

PRESS NOTES :

An extraordinary woman in an extraordinary time

Friend of George Sands, Alexandre Dumas, Lily Langtry,
Oscar Wilde; despised by Shaw

Did she really sleep in that coffin?

At the Glendon College theatre, Bayview at Lawrence, on November 15 and 16, San Nolte will take the stage in the title role of her one-woman-show, SARAH, a time with Madame Bernhardt. This piece is a portion of a full length play titled SARAH, which she wrote in 1988-89.

The play occurs on a Tuesday afternoon in Paris, May 1884 in Bernhardt's own space, Theatre du Porte Saint-Martin. Following an early production meeting Sarah has laid down for one of her famous quick naps and she awakens to an "unscheduled" session with the press.

For Bernhardt the year 1884 is a darkened tunnel. She is 39 years old, her youth is gone. Important people have abandoned her or died. Her husband is a drug addict. Her mother, who was a beautiful, well-placed Paris cortisan in her day, and who was unable to love Sarah, is now dead. Dumas is gone. Hugo is gone. Sarah's own midas touch as a theatrical manager/director/actor has begun to elude her. She is deep in debt.

Yet the legendary Madame Bernhardt has always been sustained by her own spiritual tryptic - her strong will, her theatrical genius and her utter fascination with the unusual which in turn fed the ever hungry press on both sides of the Atlantic.

This play is about Madame Sarah's ordeal wi the tunnel. How does this untamed spirit, this solo fragile creature escape?

The play is performed primarily in English.

theatre Glendon, York Hall, Glendon College
Bayview at Lawrence East

Parking: Lower Level, to the left, stairs are on the left coming up; York Hall is on your right as you come up to ground level.

Showtime: 8pm

Reservations: 487-6722,

Tickets sold at the theatre T, W, R, F 11-2,
or at the door before the show, from 7:15pm.

COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

Une femme extraordinaire à une époque extraordinaire.

Amie de George Sands, Alexandre Dumas, Lily Langtry, Oscar Wilde; détestée par Shaw.

Dormait-elle vraiment dans ce cercueil?

Au Collège Glendon, à Bayview et Lawrence, les 15 et 16 novembre, l'actrice San Nolte montera sur scène avec son "one woman show" intitulé "SARAH, a time with Madame Bernhardt". Ce spectacle est une partie d'une pièce entière intitulée SARAH, qu'elle a écrite en 1988-89.

La scène se déroule un mardi après-midi à Paris, en mai 1884, dans le propre espace de Bernhardt, au théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin. Après une réunion de mise en scène qu'elle avait eue plus tôt, Sarah s'est étendue pour une de ses fameuses siestes rapides et elle se réveille face à la presse pour une séance "imprévue".

Pour Bernhardt, l'année 1884 est un tunnel obscur. Elle a 39 ans, sa jeunesse s'est envolée. Les gens importants l'ont abandonné ou sont morts. Son mari est un toxicomane. Sa mère, qui était une très belle courtisane bien placée de son temps, et qui était incapable d'aimer Sarah, est maintenant morte. Dumas a disparu. Hugo a disparu. En tant que directrice, metteur en scène et actrice de théâtre, sa capacité à faire de l'or de tout ce qu'elle touche a commencé à lui échapper. Elle est profondément endettée.

Cependant, la légendaire Madame Bernhardt a toujours été soutenue par sa propre triptyque spirituelle - sa très bonne volonté, son génie théâtral et sa fascination absolue pour l'extraordinaire qui, à son tour, alimentait la presse, toujours avide, des deux côtés de l'atlantique.

La pièce est au sujet du supplice de Sarah face à ce tunnel. Comment cet esprit fougueux, cette créature solitaire fragile échappe-t-elle?

La pièce est jouée principalement en anglais.

Théâtre Glendon, pavillon York, Collège Glendon,
Bayview à Lawrence Est
Début du spectacle : 20h.
Réservations : 487-6722

Les billets sont vendus au théâtre du mardi au vendredi de 11h à 14h, ou à l'entrée avant le spectacle, à partir de 19h15.

SARAH BERNHARDT, a one-woman show

by San Nolte, GSH

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This applies to the four documents, Sarah1,2,3,4.

Premise: Desire is the strongest force, and survives even Death.

Translation of French text:

-- So. Pitou brought you here. A full week and three hours early. What he lacks in precision timing he makes up for in devotion.

--

Properties:

Hairpins, a French carved ivory hairpin, a chatelaine and keys, jewelry, a boa, two furs, scarves, one parasol, two books, two overstuffed cushions, a pistol, memoirs in a leather sheath with a string tie, plus one or two other sheaths [one with newspaper clippings and magazine articles/ pictures], a hairbrush, a hand-mirror, an appointment journal also tied, writing instruments (pen, ink, mechanical pencil, wooden writing pencils, blotter), scissors, calling cards, scripts, magazines, framed photographs, a rabbit's foot on a string, two drawstring bags one with gold coins and one with gold jewelry. An artist's easel, a wooden box, hand carved. A reticule (small purse) and a large strong but beat-up carpet bag. A dressing table and chair, a writing table and chair, a lounging bench with a side table. A coffin for someone 5'6". Etcetera...

Notes about Sarah: [1] "Far from being pretty, she would have passed altogether unnoticed but for the strange, far-away, fearless, steady look in her eyes."

[2] She is a consummate performer, and therefore she is able to be "up" while on stage. Yet there is -- at moments - a hint of sadness which seems to have "settled in," almost into the bones. She still abounds with energy, yet the energy is a trifle uneven. Occasionally, her acid tones are a touch too severe, coming from a mood of melancholy.

[3] She is highly prepared, or - as some say - over-rehearsed. Bernard Shaw seemed to feel she had an elaborate collection of hat-tricks. So, here...the actress' job is to layer affectations over real emotions. Occasionally, where it seems important, there will be a stagenote to aid in the sorting of layers, i.e. "genuine sigh."

[4] Her command of English is known to be very poor. Pauses and stops (double hyphens) will represent the hesitations while she's "fishing" for the correct word. She thinks, for the most part, in French and then translates.

[5] Two of her traits, of prowess with her audience, are..

(1) to OFTEN work with pauses which are a tad longer than normal, and (2) to work an individual, "staying with his/her face", and relating directly to that person... a tad longer than is custom.

If set in 1884: Contributing factors in crisis/depression situation would be -

Sarah1

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