



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Oct. 4, 2006

MEDIA RELEASE

Please include in OCT., NOV., & DEC. calendar listings and announcements

Media Contact: Julie Sutherland
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Pacific Theatre's Holiday Favourite, Lucia Frangione's **CARIBOO MAGI**, Returns to the Stage

IN SHORT: St. Luke meets Shakespeare, Dickens, Dancing Girls, and the Last of the Mohicans in Pacific Theatre's holiday favourite, CARIBOO MAGI, by Vancouver resident and award-winning actress/playwright, Lucia Frangione. Playing to sold-out houses in 2001, this new production of CARIBOO MAGI brings audience members a Christmas story that is at turns provocative, witty, outrageous, and beautifully profound. Starring Lucia Frangione and Parnelli Parnes, this is a show that can't be missed.

Runs Nov. 23-Dec.30. For tickets (\$16-\$32) call 604.731.5518 or pacifictheatre.org.

Vancouver, BC – Runs November 23-December 30, 2006 (opens Nov. 24)

St. Luke meets Shakespeare, Dickens, Dancing Girls, and the Last of the Mohicans in Pacific Theatre's revival of **CARIBOO MAGI**, by Vancouver resident and award-winning actress/playwright, **Lucia Frangione** (*Holy Mo, Espresso, Wobbling Madonna*). Playing to **sold-out houses in 2001**, the newly-published *Cariboo Magi* (Talonbooks, 2005) brings audience members a Christmas story that is at turns **provocative, witty, outrageous, and beautifully profound**.

This ridiculous romp from 1870s San Diego to Barkerville, BC during the heart of gold rush fever features the comic talents of **Dirk Van Stralen** (*She Stoops to Conquer*, Chemainus Theatre), **Donna Lea Ford** (*Cariboo Magi*, Pacific Theatre, 2001), and **Lucia Frangione** (*Julius Caesar*, Mad Duck Collective) as the unforgettable Madame Fanny Dubeau, the owner of a reputable but financially desperate saloon in Old Town, San Diego. They are joined by **Parnelli Parnes** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bard on the Beach) as the energetic, self-proclaimed poet, Joe Mackey, whose desire to write poetry is stronger than his talent. His hilarious verse serves as the narration for this sensational holiday show.

This new production of **CARIBOO MAGI** is directed by actor and renowned comic-director, Kerry VanderGriend (who directed the hit comedy *The Farndale...Christmas Carol* at Pacific Theatre last season). He is joined by a phenomenal crew, with costume design by Nicole Bach, and scenic design by Kevin McAllister. Also on board are Erin Harris as lighting designer, Spencer Capier on sound design, Lauchlin Johnston as propsmaster, and Connie Hosie as Stage Manager. With a cast and crew of this calibre, the show is bound to be a visual and verbal holiday feast.

Back by popular demand, Pacific Theatre is thrilled to present a new production of a show lauded by Vancouver theatre critics: "**Devilish wit, deep religion, sheer audacity... I cried. I laughed. And I thought. Who could ask for more?**" (Colin Thomas, *The Georgia Straight*); "**Warm and wicked. A yuletide laughfest that's not to be missed**" (Peter Birnie, *The Vancouver Sun*). Join Pacific Theatre this holiday season for some riotously funny Christmas cheer.

Details:	CARIBOO MAGI by Lucia Frangione
When:	Nov. 23-Dec.30, 2006 (opens Nov. 24), Wed.-Sat. at 8pm / Sat. at 2pm Added family matinees Christmas Week: Dec. 27-28 at 3pm (note different time)
Where:	Pacific Theatre , 1420 West 12 th Ave (at Hemlock), Vancouver, BC
Tickets:	\$16 - \$32 – To reserve call 604.731.5518, or visit pacifictheatre.org, or in person. Pay-What-You-Can preview Nov. 23 (or book in advance for \$10)

Download images at pacifictheatre.org/press.html or contact Julie for more info (see top of page).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Nov.1, 2006

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Vancouver's Finest Artists come together in a New Production of **CARIBOO MAGI**

IN SHORT: St. Luke meets Shakespeare, Dickens, Dancing Girls, and the Last of the Mohicans in Pacific Theatre's holiday favourite, **CARIBOO MAGI**, by Vancouver resident and award-winning actress/playwright, Lucia Frangione. Playing to sold-out houses in 2001, this new production of **CARIBOO MAGI** brings audience members a Christmas story that is at turns provocative, witty, outrageous, and beautifully profound. With a stellar cast including Lucia Frangione and Parnelli Parnes, this is a show that can't be missed.

Runs Nov. 23-Dec.30. For tickets (\$16-\$32) call 604.731.5518 or pacifictheatre.org.

MEDIA CALL: Wednesday, November 22, 2.30-3.30pm

Camera footage, interviews, photos: **PLEASE RSVP to Julie Sutherland**

Vancouver, BC – Runs November 23-December 30 , 2006 (opens Nov. 24)

St. Luke meets Shakespeare, Dickens, Dancing Girls, and the Last of the Mohicans in Pacific Theatre's new production of **CARIBOO MAGI**, a ridiculous romp from 1870s San Diego to Barkerville, BC during the heart of gold rush fever.

Back by popular demand, after playing to sold-out houses in 2001, **CARIBOO MAGI** highlights some incredible talent from Vancouver artists. The newly-published *Cariboo Magi* (Talonbooks 2005) is written by and stars **Lucia Frangione** (*Holy Mo, Espresso, Wobbling Madonna*). A recipient of the Gordon Armstrong Playwrights Rent award and the Sydney Risk award for her playwriting, Lucia has also been awarded for her outstanding acting.

This riotously funny play also boasts the comic talents of **Dirk Van Stralen** (*She Stoops to Conquer*, Chemainus Theatre), a four-time Jessie Richardson nominee. Dirk is recognized not only for his exceptional acting, but also for his visual artistry – Mr. Van Stralen has run a single panel cartoon in *The Georgia Straight* for the last fifteen years, and is the illustrator of *Big Ben's Dig*, a children's book published by Orca Books (2005).

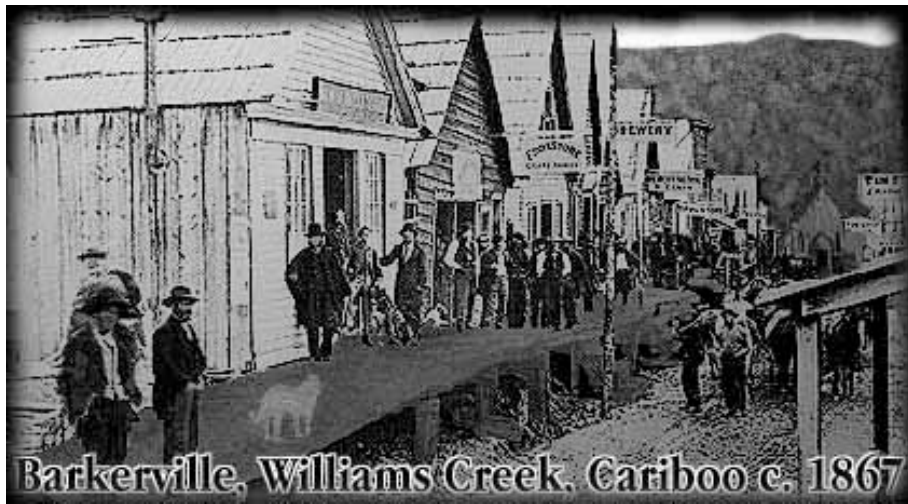
In addition, **CARIBOO MAGI** features the perfected craft of **Parnelli Parnes**, most recently seen at Bard on the Beach in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He is a recipient of the Tyrone Guthrie Award at Stratford, and was involved in its critically-acclaimed production of *Orpheus Descending* (2005). The cast is accentuated with the harlequin force of **Donna Lea Ford**, a Vancouver native whose involvement in the Vancouver film and television industry reaches back two decades. She also starred in Pacific Theatre's original production of **CARIBOO MAGI**.

This new production of **CARIBOO MAGI** is directed by actor and renowned comic-director, **Kerry VanderGriend** (who directed the hit comedies *The Farndale...Christmas Carol* and *Chickens* at Pacific Theatre, both of which were nominated for Jessie Richardson awards). The crew is also comprised of Jessie award winning and nominated designers, among them Nicole Bach, Spencer Capiere, Lauchlin Johnston, and Kevin McAllister. This powerful combination of cast and crew ensures that **CARIBOO MAGI** will be a **visual and verbal holiday feast**.

MEDIA CALL: Wednesday, November 22, 2.30-3.30pm. Camera footage, interviews, photos:
PLEASE RSVP to Julie Sutherland

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Barkerville and Gold Rush Fever



For 8 years – from 1862 to 1870 – more than 10 000 individuals traversed the Cariboo Wagon Road to seek fortune from the goldfields of the North. Many of them landed in Barkerville which, at its peak, was the largest city west of Chicago and north of San Francisco. This followed the discovery of gold on Williams Creek in 1828 by Englishman Billy Barker, which set the Barkerville Gold Rush in motion.

People believed that Barkerville would develop into one of the West Coast's largest cities, but it became a ghost town after the gold rush ended. It was deserted for 70 years until, in 1957, the provincial government began to restore it as an historic site. It now boasts 125 reconstructed buildings, and hosts the remains of one of North America's oldest Chinatowns.



San Diego in the days of the Wild West



Photo of Old Town, 1867

- ♣ February, 1850: San Diego County is created as one of California's original 27 counties.
- ♣ 1870: population of San Diego: 731
- ♣ 1862: smallpox epidemic kills hundreds of natives and Mexicans in Southern California. The scourge reaches San Diego in 1863.
- ♣ 1870: City of San Diego population is 2300.
- ♣ Feb 4, 1870: San Diego becomes the first city west of the Mississippi to set aside land for an urban park. This 1440 acre tract becomes the site for City Park (now Balboa Park).
- ♣ 1872: Tourmaline is discovered near Pala, though previously known to the natives. Mining increases by the turn of the century, stimulated by the high price of tourmaline in China. About 90% of the gem production in Southern California comes from five mines in inland San Diego County.
- ♣ 1875: Ah Quin, age 27, arrives in San Diego aboard a four-masted schooner wearing the traditional queue and carrying everything he owns on his back. Because of his diplomacy and mastery of English, Ah Quin quickly finds work as a labour contractor for the California Southern Railroad. Later Ah Quin is recognized as the unofficial Mayor of Chinatown, an area bounded by Island, J, 3rd and 4th.

Source: <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/timeline/timeline1.htm>

Saloons in the Wild West

- ♣ When America began spreading west, the saloon spread with it, popping up among the few Mexican *cantinas* already in existence.
- ♣ The first place actually called a saloon was at Brown's Hole near the Wyoming / Colorado / Utah border, established in 1822.
- ♣ First saloons weren't like we picture them: they were hastily-constructed tents that eventually developed into the ones we see in all the old western films.
- ♣ In the early days, the alcohol at these saloons was pretty dire stuff – whiskey was made with raw alcohol, burnt sugar, and chewing tobacco. The liquor was often 100 proof, though sometimes the bartender cut it with turpentine, ammonia, gun powder, or cayenne.
- ♣ Artificial refrigeration and pasteurization wasn't brought to the west until the 1880s so beer had to be drunk pretty quickly, before it got too warm or flat.
- ♣ A poker table could be found at nearly every saloon.
- ♣ Every kind of saloon you can imagine developed over time: gambling saloons, billiard saloons, dance hall saloons, bowling saloons, and the 'just drinking' saloons

Source: <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/WE-Saloons.html>

Lost in Translation?

French, German, Broken Chinook, and Chinese in *Cariboo Magi*

French

Bon!	Good!	Pardonnez-moi.	Pardon me.
Bonjour	Hello	Pas du tout	Not at all
Bordel!	Brothel hell!	petit chou	little darling
Ça va	No matter	Pour moi	For me
C'est parfait	It's perfect	Pourquoi?	Why?
c'est terrible	it's terrible	Qu'est-ce j'ai fait?	What have I done?!
Cette question	The question	Regardez	Look
Ciel!	Heavens!	s'il vous plait	Please
D'accord	Fine	Soyez debout	Stand up
Dieu nous aide!	God help us!	Taisez-vous	Shut up
Ecoutez	Listen	Tu seras fantastique!	You will be fabulous!
Exactement	Exactly	un petit	a little
Je ne peux pas	I can't	Vite!	Quick!
Je suis du Canada.	I am Canadian.	Voilà!	Tada!
Maudit!	Damn!	Vous parlez français?	You speak French?
merci	thank you	Zut alors	Darn it
mes amis	my friends		
Mon Dieu!	My God!		
Ou est ça?	Where is that?		
Ou êtes vous? Si ils sont parties je les tuerais!	Where are you? If you have left I will kill you!		
Oui! Oui! Bonne idée, William!	Yes! Yes! Good idea, William!		
Pardon? Qu'est-ce vous avez dit?	I'm sorry, what did you say?		

Broken Chinook

Ab'ba,okoke tyee potlatch dolla, konaway siwash mokst dolla Boston illahie konaway week!

The foreman will pay all Indians two dollars and fifty cents American a week!

Mesika momook kunamokst okoke kawkawa man kopa tahtlum pe mokst dingding shut!

You will work beside the China man, twelve-hour shifts!

Mesika mamook sinamoxst sun week koshe sposo okoke illahee kyas cole!

You will work seven days a week until the ground freezes!

German

Fichtelgebirge, in der Nähe meines Heims in Deutschland, mit all den Kiefern

Fichtelgebirge, near my home in Germany, with all the pines

Ich bin eine starke deutsche Frau!

I am a hearty German woman!

Ich bin froh, daß Due es magst.

I'm glad you like it.

Narr Fool

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht...

[the original German to the Christmas carol, *Silent Night*]

Vollständig. Completely.

wo sind Sie jetzt Mutter?

where are you now, Mama?

Chinese

Depending on the specific region in China from which they had originated, Chinese immigrants who came to the Cariboo during the gold rush spoke a variety of dialects. The phonetic transcription provided here is that of Taishanese (or Toisanese), which was one of the most commonly spoken and understood dialects within the Chinese communities across North America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Kat boon loi chui koi gei nin!

They were the firstborn nation!

Na dei ng dei tui or hai ai sui? Or ng hai fa guo nin, or yiu ng hai gwei lo, or wat che hai hong nin, or yit ding hai ga na dai nin.

Don't you know who I am? I am not French, I am not Indian. I might be Chinese, and I am definitely Canadian!

Playwright's Notes

How Cariboo Magi was born

January 6, 1998, I threw my raggy suitcase into the rusted out trunk of Don Noble's ancient Toyota, got in the back seat [because the front passenger seat rotted out and no longer existed] and I waved my moldy apartment good-bye for a week. Through our connections with Pacific Theatre, we had been invited to workshop our new play: *Winter Harbour*, in sunny San Diego at Lamb's Players!

Lambs booked us into the glorious Del Coronado hotel where I set up my lap top overlooking the ocean. In the morning, as I strolled along the beach to the theatre, clutching my latest draft, young muscled glistening Navy base boys would jog past me and smile...All day our play was read by excellent actors and examined by keen dramaturges and then we met with the other writers and were all treated for lavish meals and drank wine and laughed and mused philosophically with our peers every night for a week. It was absolute luxurious playwright heaven. One night I remember bursting into tears it was just too wonderful, I didn't feel like I deserved the experience. One of Lamb's directors, Jeff Miller, explained to me that the point was to remind writers how valuable they are, to treat them, if only for a week, like royalty. Like children of God.

A year later, Lambs Players asked me to write an historical, comical, non-musical, four person, nativity oriented Christmas touring show that was good for all ages, had a "Holy Mo" feel to it and could fit the set in a van. Oh, and I was to make sure that Harod's slaughter of the babes and the birth of Christ was not too graphic...because one of their previous shows had frightened young children with the screaming.

I was working up in the Cariboo at the time, performing at Barkerville's Historic Park as "Mrs. Bowron" in the school house. I thought, "Aha, what if a touring troupe came up from San Diego to Barkerville during the gold rush to do a

pageant at the Theatre Royal...?!" And my muse took it from there. My imaginary Fanny, William, Marta and Joe were inspired by Barkerville historical characters: saloon owner, Fanny Bendixon, Reverend James Reynard, hurdy gurdy dancer Jeanette Ceise and Cariboo poet, James Anderson. [I use some of his poetry in Mackey's "epilogue".]

Lambs Players loved the show and stood by it, even when a church lady objected to the baptism scene and stopped an early performance by shouting, "This is demonic!" She then called a number of venues the play was booked in and they had massive cancellations. But it soon caught on that the script was far from blasphemy and it ended up being their most popular touring show to date.

Ron Reed asked me if I'd be interested in writing a two act version of the play for Pacific Theatre. [Twist my "rubber chicken" arm.] When I revisited it, I caught myself with an all Caucasian cast during a period of history where the majority of the population was Chinese. I was excited about the idea of honoring and including the history of the Chinese miners, but a bit nervous writing about a culture I knew nothing about, and I was so afraid of offending anyone, let alone the whole issue of cultural misappropriation...so I ended up with a Joe Mackey who was a handsome, likeable, smart, talented actor, a successful miner, and a witty, charming orphan of mixed unidentified lineage.

Well, during the first read, John James Hong said something along the lines of, "Lucia, this guy is so perfect he isn't human." I realized to my horror in all efforts to avoid racism, I had created my own version of the "noble savage"! Thus, the whole *Last Of The Mohicans* angle to the play was born and Mackey is now, among other things, a bad poet!

The world premiere of the two act version opened in November 2001. It was directed

by Diane Brown, dramaturged by Lisa C. Ravensbergen, historically researched by Don Noble, designed by Kevin McAllister, and it starred myself, Dirk, Donna-lea and John James Hong. The show was a rip roaring success and the play won the Sydney Risk playwright award that year at the Jessies and Dirk got an outstanding lead actor nomination. Jerry Wasserman recommended the play to Talon books for publication and now the script is being launched the same time the play returns to the stage where it was born for another terrific run.

I heartily welcome some fantastic new faces to our wild Cariboo ride and I give my sincere thanks to everyone I've mentioned above who helped create it.



And now, after tonight's performance...I'll unlace my corset, take off my hair and hope my French accent stayed in the country...I will not take the bus back to my moldy little apartment. I will drive my four door family vehicle with the car seat to my pink but cozy "Vancouver special" on the east side. I will open the door and hug tight the best two gifts ever given to me by the Magi: my husband Michael and my baby, Eleanora. You never know what wonder the coming years will birth. Merry Christmas to you all.
Love Lucia

About Pacific Theatre

Pacific Theatre was founded in Vancouver in 1984 as a professional theatre company which aims to delight, provoke, entertain and engage its audience by presenting stories that explore the spiritual aspects of human experience in a non-propagandist way that respects all faith orientations, and which strives to operate with artistic, spiritual, relational and financial integrity. The company was founded by current Managing Artistic Director Ron Reed, and it continues to thrive under his leadership.

Pacific Theatre is a member of the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance, the Alliance For Arts & Culture and an affiliate member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres. To date the company has produced 62 shows, including nearly 2 dozen premieres, such as ESPRESSO by Lucia Frangione, and received over 65 Jessie Award nominations. In our 2005-06 season, Pacific Theatre received 16 Jessie nominations and 4 awards, the highest of any theatre. What's more, in June, 2004, Pacific Theatre was voted "ONE OF VANCOUVER'S FAVOURITE LIVE THEATRES" in the Stars of Vancouver Readers' Choice Awards, Vancouver Courier (along with the Arts Club and The Vancouver Playhouse).

