEN SMITH*Lighting Design*

Steve has spent his adult life in the non-amplified music business, first as a high-school music teacher in Toronto and then as GM of orchestras in Kingston, Victoria and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Along the way he was TD, of the Grand Theatre (Kingston) in the 80s and presently does IATSE crew work (Royal Theatre / Arena); and does statistical work for Orchestras Canada. At Langham?... He lit Noel Coward's *This Happy Breed* about 15 years ago. Steve thanks his son Gregory (TD, Belfry Theatre) for essential assistance with this project.



JANINE METCALFE

Costume Design

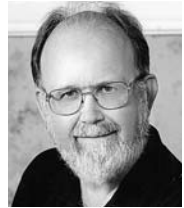
In the early 1990's, Janine worked in Canada and the US doing fashion shoots for various publications. Later that decade, she concentrated her work in the film and television industry, directing the wardrobe departments for numerous commercials and independent films. In 2000, she started a wardrobe/costume rental company in Toronto. She was running her company as well as continuing wardrobe work for TV commercials and print advertisements until she moved to Victoria in 2009. This is her first production in Victoria.

Production Biographies

ALAN MACKENZIE

Sound Design

Alan has worked on numerous productions for Langham Court and several other local companies since joining Langham in the early 60's, including the Victoria Operatic Society, Doc & the Doo Wops, String of Pearls and more recently The Starlight Pops Choir. He has been Langham's Technical Director for the past five seasons.



PAUL GILLAN

Props Master

Paul Gillan is a newcomer to the theatre. Even though he has no experience he is interested in helping out in all areas and looks forward to meeting new people and making new friends at Langham Court Theatre. Paul is also in the current production of the Langham Court Readers' Theatre.




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About the Playwright



English playwright, screenwriter and author, **Alan Bennett**, was born in Leeds 9 May 1934. He attended Oxford University where he studied history and performed with The Oxford Revue. His collaboration as writer and performer with Dudley Moore, Johnathan Miller and Peter Cook in the satirical revue *Beyond the Fringe* at the Edinburgh Festival in 1960 brought him instant fame. He gave up academia, and turned to writing full time, his first stage play *Forty Years On* being produced in 1968.

His output includes *The Madness of King George III* (later an Academy Award winning movie starring Nigel Hawthorne and Helen Mirren), *The History Boys*, *The Habit of Art*, the series of monologues *Talking Heads*, and popular audio books.

As we see with *The Lady in the Van*, many of Bennett's characters are unfortunate and downtrodden. Life has brought them to an impasse or else passed them by. In many cases they have met with disappointment in the realm of sex and intimate relationships, largely through tentativeness and a failure to connect with others. Bennett is unsparing and compassionate in laying bare his characters' frailties.

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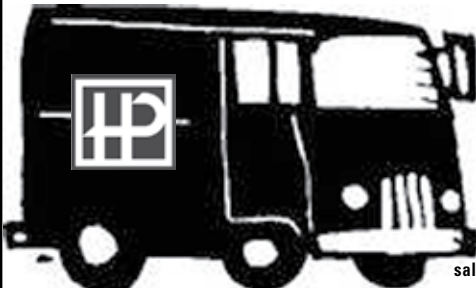
Featuring: **Melissa Blank** - recently seen in Langham's *The Memory of Water*, *Enchanted April* and *Pack of Lies* and **David MacPherson** - most recently in Langham's *Scotland Road* and *The Long Weekend*

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Cast and Crew of *Lady in the Van*



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tel: 250.952.4211
carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca



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**SYLVIA RHODES***Miss Shepherd*

Sylvia has performed many times on the Langham stage, and was last seen as the perfumed and aristocratic Madam Beaurever in *Shot in the Dark* but is delighted to be playing a somewhat less salubrious character in *The Lady in the Van*. Sylvia also directed the first play of this season *The Odd Couple*.

Cast Biographies**TONY CAIN***Alan Bennett*

Tony is a new member to Langham . He has worked on two previous productions *Sylvia* and *Memory of Water* as an ASM. He will be the director for next season's opener *The Melville Boys*.

**ROGER CARR***Alan Bennett 2*

Last season Roger directed Alan Bennett's *The History Boy's* and is delighted to be playing him in this play. He is this season's Production Chair and directed the preceding production *The Laramie Project*.

LESLEY GIBBS*Mam*

Lesley has loved doing accents on stage ever since her days in repertory theatre in north-country U.K. and so particularly relishes playing the Yorkshire character of Mam. Lesley was seen last season at Langham as Mrs. Potts in *Picnic*, and prior to that as Costanza in *Enchanted April* and Maudie in *Waiting in the Wings*. It's a joy to work with such an experienced and talented group on stage and off.

**MICHAEL ROMANO***Rufus*

Michael needed only to hear the phrase "gaudy 70's polyester" to know this would be a substantial role and he hopes to bring a certain "static-cling" to the stage as Rufus the neighbour. Michael was previously seen in Langham Court's *The Laramie Project* and also St.Luke's *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

LORENE CAMMIADE*Pauline*

Lorene is very pleased to be working with Keith and Cynthia again, as well as so many old friends from previous productions. She last appeared at Langham Court earlier this season as Mary in *The Memory of Water*. She will next be seen in the Dragon Monkey's Theatre production of *The Smell of the Kill* in this year's Fringe Festival. Lorene is most grateful to her children for all their patience and support in her theatrical endeavours!



**WENDY MERK***Social Worker*

Wendy's theatre work includes directing, acting, singing, writing, teaching and producing contemporary plays, musical theatre, opera, operetta, classical dramas and comedies, concerts and ballet. In Toronto Wendy performed diverse roles in musical theatre, including *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Another Kind of Hero*, and *Ezzie's Emerald*. One of her most memorable experiences was performing the role of Lord Montague in a gender-bending production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in an abandoned rail-yard underneath the Bathurst Street Bridge.

BARRY GRIMSHAW*Underwood*

Barry first appeared in Victoria in 1964 as Pooh Bah in *The Mikado* for VOS and since then has played numerous roles at Langham Court. He has also performed with both VOS and the Bastion Theatre company and was in the movie *Harry in your Pocket*, filmed in Victoria. When not acting or singing, he can be found most mornings on Langham's set construction crew.

**Cast Biographies****ALEX CARROLL***Lout*

Though not new to being on stage, Alex Carroll is new at Langham Court. This will be his second stage play – the first being two roles in the recent production of *The Laramie Project*. Alex is beyond excited to begin a long journey of acting with Langham Court.

PHIL GIBBS*Fairchild*

This is turning out to be Phil's Alan Bennett time of life, playing Headmaster in *The History Boys* last season and now Leo Fairchild in this production. Previously at Langham, Phil played Warnie in *Shadowlands*, Jake in *Artichoke* and First Voice in *Under Milkwood*. It's a great pleasure to share the stage with so many good friends, old and new. And as always, hats off to our techies and crew.

**PAUL BERTORELLI***Doctors*

Paul is originally from Wales. This marks his third appearance in a Keith Digby/Cynthia Pronick directed play at Langham Court, the first two being *Racing Demon* and *Pack of Lies*.

MICHAEL KING*Interviewer/Ambulance Driver*

Michael was a founding member of the Deep Cove Stage in North Vancouver and has worked with North Van Players, Maple Ridge Players and Vancouver Musical Theatre. Michael has worked in all aspects of community theatre from sweeping the floors to directing and is thrilled to be a part of Langham Court's present production and the Reader's Theatre series.



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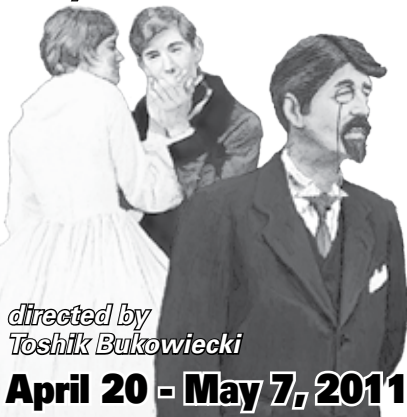
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Formerly an officer and one of the first women aircrew in the Canadian Military, she is now happily settled in Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island

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The Victoria Theatre Guild has been offering quality community theatre for 82 years. It has not only benefitted from the time and talents of the artists but also the generosity of others. This list represents those who have financially contributed this season. If you would like to help us to continue bringing quality live theatre to the community, please feel free to contact Densie Brown, Theatre Manager, at 250-384-2142.

NOTICE

Langham Court Theatre announces a change in its 2010-2011 season, effective immediately. *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* by Canadian playwright Ann-Marie MacDonald will no longer be produced as Langham's sixth play of the current season, scheduled for June 2011. In its place, *Elizabeth Rex* by Timothy Findley, a drama set in the rich theatrical era of Elizabeth I, will open June 8 and run thru June 25 of 2011. Langham Court Theatre hopes this program change will in no way inconvenience its audience and assures patrons and friends of its ongoing commitment to produce the finest community theatre in Victoria and for miles around.

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