



Above right: Producing Artistic Director (in green) with audience member and *LYSISTRATA* actors Howard Dai, Viktor Barkar, Michael McIntyre, Marc Anthony Williams, Bailey Soleil Creed.

2019 Report from Producing Artistic Director Renée Bucciarelli

What an exciting, full year for City Stage New West! After hosting our surprisingly successful 2018 experiment—an audience-participation read-and-sing-along of Dicken’s *A Christmas Carol*—the *Anvil* partnered with us to bring a “*Sips n’ Scripts*” reading series free to the public in 2019. Our “*Censored! Forbidden Classics of the Wicked Stage*” series presented 3 banned comedies spanning 2300 years of history, all addressing themes of women’s sexual and financial agency that resonate strongly in the #metoo era. Audiences could participate by reading supporting roles with City Stage New West’s rehearsed professional actors, adding sound effects, and taking part in intermission activities, polls, and post-reading discussions about the plays, their impact, and censorship. Specially themed “sips” were available at the *Anvil* Cash bar.

Aristophanes’ *LYSISTRATA*, directed by **Bucciarelli**, featured multi-talented actor **Bailey Soleil Creed** in the title role, along with some of Creed’s original spoken-word poetry. **Mae West’s *SEX***, directed by **Bucciarelli**, featured **Nicola Whitney-Griffiths** as Montréal’s “Margy Lamont”, the role that landed Mae West in jail and launched her brilliant career. **George Bernard Shaw’s *MRS. WARREN’S PROFESSION*** crowned the series with



Alley Theatre’s re-united cast from their 2014 production. Directed (again) by **Marisa Emma Smith**, this reboot featured some of the Lower Mainland’s finest actors, including **Linda Quibell** (title role), **Melissa Oei**, **Tom Pickett**, **Daniel Arnold**, **Patrick Sabongui**, and **Eric Keenleyside**.

At the *Anvil’s* ***Culture Forward New West***, actor **Simon Webb** and **Bucciarelli** as reprised their roles from CSNW’s 2017 ***SHAW SHORTS!*** as “George Bernard Shaw” and “Mrs. Patrick Campbell” to talk about censorship and defend Shaw’s banned play *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*.

This year, we welcomed new Board President **Dr. Christopher Walmsley**, former professor of social work at Thompson Rivers University, author, and community organizer, who joins **Callyn Dorval** (Vice President), with directors **Howard Dai**, **Barb Ganger**, and new director **Melanie Germain**. Former long-time President **Pansy Jang** remains as Treasurer/Secretary. **Dorval**, **Germain**, and **Dai** contributed their acting chops to two of our readings.

STILL TO COME IN 2019:

Thursday, December 19, 7-9 pm, City Stage New West presents Charles Dickens’ ***A CHRISTMAS CAROL*** at the *Anvil Centre* for our holiday *Sips ‘n’ Scripts*. This audience-inclusive, family-friendly read and sing-along will once again star veteran actor **Dave Clothier** as “Scrooge”. Audiences can read a role, throw a snowball, don a Victorian costume piece, join the Christmas songs--or just sit back and enjoy the fun. “Smoking Bishop” (a spiced wine loved by Dickens) will be the featured sip. Free cocoa and goodies for kids. **Free admission, all ages**. Reservations link at www.citystagenewwest.org or call **604 527 4640**.

