

Portland Center Stage at

THE ARMORY
PRESENTS

Mary's Wedding

By Stephen Massicotte

Directed by Brandon Woolley

April 15 – May 28, 2017

In the Ellyn Bye Studio

Artistic Director | Chris Coleman

Mary's Wedding

By Stephen Massicotte

Directed by Brandon Woolley

Scenic and
Costume Designer
G.W. Mercier

Lighting Designer
Kristeen Willis Crosser

Sound Designer
Em Gustason

Projection Designer
Kwame Braun

Dialect Coach
Mary McDonald-
Lewis

Production
Dramaturg
Mary Blair

Stage Manager
Mark Tynan

Production Assistant
Bailey Anne Maxwell

Casting
Brandon Woolley

Alex J. Gould.....Charlie
Lexi Lapp..... Mary/Flowers

Performed without intermission.

Videotaping or other photo or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

The world premiere of *Mary's Wedding* was presented as part of the 2002 playRites Festival of New Canadian Plays at Alberta Theatre Projects. The playwright acknowledges the assistance of the Banff Playwrights Colony — a partnership between Canada Council for the Arts, The Banff Centre and Alberta Theatre Projects.

The Actors and Stage Manager employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Chris Coleman

The first year I came to Portland, I was getting to know a couple who had been attending Portland Center Stage since our first day in business. They had met in college back in the Midwest. While he was stationed overseas, they continued their courtship the only way possible at the time: through handwritten letters posted via snail mail. It was a slow, thoughtful way of getting to know each other, but as they relayed their story some 45 years after their first meeting, it was clear it had been a successful method.

The loves we meet, the choices we make, the moments we find the courage to speak from our heart, and the times we shrink from giving voice to our truth – follow us, haunt our thoughts, and inhabit our dreams.

In *Mary's Wedding*, we get the rare gift of revisiting our own innocence, our earliest longings, and our deepest struggles to find words for the feelings that threatened to overflow their banks in our youth. It's a story without irony or guile, as willing to live in the crevasses of a dream as much as it is on the back of a horse.

In 2017, it feels like a privilege to travel back to this moment in the early days of the 20th century, to get to know these two young people aching to find their way forward with the other.

FEATURE | A CONVERSATION WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT

PRODUCTION DRAMATURG MARY BLAIR SPOKE WITH PLAYWRIGHT STEPHEN MASSICOTTE ABOUT HIS PLAY *MARY'S WEDDING*.

***Mary's Wedding* was your first full-length play. What inspired it?**

So this was going to be a war play. However, I was in love when I wrote it, and I thought it was a love to end all loves. This is not that love story but the more I loved her, the more Mary and Charlie loved each other. The more I longed to return to her, the more they longed to return to each other. So the war play became a love story. I wrote it to forget her and to get her back and to remember her and to let her go.

Mary and Charlie are fictional but the character of Gordon Flowerdew is an actual Canadian soldier and WWI hero ...

I think that I dramatize history in a frustrated effort to make it solid and real. I want the dead to be alive again, so that they'll walk and talk for me. I want to slow things down. And it seems important, for some reason, that I tell the audience that there were other people here before us.

The poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" features prominently in the play. Is its inclusion a commentary on war?

A friend's grandfather once described to me how he had to memorize and recite "The Charge of the Light Brigade" in school

when he was young. When I was writing *Mary's Wedding*, I decided it would be fun to incorporate that. I also like learning about a piece of music, book, quote or poem from its inclusion in a movie, play or TV show. I first learned about Tennyson's poetry from *Anne of Green Gables*.

There's an anti-war message in *Mary's Wedding* but it's not something I set out to do. The story stands for itself. Politics do land in my plays but I try to have them go deeper to something more primal.

Do you see differences with how American audiences experience the play verses Canadian audiences?

Canadians definitely know more about WWI simply because it was a significant part of Canada finding its national identity. We never had a revolution so the cutting of our apron strings from Great Britain took a different form. But, that said, American audiences first started seeing *Mary's Wedding* in 2003 and so it definitely resonated in light of 9/11, and the subsequent Iraq and Afghanistan invasions.

I love the way you echo particular phrases throughout the play, especially "all those arms and voices ..." which Mary repeats during four different encounters with Charlie.

I am fond of recurring lines and because of the poetry themes (Tennyson) I wanted the play to feel poetic. The recurring motifs are, I hope, reminders of the dream nature of the play. Bits and pieces echoing front to back, and back to front, through the experience. Memory works that way. How many little things in a

day remind us of something from yesterday, last week, last year, or from farther back than that? Early on, there were so many little zingers in the play we had to really go through and pick and choose where and when they happened.

What motivates your writing?

I do find that my plays (now that there are enough of them to look back on) are about people confronting their mortality, and their pasts, and finding a way to continue on because of these confrontations. They're about people trying to survive some deep grief, depression, or profound feeling of hopelessness. How to find hope when there's no hope. I want the audience to be moved in some way, to be confronted, even if just a little bit, with their own mortality, and to find an offer of hope.

Do you have a perspective on how you would like the audience to interact with this play?

Not really. Perhaps ... to just go with it. Let go today and think about it tomorrow.

I've read that *Mary's Wedding* has had over 100 productions since it first premiered in 2002 ...

Yes, I think there may be close to 110 productions, maybe a few more. I've been very fortunate with *Mary's Wedding*. We were sitting in the house on break during a rehearsal for the first production of the play when the director said to me, "you know, this play's going to change your life." I didn't believe her but it very much did.

BIOGRAPHIES

Alex J. Gould

Charlie

This production makes Alex's debut at The Armory. Alex is an actor and fight director in New York City, originally from Boston, MA. Off-Broadway: *The Woodsman* (New World Stages, 59E59 Theaters), which was also featured on PBS and is available on BroadwayHD. Other New York credits include *The Radicalization of Rolfe* (New York International Fringe Festival Best Overall Play 2016); *Last Cigarette* (Ensemble Studio Theatre); *Student Body*, *The Mysteries*, *a cautionary tail*, Thomas Bradshaw's *Job* and *#serials@theflea* (Flea Theater). Regional/international: *Whaddabloodclot* by Katori Hall (Williamstown Theatre Festival) and Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015. Readings/workshops: Ensemble Studio Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, The Lark, Guild Hall and Jewish Plays Project. Alex is a former member of The Bats, the resident acting company at the Flea Theater. Education: The American Musical and Dramatic Academy. alexjgould.com

Lexi Lapp

Mary/Flowers

Lexi is thrilled to be working at The Armory for the first time. New York: *Alligator* (New Georges/The Sol Project) and *STET* (Abingdon Theatre Company/The Muse Project). Regional: *I Will Be Gone*, *That High Lonesome Sound*, *So Unnatural a Level* (Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Luna Gale*, *At The Vanishing Point* and *The Markers* (Actors Theatre of Louisville). Other credits include Ilse in *Spring Awakening*, Sebastian in *The Tempest*, Evelyn in *The Shape*

of Things, Agnes in *A Bright Room Called Day*, The Moon in *Blood Wedding*, and Valerie in *Trojan Women 2.0*. Film: *Love & Everything in Between* and *Cut Shoot Kill*. Lexi is a graduate of Ramapo College of New Jersey and the Acting Apprentice Company at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Much love to Mom and Sam.

Stephen Massicotte

Playwright

Stephen's play *Mary's Wedding* premiered in 2002 at the Alberta Theatre Projects' playRites Festival and was the winner of the 2000 Alberta Playwriting Competition, the 2002 Betty Mitchell Award and the 2003 Alberta Book Award. *Mary's Wedding* has received more than a hundred productions, has been translated into French, and has been adapted into an opera by the Pacific Opera Victoria. His play *The Oxford Roof Climber's Rebellion* premiered as a co-production between the Tarragon Theatre and the Great Canadian Theatre Company and was a hit Off-Broadway. It won the 2007 Canadian Author's Association Award for Best English Language Play and the 2007 Alberta Book Award for Drama. His most recent play, *The Clockmaker*, premiered at the Alberta Theatre Projects' 2009 playRites Festival and won the 2009 Betty Mitchell Award for Best New Play and the 2011 Toronto Theatre Critics Award for Best English Language Play. Stephen wrote the feature films *The Dark* and *Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning*, for which he won the award for Best Script/Drama over 60 Minutes at the 2004 Alberta Media Production Industries Association Awards. He also wrote the award-winning short film *June* and, most recently, *Historica Canada's Winnipeg Falcons* and *Nursing Sisters Heritage Minutes*.

Brandon Woolley

Director

Brandon is a director and producer in Portland, Oregon. He is excited to be collaborating on *Mary's Wedding* with such a stellar team. Later this spring Brandon will assistant direct the Oregon Symphony's production of *Persephone*. Directing credits include: *Sex with Strangers* (The Armory); *International Falls* and *The Few* (CoHo Productions); *The God Game* (self-produced); *The End of Sex* (Theatre Vertigo); *Dial M for Murder* (Bag&Baggage Productions). Brandon has worked on multiple shows at The Armory as an assistant director (*Astoria: Part One*, *LIZZIE*, *The Whipping Man*, *Red*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *A Christmas Story*). He has also collaborated with Third Rail Repertory Theatre, Broadway Rose Theatre Company and Live On Stage. Brandon is the producing associate and JAW co-producer at Portland Center Stage at The Armory. Much love to Sean, Mom and Brittney.

G.W. Mercier

Scenic and Costume Designer

Portland Center Stage at The Armory scenic design credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Dreamgirls*, *Fiddler on the Roof* (PAMTA Award, Best Set Design), *Anna Karenina*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Ragtime*, *Grey Gardens*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Cabaret*, *West Side Story* and *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*. In San Francisco, he was honored with the Bay Area Critics Award for Outstanding Scenic Design for Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life* at ACT and the Theatre Bay Area Award for Outstanding Scenic Design for Tarell McCraney's *Head of Passes* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and The Public Theater, both directed by Tina Landau. In New York, he proudly received the Daryl Roth Creative Spirit Award for

Outstanding Talent and Vision in Design. G.W. Mercier thrives on collaborating with amazing writers, composers, directors, partner designers and actors, creating original work or making established shows seem new.

Kristeen Willis Crosser

Lighting Designer

Kristeen is thrilled to return to The Armory after designing lighting for *Sex with Strangers* last season. Recent regional theater credits include ACT-Seattle's *Invisible Hand* and Triad Stage's *Crimes of the Heart*. She has designed for several area theaters, including Artists Repertory Theatre (*Feathers and Teeth* and *Eurydice*), Third Rail Repertory Theatre (*The Night Alive* and *Or*), Northwest Children's Theater (*Sleeping Beauty* and *Pinocchio*), Profile Theatre (*Buried Child* and *Thief River*), CoHo Productions (*Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* and *The Outgoing Tide*) and Miracle Theatre (*Mariela in the Desert* and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*). She was also recently nominated for a Los Angeles Ovation Award for her lighting design of *Foxfinder* in Pasadena. She thanks her husband, Mike, for all of his love and support.

Em Gustason

Sound Designer

Em is excited to be working with Brandon Woolley again after last season's *The Few* with Coho Productions. Other recent Portland credits include *Marjorie Prime* with Artists Repertory Theatre, *James and the Giant Peach* with Oregon Children's Theatre and *How We Got On* with Portland Playhouse. He holds a B.A. in technical theater and audio recording from The Evergreen State College.

Kwame Braun

Projection Designer

Kwame Braun oscillates arrhythmically between documentary filmmaking and creating video projections for theater and dance. He taught filmmaking for many years at the University of California, most recently at Berkeley, but has recently jumped ship for the University of Washington, Seattle. His African documentaries — *passing girl; riverside* and *Stageshakers!* — have screened at international ethnographic film festivals, including New York City's Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival. His collection of short videos, *Video Portraits of Survival, V.2*, premiered at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in 2007. Recent theater projects include *The Lasso of Truth* at Marin Theatre Company and *Chavez Ravine* at UC Berkeley. He is currently involved in the development of a chamber opera by Philip Kan Gotanda and Max Duykers, *Both Eyes Open*. This is his first show at The Armory, and he thanks Skip Mercier for roping him in.

Mary McDonald-Lewis

Dialect Coach

Mary McDonald-Lewis has been a professional artist since 1979. She resides in Portland, Oregon, and is an international dialect coach for film, television and stage. She also works as a voice actor, on-camera actor, stage actor and director. *Mary's Wedding* is MaryMac's 28th show with Portland Center Stage at The Armory, and you can also hear her work at Artists Repertory Theatre, where she is a resident artist, voice and text director. She is deeply grateful to the patrons and audience members of The Armory, whose support allows the theater to provide her services to the actors. MaryMac loves what she does, and she thanks Finnegan, Sullivan and Flynn for always wagging their tails when she comes home.

Mary Blair

Production Dramaturg

Despite a degree in business administration and a career in human resources with Macy's and PepsiCo in New York, Mary is a theater geek at heart. She joined Portland Center Stage at The Armory in 2010 as a member of the JAW reading committee, then left to manage CoHo Productions for two seasons. She returned to The Armory in 2014 as literary associate. Previous dramaturgical credits include *Our Town* (her favorite play of all time) and *The Oregon Trail*. Mary wishes to thank Brandon Woolley for this opportunity to dive into the history and poetic writing that is *Mary's Wedding*.

Mark Tynan

Stage Manager

Imagine being in a room full of artists, watching the birth of an idea, a movement given purpose, a sentence, phrase, scene, act given life. Then imagine that room translating to the stage with lighting, sound, costumes, scenery and props, then you can imagine what Mark's job is like. Special thanks to the phenomenal production assistants, Stephen Kriz Gardner, Will Bailey, Kristina Mast, Bailey Anne Maxwell and Kristen Mun, who help keep the vision attainable. Prior to The Armory, Mark toured nationally and internationally with musicals including *Jersey Boys*, *Dreamgirls*, *The King and I* with Rudolf Nureyev, *How to Succeed ...*, *Grand Hotel*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Rent*. Other Portland credits include several summers with Broadway Rose Theatre Company in Tigard. Regional credits include Alley Theatre (Houston, TX), La Jolla Playhouse (La Jolla, CA) and Casa Mañana Theatre (Fort Worth, TX).

Bailey Anne Maxwell

Production Assistant

Bailey Anne Maxwell is thrilled to be returning to The Armory, after acting as production assistant for *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Stupid F**king Bird*, *Sex with Strangers*, *Other Desert Cities*, *Twist Your Dickens* (2014 and 2015) and *Dreamgirls*. Bailey also worked as a deck crew member on *Great Expectations* last season. In the past, Bailey has worked as a production assistant with Artists Repertory Theatre on *The Motherf**ker with the Hat*, *Foxfinder*, *Ten Chimneys*, *The Lost Boy* and *Seven Guitars*. Bailey has recently enjoyed being the stage manager for *Up the Fall* with PHAME Academy and *The Wizard of Oz* with Broadway Rose Theatre Company. She has also worked with Profile Theatre as a stage management apprentice on *Buried Child*, *Eyes for Consuela* and *In the Next Room*. Bailey is a proud Linfield College graduate and a member of the EMC program.

Chris Coleman

Artistic Director

Chris joined Portland Center Stage at The Armory as artistic director in 2000. Before coming to Portland, Chris was the artistic director at Actor's Express in Atlanta, a company he co-founded in the basement of an old church in 1988. Chris returned to Atlanta in 2015 to direct the world premiere of *Edward Foote* at Alliance Theatre (Suzi Bass Award for Best Direction, Best Production and Best World Premiere). Other recent directing credits include the Off-Broadway debut of *Threesome* at 59E59 Theaters; a production that had its world premiere at The Armory. Chris has directed at theaters across the country, including Actor's Theater of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, ACT Theatre (Seattle), The Alliance, Dallas Theatre Center, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, New York Theatre

Workshop and Center Stage (Baltimore). A native Atlantan, Chris holds a B.F.A. from Baylor University and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon. He is currently the board president for the Cultural Advocacy Coalition. Chris and his husband, Rodney Hicks – who is appearing in the new musical *Come From Away*, which opens on Broadway in March – are the proud parents of an 18-lb Jack Russell/Lab mix, and a 110-lb English Blockhead Yellow Lab. For the past three years, Chris has had the honor of serving as the director for the Oregon Leadership Summit.

Portland Center Stage at The Armory

Portland Center Stage at The Armory is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since 2000. An estimated 150,000 people visit The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. Eleven productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events — created in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 20 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. The Northwest Stories series was recently launched to develop and produce works about, or by artists from, the Northwest region. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

SPONSOR STATEMENTS

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Actors take chances. Sometimes they work. Sometimes they don't. But none of these actors would be on stage tonight without taking chances. It's part of growth, and we're all made to grow. That's why we're such a proud supporter of Portland Center Stage. Let this performance inspire you to take the chances that power your own growth.

PRODUCTION SPONSORS

Cupcake Jones

As we at Cupcake Jones look back on our 10 years in business and as a neighbor of The Armory, we are clear that partnerships like ours are the fabric of what makes Portland a great place to live. When businesses support the arts and arts organizations support local businesses, everyone wins. And since weddings are our business, *Mary's Wedding* seemed the perfect sponsorship opportunity. Thank you for 10 great years, neighbors. Here's to many more!

Footwear Specialties International

Footwear Specialties International is pleased to support Portland Center Stage at The Armory for this production of *Mary's Wedding*. FSI recognizes the value that the arts in general, and theater in particular, provide to a community, creating inspiration and enrichment far beyond the doors of this venue. The Armory has consistently been committed to excellence through a wide variety of diverse performances. FSI is proud to help them continue that tradition.