

DAL THEATRE 2008-09 SEASON PRESENTS

THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE

BY BERTOLT BRECHT



DIRECTED BY MARGOT DIONNE

FEBRUARY 11 - 13, 8:00PM

FEBRUARY 14, 2:00PM & 8:00PM

DAVID MACK, MURRAY THEATRE

DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE

TICKETS: \$12 REGULAR, \$6 STUDENTS / SENIORS

DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE BOX OFFICE 494.3820

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BACKGROUND ILLUSTRATION "THE FALL OF FALLIN"
BY OAR, G. LECONDE & KARA DYER/JDOI



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

Inspiring Minds

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The Caucasian Chalk Circle
Written by *Bertolt Brecht*
Translated by *James and Tania Stern*



Dispatches from the Mountain
- Sarah Higgins

Once upon a time, in the very space in which you find yourself, a theatre company gathered to read the story of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* – a story we would soon tell.

It begins with the storyteller. Bertolt Brecht, bard and epic poet. The group decides to focus on the “epic” nature of the telling, because it is an epic story we relate. We listen when Brecht says don’t hide the machinery of the stage, don’t make theatrical magic synonymous with illusion. Onstage, pulleys and rope and rips in the fabric are happily visible. And we collect everything we can on how this story relates to today. We set about the process of making meaning. Brecht says don’t hide, so we aren’t hiding. So we say: our story will be set in the Caucasus.

On the wall we hang a map. On this map, someone draws an arrow pointing to Georgia, and more generally to the region of the Caucasus: the mountainous region that divides the Black Sea from the Caspian, Europe from Asia, West from East, Christianity from Islam. This is the home we choose for our story. It is a home Brecht offers us in the original telling of the parable of the woman who takes a child, lost in the confusion of a revolution, and is then confronted with the practical question: to whom should the child belong – its birth mother, or the woman who raised it? In this folk-tale, Brecht gives us a mountain. He shows us the intricacies of human nature and interactions. Far from viewing the world in black or white, he shows us that oftentimes each is easily mistaken for the other shade, and that the areas in between, in the grey, are sometimes the only shade we see. He asks us to tell the story simply and honestly, to present the facts as written and let the audience participate in the process of making meaning.

In the face of Brecht’s challenge to simply and effectively tell the story, how can we ignore the events of recent history? How can we turn away from this mountain he builds, of honest and epic storytelling? We can’t.
We climb.

Brecht, our bard, separates emotion from intellect and asks both of the audience. He asks, in sharing a story with others, for all the emotion and expression of the teller to be projected out instead of internalized so that knowing the story does not mean expressing it emotionally. And as his actors project the story, Brecht asks the audience to juggle. He endows the audience with the intellect of the actor-storyteller, the knowledge and facts of the story, while drawing all the emotion from the spectator. Brecht puts all the pressure of engaging the audience's minds and emotions on the audience itself, demanding the story be co-produced by audience and actor.

Brecht says that everything boils down to the social – plays need to have dimensions that affect, as well as reflect, society. He says the relationship between individual and society is forever in flux, and so one should always remain foreign, even in one's own society. He asks for recognition over instinct, writes a worldview and not an experience, says it's the process that counts. He says, "Climb".

Up and over the Janga-Tau we go, fighting to show the truth of the story in movements, in words. The mountain is big. It's slow-going. The terrain is very real; we feel every rock under our feet, see every outcrop outlined against the sky as we head in. And once past the foothills, there's still the glacier to climb. But the farther we go, the easier it gets. It might be the air up here, but soon we can see opportunities for a little circus, a little cabaret, a little clowning. So we play. And in the playing, we think: Maybe Brecht is saying, "Relax. It's a tough story that has to be told – but have a little fun doing it!"

Or maybe that's just the wind up here.

Still. We play on.

Sarah Higgins

We find that we need a distinct voice for our story, one point of view to funnel the telling so it makes sense, and is more pertinent to today. Essentially, so it flows. We find one.

Anna Polikovskaya.

Born 1958; Died October 7, 2006.

A journalist, writing for independent sources like “Novaya Gazeta” in her Russian home.

An activist, reporting on corruption, torture, mass executions, kidnappings, the Second Chechen War.

Outspoken, she criticized Putin (Russian president), Kaydrov (Chechen president).

Assassinated – shot in the elevator of her apartment building.

A reporter, a writer,

Stands in her home.

A reporter, a writer,

Dies in her home.

All for being a reporter, a writer.

All for telling the stories no one can hear, otherwise.

“I'm not polite - I say what I think. And what I think about is what I see with my own eyes. My job is simple: to look around and to write what I see.”

The Presidents of other countries listen to her.

Even the President of her own country listens to her.

And on a Saturday morning

This reporter, this writer

Is shot in her home.

On a Saturday in 2006.

On a Saturday in October.

Jan. 19, 2009. Stanislav Markelov, Russian lawyer for “Novaya Gazeta”, outspoken against pro-Russian Chechen government. Assassinated – shot on a busy Moscow street in the middle of a Monday afternoon.

Creative Team

<i>(Director)</i> Margot Dionne
<i>(Assistant Director)</i> Sarah Higgins
<i>(Original Score Composed By)</i> Michael Doherty
<i>(Musical Director)</i> Chuck Homewood
<i>(Sound and Lighting Designer)</i> Bruce MacLennan
<i>(Costume Designer)</i> Helène Siebrits
<i>(Costume Coordination By)</i> Anneke Henderson
<i>(Set By)</i> Peter Perina
<i>(Assistant Set Designer)</i> Claire A. Hill
<i>(Final Dance Choreography)</i> Veronique MacKenzie

Cast (in order of appearance)

Amanda DebisonShauva, Merchant Woman
Sebastien LabelleAzdak, Architect #2, Peasant, Rotten Bridge, a Very Old Peasant
Dana Carly Andrews ...Singer #1
Stephanie Barone ...Beggar/Petitioner, Nina, Rotten Bridge, an Old Woman, Invalid
Allison Basha ...Grusha (in Spring), Beggar/Petitioner, Masha, Singer #2
Jessica Brown ...Beggar/Petitioner, Suleika, Rotten Bridge, Aniko (Sister-in-Law), Ironshirt #2, Musician
Andrew Pelrine ... Beggar/Petitioner, the Stableman, Ironshirt ("Blockhead"), Wedding Guest, Nephew, Farmer #2, Old Man
Claire St-Francois ... Beggar/Petitioner, Architect #1, Rotten Bridge, Singer #2, Ironshirt Chorus, Lawyer #2

Dana Thompson ...Beggar/Petitioner, the Cook, Mother-in-Law, Ironshirt #3
Ben Irvine ...Palace Guard, Ironshirt
Tyler Miedema ...Shalva (Adjutant), Rotten Bridge, Monk, Doctor
Lucas Robinson-Grant ...Governor Georgi Abashvili, Merchant, Yussup, Farmer #1
Myrthin Stagg ...Natella Abashvili, Rotten Bridge, Woman Guest #2
Jessica Jerome ...The Nurse, Rotten Bridge, Woman Guest #3, Old Woman with Ham
Emma Lavender ...Doctor Niko Mikadze, Peasant with Milk, Rotten Bridge, Ironshirt #1
Matthew Peach ...Doctor Mikha Loladze, Rotten Bridge, Lavrenti, Blackmailer, Lawyer #1
Andrew Cardinal ...Palace Guard, Ironshirt
James MacDonald ...Prince Kazbeki, Corporal, Wedding Guest, Farmer #2
Katie MacDonald ...Grusha, Little Michael
Robert Murphy ...Simon Chachava, Irakli (the Bandit)
Christine Milburn ...Messenger, Peasant Woman, Rotten Bridge, Ironshirt Chorus
Richelle Khan ...Singer #2, Rotten Bridge, Woman Guest #1, Old Woman

Musicians

Keith Mullins ...percussion
Dorian Baker ...clarinet

Production Team

(Stage Manager) **Jeremy Powell**

(Assistant Stage Manager; Sound Operator) **Kayleigh Sheehan**

(Assistant Stage Manager) **Megan MacIntosh**

(Construction Crew Chief) **Jeff Bingham**

(Construction Crew) **Taylor Dyon**

(Construction Crew) **Ryan Lum**

(Props Crew Chief) **Taylor Andrews**

(Props Crew) **Kristin Coral Sinel**

(Props Crew) **Claire Lisbon**

(Props Crew) **Julie Matheson**

(Lighting Crew Chief) **Sarah Anstead**

(Lighting Crew) **Christie McManaman**

(Lighting Crew) **Stewart Delo**

(Head Dresser) **Lynn Davies**

(Dresser) **Carly Beamish** ; *(Cutter)* **Jennifer Flemming**

(Dresser) **Courtenay Crewson** ; *(Cutter)* **Elizabeth Hughes**

(Dresser) **Benjamin McGregor** ; *(Cutter)* **Sarah MacKenzie**

(Dresser) **Miel Nicholson** ; *(Cutter)* **Laura Merlini**

(Dresser) **Marilyn Smulders** ; *(Cutter)* **Jennifer Mills**

(Dresser) **Morgan Young** ; *(Cutter)* **Jessica Power**

(Cutter) **John Renaud** ; *(Cutter)* **Elise Sinclair**

(Cutter) **Myra Sloan** ; *(Cutter)* **Johanna Tower**

(House Manager) **Deborah Preeper**

(Headshots) **Daniel Abriel**

(Production Photographer) **Ken Kam**

(Poster Design) **Paul Williams**

Dalhousie University Department of Theatre: Faculty and Staff.

Roberta Barker	Department Chair, Colonial Canadian Theatre, The Modern Theatre, Post-Colonial Canadian Theatre
Anthony Black	The Director in the Theatre
Hans Böggild	The Playwright in the Theatre
Shannon Brownlee	Film Genres, Film Analysis, Issues in Film Aesthetics
Derek Bruce	Rental Crew Chief
Margot Dionne	Acting III and IV, Introduction to Acting and Performance
Kathryn Edgett	Dance and Movement II and III
Jure Gantar	Introduction to Theatre, Associate Dean of Arts
Anneke Henderson	The Aesthetics of Ritual Costume, Costume in Performance II, Body-Shaping Through Historical Tailoring II, Costume Technology
Dianne Kristoff	Introduction to Costume, Costume in Performance I, The Sculpture of Dress
Susan Leblanc-Crawford	Introduction to Acting and Performance
Daniel Lillford	New Play Development Workshop – Advanced Performance Techniques
Véronique MacKenzie	Dance & Movement – Advanced Performance Techniques
Bruce MacLennan	Lighting and Sound Instructor
M.J. MacLeod	Stage Management Instructor
Rob McClure	Introduction to Acting and Performance, Acting II, Advanced Performance Techniques
David Nicol	Classical Theatre, Early Modern Theatre, Dramaturgy, Special Topics: Puritans and Perverts – The Theatre of Middleton and Rowley
Peter Perina	Technical Scenography I and II, Performance Technology I and II, Scenography, Theatre Organization and Stagecraft, Scenography I,

Peggy Redmond	Singing
Lynette Reid	Movement – Acting IV
Melinda Robb	Props Instructor
Ken Schwartz	Theatre Performance
Heléne Siebrits	Cave to Café – Costume & Identity from Antiquity to 1700, Designer's Language, Academic Advising
Lynn Sorge-English	The Aesthetics of Contemporary Dress, Dress and Identity: King's Court to Mass Culture, 1700-Present, The Aesthetics of Historical Costume
Susan Stackhouse	Voice and Speech II and III, Vocal Coach
Ian M. W. Thomson	Construction Instructor
Glen Walton	Introduction to Film Study/Film Study

Administrative Staff

Julie Clements	Departmental Secretary
Louise Renault	Administrative Officer

Teaching Assistants and Markers

Jennifer Coe, Hilary Doda, Tyler Foley, Faith Anne Hine, Sarah Klein, Zachary Moull, Darlene Nadeau, Tara Patriquin, Robert Plowman, Andrew Wood

Student Assistants

Taylor Andrews	Props
Sarah Anstead	Construction
Claire A. Hill	Construction
Jonathan Tsang	Lighting/Technical
Jessica Power	Costume Stores Assistant
Bebhinn Jennings	Costume Librarian
Sarah Higgins	Office Production Assistant
Arran Smith	Office Production Assistant



Georgia. Geo-politically strategic, sitting on kilometres of oil pipelines, it is caught in a violent and ongoing tug-of-war between Asia (Russia) and the West. Russian presidents grow wary of Georgian presidents who desire to join NATO, or the EU. American presidents support Georgian presidents, train Georgian armies. And still, citizens work and live in the cities over which these Powers That Be argue and bomb. The citizens continue, vulnerable but strong. Life metamorphosed, but ceaseless.

The storyteller says: A time of bloodshed.

The Soviet Union – disintegrating under the individual forces of regions seeking sovereignty, it struggles on until a complete collapse in 1991.

Georgia – caught, economically and politically, between Russia and the West, this country seeks independence.

Chechnya – vehemently nationalist, this region fights for separation from Russia

The Caucasus – in its hugely divided ethnic mass, conflicts are raging constantly. We draw on Chechnya (First and Second Wars).

October 2006 – a storyteller is killed: Anna Politkovskaya.

August 2008 – Russia and Georgia reignite the dormant flame between them, battling over breakaway regions (South Ossetia and Abkhazia).

[A Timeline]

1991: USSR collapses after Perestroika established (freedom of speech, to a degree); Georgia and Chechnya declare independence from Russia.

1992: Russian-backed Georgian militias instate Shevardnadze.

1994-1996: First Chechen War re. separation from Russia (Chechen rebels win independence).

1999 (ongoing): Second Chechen War re. desire for Islamic state.

2003: Shevardnadze ousted after mass demonstrations over sham elections.

2003: Georgian President Akhmad Kadyrov wins elections in which Russia interfered.

2004: Mikhail Saakashvili elected as president of Georgia.

2008: Georgia invades breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

2008: Russian troops sent in, Russian bombing over S. Ossetia/Abkhazia and other parts of Georgia.

Oct 10/08: Russian troops out of Georgia (as per cease-fire).

...And the story rages on...

Once upon a time, right here, a group of people gathered to tell a story.

It was to be a telling of Bertold Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

It was to be set in the Caucasus.

It was to prove that the world isn't divided definitively into black and white,

that jobs are best done by those who work hard,
that what's given can easily be taken away,
that sometimes justice doesn't make any sense,
that a society with uneven power distribution holds
inherent hypocrisy and absurd cruelty,
that even in the bloodiest of times, there are still
good people,

that not all happy endings have a happy story, and
that the audience is as much a part of the story as anyone else.

So you tell us: *Once upon a time*...

**The Storytelling Continues, In
A New Play Development Showcase**

Staged Reading with 4th Year Acting Programme

1pm THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2009

STUDIO TWO, Dalhousie Arts Centre

4th-year acting students partner with seniors from the Northwood Community Centre to create a performance piece reflecting lives lived.

The Directors' Showcase

8pm MARCH 12 – 13, 2009

David Mack Murray Theatre (Studio One)
Dalhousie Arts Centre
Admission: FREE

Student directors, from the *Director in the Theatre* class, stage Shakespearian era scenes.

The Playwright's Cabaret

8pm MARCH 21-22, 28-29 2009

David Mack Murray Theatre (Studio One)
Dalhousie Arts Centre – Admission: FREE

A staging of student-written works, developed through a year-long class. Audience comments are used to further rewrite the plays after the performances.

And Trelawney of the Wells

Written by Arthur Wing Pinero
Directed by James Dodding

MARCH 31 – APRIL 4, 2009

Sir James Dunn Theatre

Enchanting Victorian leading lady Rose Trelawney leaves the bosom of the theatrical community to marry dashing young aristocrat Arthur Gower, but their Cinderella story is shattered by Arthur's stuffy family and Rose's unconquerable love for the stage. Will long-entrenched prejudices doom them to languish in their separate worlds? Or can a new vision of theatre reunite them?