

Nightwood Theatre presents the award-winning  
new work from Linda Griffiths!!!

***"[Linda] Griffiths is one of Canada's 'originals' known not only for the quality of her work, but for the sheer range of her career."***

Maclean's Magazine

***"Endlessly witty, vigorous, funny...brilliantly inventive..."***

Calgary Herald

***Age of Arousal***

By Linda Griffiths

Directed by Maja Ardal

Starring Clare Coulter, Sarah Dodd, Maggie Huculak, Ellen-Ray Hennessy,  
Gemma James-Smith and Dylan Smith

Set and Costume Design by Julia Tribe, Lighting Design by Kimberly Purtell,  
Composition by E.C. Woodley

November 17 to December 16, 2007 at Factory Theatre, Mainstage

By the award-winning writer of *Maggie and Pierre* and *Alien Creatures*

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**Toronto, ON...** *The setting is 1885: a time of great passion, great confusion. Mary Barfoot, an ex-militant suffragette, runs a school for secretaries with her beloved Rhoda. The school's invasion by three spinster sisters and a charismatic cad named Everard, creates a catalyst for political, sexual and emotional explosion. Ideas and libidos clash for dominance, as each character confronts the meaning of revolutionary courage.*

Nightwood Theatre, in association with Factory Theatre, is proud to present the Toronto premiere of **Linda Griffiths's** *Age of Arousal*. Genre-busting, rule-bending and ambitiously original, *Age of Arousal* is a lavish, sexy and powerful ensemble piece about the forbidden and gloriously liberated self. This truly wonderful story is wildly based on George Gissing's 1893 novel "The Odd Women."

Griffiths describes what drew her to Gissing's book, "I found a battered paperback in a secondhand bookstore and bought it for a dollar. I'd never heard of George Gissing, I just turned the book over and the synopsis said, 'Five Victorian spinsters...' I was sold. I put it away, but I think I knew I'd write something about it some day."

Nightwood Interim Artistic Director and *Age of Arousal* director **Maja Ardal** goes on to explain what makes this production so exciting, "This is a production where the best writing meets the finest of acting ensembles."

*Age of Arousal* makes its Toronto premiere fresh from an acclaimed run at Alberta Theatre Project's (ATP) PlayRites Festival where it won the Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding New Play.

Another exciting device which the playwright employs in *Age of Arousal* is 'thought speak.' The characters speak their thoughts in wild uncensored outpourings. The invented term is 'thought speak.' 'Thought speak' is verbose and quick, with the words spilling out like diamonds from a velvet box. This is their interior voice. The 'thought speak' sections are not asides to the audience; they are part of the scenes themselves. Often the 'thought speak' lines are spoken directly to the other actor – who holds the emotion and intention of the

previous dialogue. Think of ‘thought speak’ as the voice inside of you that shouts and sometimes whispers your inner emotions, thoughts, fears and ideas.

Directed by **Maja Ardal**, *Age of Arousal* stars some of Canada’s finest actors including **Clare Coulter** (“Away From Her,” “Five Senses”) as Mary Barfoot, **Sarah Dodd** (Company Theatre’s *A Whistle in the Dark*) as Rhoda Nunn, **Maggie Huculak** (“Queer As Folk”) as Alice Madden, **Ellen-Ray Hennessy** (11 Dora Award nominations) as Virginia Madden, **Gemma James-Smith** (National Theatre School 2003) as Monica Madden and **Dylan Smith** (“Murder on the Orient Express,” “Eastenders”) as Everard Barfoot.

#### **Selected Bios:**

##### **Linda Griffiths, Playwright**

As playwright and actor, Griffiths is the winner of five Dora Mavor Moore Awards, a Gemini Award, two Chalmer's Awards, the Quizzane International Festival Award for *Jessica* and Los Angeles' A.G.A. Award for her performance in John Sayles' film “Liana.” She has twice been nominated for the Governor General's Literary Award (*The Darling Family*, 1992, *Alien Creature*, 2000).

Best known for writing and performing a triple role in the play *Maggie & Pierre* in which she played Pierre Trudeau, Margaret Trudeau and a journalist called Henry. Since then, she has continued to create unique, highly theatrical plays that are magical, literate and popular. Her plays include: *Alien Creature: a visitation from Gwendolyn MacEwen*, *The Darling Family* and *The Duchess: a.k.a. Wallis Simpson*. As co-author of *The Book of Jessica* (written with native author and activist Maria Campbell), Griffiths and Campbell created a new hybrid of theatre book, one which included the play *The Book of Jessica*, as well as the personal and political process of its' creation.

Griffiths is one of the founding members of Twentyfifth Street Theatre in Saskatoon. In 1997, she formed her own company Duchess Productions, which produced a tour of *Alien Creature*, as well as developing and associate-producing *The Duchess*, *Alien Creature*, *Chronic* (Factory Theatre 2003) and *Age of Arousal* (ATP 2007). An anthology of her work, *Sheer Nerve: Seven Plays* by Linda Griffiths was published in 1999. She is an Adjunct Professor to the University of Toronto's Masters Program in Creative Writing. New projects include a one-person-show, *The Last Dog of War*.

##### **Maja Ardal, Director**

Maja Ardal steps in as Interim Artistic Director at Nightwood from March 2007 to March 2008. Ardal is a playwright, performer and core member of Contrary Company. She was the recipient of the 2002 George Luscombe Award for Mentorship in the Theatre. She is a director, theatre instructor and former Artistic Director of Young People’s Theatre (now Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People). Her production of *Whale* at YPT received the Dora Award for Outstanding Production and toured to Washington D.C. She began her career performing at Toronto Workshop Productions, under the guidance of the late George Luscombe, whom she regards as her theatre mentor. An Iceland-born Canadian, Ms. Ardal was schooled in Scotland. She returned to Iceland in 2001 to direct her play *Midnight Sun*, which was also co-produced by Tarragon Theatre and the National Arts Centre, as well as Gloucester Playhouse, Massachusetts. She also wrote the book for the musical *Joy*, (music by Joey Miller), produced by the Workman Theatre, Toronto, 2002.

Ardal has directed at The Shaw Festival, The Grand Theatre, London, Alberta Theatre Projects and Great Canadian Theatre Company, among others. Her recent appearances as an actor were in *Kilt* by Jonathan Wilson at Tarragon Theatre, (nominated for Dora Award for Outstanding Performance) and *Joan* at the Caravan Farm Theatre. In the 2004 season, she directed *Stones in His Pockets* at Alberta Theatre Projects (Betty Mitchell Award nomination for Outstanding Direction) and *The Foursome* at The Grand Theatre, London. In March, 2006, she directed *Stones in His Pockets* at The Grand Theatre and *The Threepenny Opera* at Humber College. Ardal teaches playwriting – Laban approach to Shakespeare – and ‘acting for the empty space.’ Most recently at Humber she directed the 2007 graduating class in Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*. She has taught at the University of Toronto, The National Theatre School, Humber College, Fanshawe College, Tarragon Theatre and she continues to offer workshops ranging from youth programmes to professional development. Ardal wrote and performs the hit show *You Fancy Yourself* which recently completed a successful run at New Stages Peterborough and goes to Theatre Aquarius in February 2008.

**High resolution photography for *Age of Arousal* is available for download at:**  
[http://www.nightwoodtheatre.net/index.php/media/category/2007\\_2008/](http://www.nightwoodtheatre.net/index.php/media/category/2007_2008/)

### Age of Arousal Details

<b>DATES:</b>	November 17 to December 16, 2007
<b>MEDIA/VIP:</b>	Friday, November 23, 2007
<b>SHOW TIMES:</b>	Tuesday to Saturday at 8:00 p.m., Wednesday 12:30 p.m., Saturday 2:00 p.m., Sunday 2:00 p.m.
<b>TICKETS:</b>	Single Tickets: \$25 - \$36 Sunday: PWYC Previews: \$12 <b><i>Passholders save over 20% on tickets when booking for both productions</i></b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Factory Theatre, Mainstage, 125 Bathurst Street Tickets are available in advance by calling (416) 504-9971 or online at <a href="http://www.nightwoodtheatre.net">www.nightwoodtheatre.net</a>

**Mark the date!!!!**

#### **Upcoming at Nightwood:**

##### **I. *a nanking winter* (all lower case) by Marjorie Chan**

February 23 to March 16, 2008 (Opening Night: February 27, 2008)

at Factory Theatre Mainstage

Presented by Nightwood Theatre in association with Cahoots Theatre Projects

Directed by Ruth Madoc-Jones

Starring: Leon Aureus, Ella Chan, Brooke Johnson, Grace Lynn Kung and Stephen Russell

##### **II. FemCab**

Tuesday March 4, 2008

Lula Lounge, 1585 Dundas Street West

Our notorious celebration of International Women's Day returns! Performing artists of every discipline hit the stage in a raucous salute to the extraordinary achievements of women.

Book your tickets by calling 416.944.1740 ext.7

##### **III. GA-LA-LICIOUS**

Thursday April 17, 2008

The Courthouse Lounge, 57 Adelaide Street East

Join us for our second annual fundraising gala! Gorge on delectable music, capricious comedy and first-rate guest appearances. Last year we brought you the indomitable Sarah Harmer and you won't be disappointed this year.

Early Bird Tickets: \$45.00 (before March 17, 2008)

Regular Tickets: \$55.00

Book your tickets by calling 416.944.1740 ext.7

##### **IV. EXTREME WOMEN**

Sunday May 4, 2008

Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen Street West

Join us for our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual staged readings of three innovative international works at one of the city's most innovative spaces.

Tickets: \$10

Book your tickets by calling 416.944.1740 ext.7

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#### **ABOUT NIGHTWOOD THEATRE**

Nightwood Theatre – Artistic Director **Kelly Thornton** (on leave until March 2008) – Interim Artistic Director **Maja Ardal** and Producer **Monica Esteves**.

For 28 years, Nightwood Theatre has developed, produced and toured landmark, award-winning plays by and about women. The company's tremendous work in play creation bore fruit to many renowned and acclaimed plays that are now part of the Canadian theatre canon. These include *Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* by Ann-Marie MacDonald, *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God* by Djanet Sears, *The Danish Play* by Sonja Mills and over 50 other new Canadian plays by women.

Nightwood plays have won Canada's highest literary and performing arts honours, including Governor General, Chalmers, Dora Mavor Moore and Trillium Awards. Nightwood is a valued member of various communities, at a local, regional and national level. Through our youth initiatives and mentorship programs, our various festivals, productions, events, colourful history, an important mandate and an exciting fundraisers and collaborations with other organizations, Nightwood is a growing, thriving success story with an important mandate and an exciting future.

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**Press contact:**

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