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Major Barbara

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Frederic Wood Theatre
presents

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by
George Bernard Shaw

directed by
Antony Holland

January 15-25
1986

University of British Columbia
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Regretfully, the Frederic Wood Theatre has had to cancel its plans to produce *The Thirty Nine Steps* due to unforeseen copyright difficulties. We are, however, working on another project with John Gray, details of which we hope to be able to announce shortly.

For Information & Reservations

PHONE 228-2678

Frederic Wood Theatre Magazine

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George Bernard Shaw
A Chronology

1856	George Bernard Shaw born in Dublin, Ireland, July 26th.
1876	Arrived in London to make his way.
1879-83	Wrote five unsuccessful novels in laborious succession: *Immaturity*, 1879; *Irrational Knot*, 1880; *Love Among the Artists*, 1881; *Cashel Byron's Profession*, 1882; and *An Unsocial Socialist*, 1883.
1882	Heard Henry George, American author of *Progress and Poverty*, address a London Meeting. It "changed the whole current of my life." Read Marx's *Das Kapital* at the British Museum. It "made a man of me."
1884	Fabian Society formed; Shaw elected a member.
1890	Wrote *Quintessence of Ibsenism*.
1888-94	Brilliant success as music critic.
1892	First play, *Widower's Houses*, produced.
1893	*Mrs. Warren's Profession* banned. First produced in 1902.
1894	*Arms and the Man* and *Candida*. Shaw's first stage successes.
1895-98	London's leading drama critic in Frank Harris' *Saturday Review*.
1896	*You Never Can Tell*.
1898	Married Charlotte Payne-Townsend, an heiress and fellow Socialist.
1899	Wrote *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* for Ellen Terry, and *Caesar and Cleopatra*.
1901-03	*Man and Superman* (produced in 1905) began Shaw's great period. First play to have full-scale Shavian preface.
1904-07	Vedrenne and Granville Barker Court Theatre productions of Shaw, Shakespeare, and Euripides establish Shaw's permanent theatrical reputation with 701 performances of eleven Shaw plays.
1905	*Major Barbara*.
1906	*The Doctor's Dilemma*. Bought "Shaw's Corner" at Ayot St. Lawrence.
1908	*Getting Married*.
1911	*Androcles and the Lion*.
1912	*Pygmalion*. Shaw sculpted by Rodin.
1914	Courageous and much reviled attack on super-patriotism and the insanity of war, *Commonsense About the War*.
1913-16	*Heartbreak House* (produced in 1920).
1921	*Back to Methuselah*, Shaw's "Metabiological Pentateuch."
1923	*Saint Joan*.
1925	Awarded Nobel Prize for Literature.
1928	*The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*.
1929	*The Apple Cart*.
1947	Wrote last complete play at the age of 91: *Buoyant Billions*. His career as a publishing writer exceeded seventy years.
1950	Shaw died at his home in Ayot St. Lawrence, November 2nd.

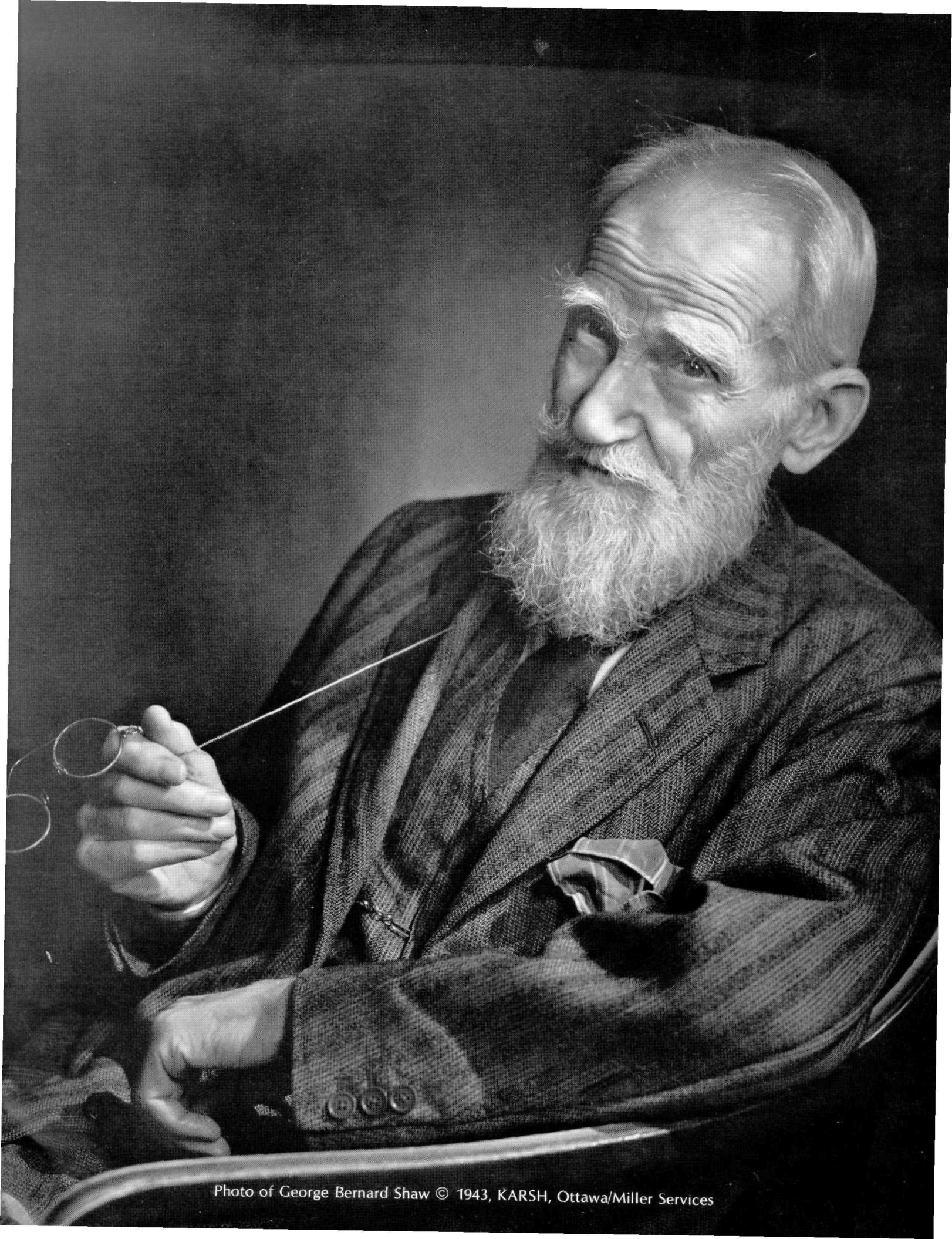
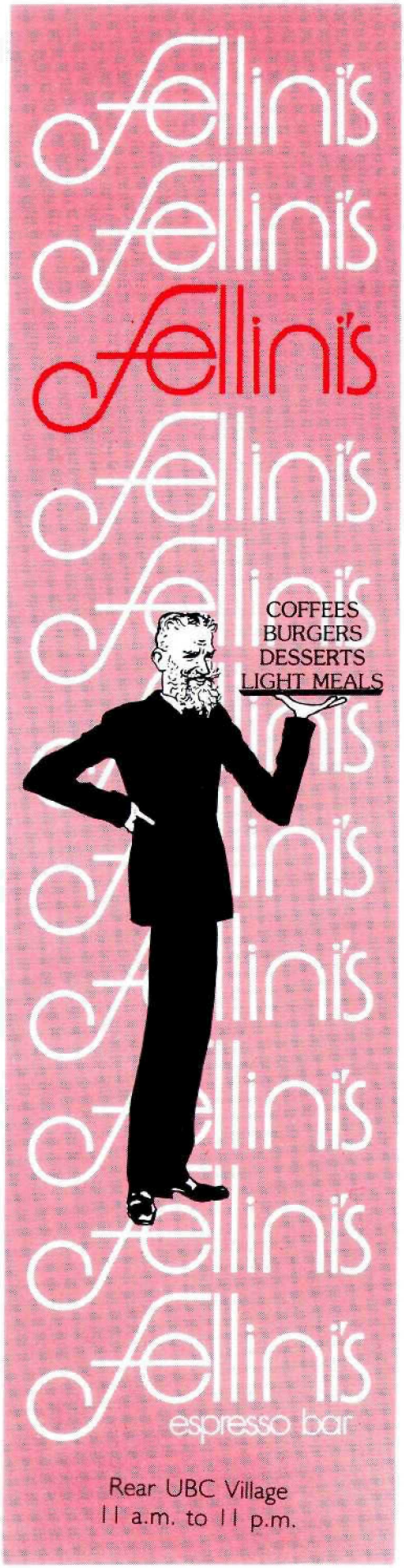


Photo of George Bernard Shaw © 1943, KARSH, Ottawa/Miller Services



MAJOR B

by

Bernarc

Directed by Ant

With Leon Pownall

Set designed by Alison Green	Costumes designed by Jannette Bijde-Vaate	Lighting designed by Marsha Sibthorpe

CAST

LADY BRIT	Kathryn Bracht
STEPHEN	Bruce Harwood
SARAH	Katey Wright
BARBARA	Sarah Rodgers (January 16, 18, 21, 23, 25) Laura White (January 15, 17, 20, 22, 24)
CUSINS	Philip Spedding
CHARLES LOMAX	Stefan Winfield
MORRISON, BILTON	Don McAdam
RUMMY MITCHINS	Tanja Dixon-Warren
SNOBBY PRICE	Chris Rosati
JENNY	Corrine Hebden
PETER SHIRLEY	Michael Fera
BILL WALKER	Darren Andrichuk
MRS. BAINES	Carol Nesbitt

Act One

It is after dinner in January, 1906, in the library of Lady Britomart Undershaft's house in Wilton Crescent.

Act Two

The yard of the West Ham shelter of the Salvation Army on a cold January morning.

INTERMISSION

Act Three; Scene One

The next day, after lunch in Lady Britomart's library in Wilton Crescent.

Act Three; Scene Two

Perivale, St. Andrew's at the Undershaft and Lazarus Cannon Foundry.

**Mr. Holland and Mr. Pownall who are currently Artists in Residence, appear through the courtesy of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

ARBARA

y

d Shaw

tony Holland*

ll* as Undershaft

PRODUCTION

Technical Director . . . . . Ian Pratt
Properties Mistress . . . . . Sherry Darcus
Costume Supervisor . . . . . Rosemarie Heselton
Lighting Execution . . . . . Debbie Starr, John Henrickson
Set Construction . . . . . Don Griffiths, Robert Eberle
Cutter . . . . . Charlotte Burke
Wardrobe Mistress . . . . . Jannette Bijde-Vaate

Stage Manager . . . . . David Hay
Assistant Stage Managers . Michael Groberman, Wayne LaRiviere
Properties Assistant . . . . . Cynthia Burtinshaw
Make-up . . . . . Cynthia Johnston
Musical Director . . . . . Bruce Dow

House Manager . . . . . Craig Duffy
Box Office . . . . . Bruce Dow, Carol Fisher, Linda Humphries
Business Manager . . . . . Marjorie Fordham
Production . . . . . Norman Young

Scenic Artists . . . . . David Roberts, Larry Osland

Vocal Coach . . . . . Rod Menzies

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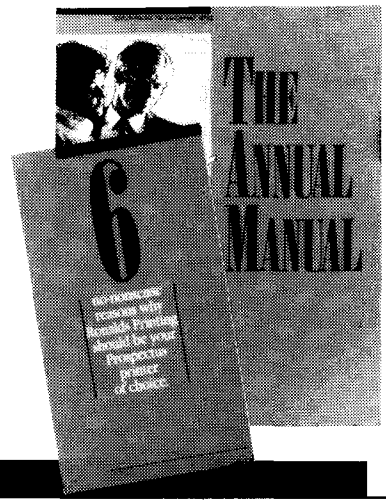

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G.B.S. on Major Barbara

In reviving a play 24 years old, I shall find myself, as usual, up against that sanguine belief in progress which classes everything unpleasant with old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago. Quite recently a play of mine on the subject of marriage was criticized as out of date because it dealt with abuses that have long since disappeared. As a matter of fact the only abuse which had disappeared in the meantime was one which was not mentioned in the play. Every proposal to remedy the others has been funked and rebuffed. I therefore venture to offer our amateurs of progress a hint or two as to how the passage of time has affected the actuality of Major Barbara.

First, the problem of the unemployed, with which the Salvation Army is seen struggling in the play, grew to an unprecedented magnitude in 1920; and as the unemployed now consist to a considerable extent of demobilized soldiers, and their successors with the colours do not enjoy the confidence of the Government in the matter of compelling them to starve, the old restraints upon indiscriminate outdoor relief under the Poor Law have been thrown to the winds, bankrupting the Guardians in all the centres of unemployment, and sending up rates and taxes to a point at which Major Barbara's poverty on £7,000 a year has become titled destitution on little more than half that pittance.

In consequence 'the bribe of bread' which so troubled Major Barbara is now anticipated by a variety of so-called doles, ranging from unemployment insurance benefit to outdoor relief to wives and children, and even to ablebodied men under pretexts available for easy going guardians (not, by the way, always Labor Guardians). But there are still ablebodied men, out of benefit and without wives or children, who are as destitute as Peter Shirley in the play; and unfortunately the typical cases are not now those of skilled men 'too old at 46,' but of young men who have never had any industrial training. Having grown up since the great industrial debacle of 1920, they have had their mouths stopped with Poor Rates, Lord Mayors' Funds, and doles of one sort or another until, if there were any commercial employment within their reach, they would be unemployable for want of the habit and training of steady work. Only in the case of the soldier is it recognised that he must be kept in full health and training between his jobs. For the civilian, we think it enough to throw the poor fellow a good natured half-crown, and hurry away in the opposite direction whilst he goes to the devil.

When the war came Undershaft and Lazarus did not do so well as was expected of them, because Lazarus had obtained too much control; and after a frightful slaughter of our young men through insufficient munitions the Government had to organize the business in national factories and to send public officials to teach Lazarus how to conduct as much of it as was left to him. But the moment the war was over, Undershaft and Lazarus came back with all their newspapers shouting that they had saved the country, and that the national factories were sinks of corruption and incompetence. They then plunged into an orgy of over capitalization followed by wholesale repudiation, which they called reconstruction and stabilization; so that every blunder and every swindle on their part left the public more and more impressed with their gigantic grasp of business and finance, incidentally providing our playwrights with materials for much tragic farce.

"Undershaft", however, survived the wreck. His policy of high wages and ruthless scrapping of obsolete methods proved more lucrative than sweating and doing what was done last time. His well-paid employees became his best customers. He emerged in fiction as Clissold and fact as John Ford. And the spectacle of his successes in making money gave great satisfaction to the huge majority who have rather less chance of achieving it themselves than of winning the Calcutta Sweep.

West Ham meanwhile is in the same old mess as when the play was written, except that the rates have risen to such impossible heights that the Government has had the brilliant idea of camouflaging them by adding them to the rents. The Salvation Army still spends in a struggle with poverty the zeal that was meant for a struggle with sin and the money that Undershaft and Bodger subscribe for the reasons set forth in the play. And the author is still of opinion that the best comedies for British audiences are those which they themselves provide by trying to run an international civilization on the precepts of our village Sunday Schools and the outlook of our suburban nurseries.

(When *MAJOR BARBARA* was revived at Wyndham's Theatre on March 5, 1929, this note by Shaw was printed in the programme.)

Shaw and the World of Major Barbara

By Peter Lewis

Major Barbara was the third new Shaw play to be presented at the Court Theatre in 1905, Shaw's *annus mirabilis*. He had made his reputation for comedy in March, when the King attended a command performance of *John Bull's Other Island* and laughed so much that he broke his chair. *Man and Superman*, shorn of the Don Juan in Hell act, played to packed houses in October and, in November, came *Major Barbara*. With these three plays, Shaw converted the theatre into a forum of ideas and debate, where audiences came to be provoked, to be forced to think and to carry on the argument after the curtain fell. He was in his 50th year and he had indisputably arrived before the general public as England's leading playwright.

Poverty and the Salvation Army

Shaw's theme in *Major Barbara* was poverty and what could or should be done about it. It was a timely subject. Although Britain was still at the summit of her imperial power in 1905, there were nearly a million people receiving Poor Law relief. One person in 36 was a pauper, over two-thirds of them women and children. In London the proportion was higher, one person in 31. On 1 January 1905, there were in London, 148,000 paupers, including 1,365 "casual paupers", most of them described as vagrants, who spent the night on the streets or in the workhouse casual wards, or Spikes.

Their number had increased substantially since 1878, when William Booth founded the Salvation Army and became its first General. In 1888 the Army had opened its first hostel for down-and-outs (it still runs many today). Booth's book, *In Darkest England*, claimed that one person in ten lived "below the standard of the London cab-horse", which was at least assured of food, shelter and warmth. From the beginning women enjoyed equal status with men in the Salvation Army as officers, soldiers and preachers, thanks to his wife, Catherine Booth's initiative. There were many Major Barbaras.

Arms and Armourers

In 1905 (the year the first Dreadnought was built) the biggest arms makers in Britain were Armstrong, Vickers and the Nobel Dynamite Trust. Sir William (later Lord) Armstrong had built up his firm until it was second only to Alfried Krupp, selling armaments from China to Peru. To Armstrong's mansion on Tyneside came (in person) the Shah of Persia, the King of Siam, the Emir of Afghanistan and many a military delegation to buy arms. "Those who use the means we supply must be responsible for their legitimate application," said Armstrong, who professed to believe that the new engines of war would make war less barbarous.

Alfred Nobel, who patented dynamite in 1867, bringing himself an immense fortune, was a strange, withdrawn, misanthropic man who wrote poetry in imitation of Shelley. He was interested in pacifism but claimed "My factories may end war sooner than your peace congresses. The day two army corps can destroy each other in one second, all civilised nations will recoil from war and disband their armies. "This was not Shaw's belief. Says Undershaft: "The more destructive war becomes, the more fascinating we find it." Who was the greater realist?

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A Note On Major Barbara

Shaw's attitude to General Booth's Army was very friendly, but he might not have thought of writing "Major Barbara" had he not trounced in print someone who had written to the papers describing an orchestral performance as "worse than a Salvation Army band". Shaw's reply drew from the delighted General an invitation to the Salvation Army Festival of Massed Bands. After writing a professional musical criticism of this performance, Shaw suggested the Army's lads and lassies should act plays as well as sing and play in bands and added: "Why not a little play by me?" This notion of a playlet for the Salvation Army grew into a three act play for the Court Theatre under the Vedrenne-Barker management.

The play was first titled "Andrew Undershaft's Profession" to make the point that, although munition-making is supposed to be discreditable, it is not, and, if used to produce better conditions for its employees, it is doing good. Later Shaw decided it should be called "Major Barbara" and offered the name part to Ada Rehan. The completion of the play was delayed and on September 17th, 1905, Shaw wrote that he was in a condition of sullen desparation concerning it. However, the production went into rehearsal a month later but Ada Rehan, who had met with an accident, was not able to play the title role and Annie Russell took the lead, with Louis Calvert as "Undershaft" and Granville Barker as "Cusins".

The first performance of the play on November 28th, 1905, was received with "mingled delight and exasperation" by an audience including the Prime Minister, "all the intelligentsia of London" and a box full of Salvation Army commissioners who viewed the production as an excellent advertisement for their organisation and lent the uniforms to the Management in the interest of authenticity.

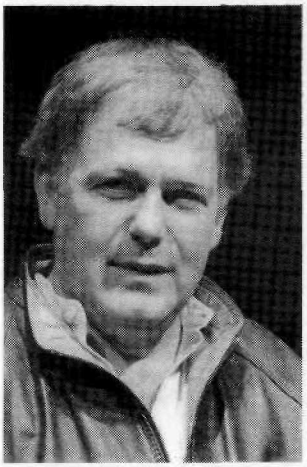
Years later, in 1937, Sir Winston Churchill, writing in "Great Contemporaries" referred to Bernard Shaw as "the greatest living master of letters in the English-speaking world", and related how he had recently taken his children to see a production of "Major Barbara", the "very acme of modernity". It had been twenty years since he had seen it, "the most terrific years" the world had known, in which the landmarks of centuries had been swept away and science had transformed the conditions of our lives and the aspect of town and country. But, said Sir Winston, in this play "there was not a character requiring to be re-drawn, not a sentence, not a suggestion that was out of date."

G.D.

Antony Holland

Antony Holland has had a distinguished career in the theatre, with a long list of credits as actor and director. He is currently busy as an actor, and last year won the Jessie Award for the best performance in a Leading Role (in the Arts Club Production of S. Snukal's *Family Matters*). In 1985 he directed Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* for the UBC Summer Stock Company. Mr. Holland has recently completed work on three movies; in one of them he played opposite Katharine Hepburn.

Leon Pownall



Mr. Pownall has worked in the theatre as an actor, director, writer and educator for over 25 years. A veteran of the Stratford and Shaw Festivals, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the Neptune Theatre in Halifax, the Vancouver Playhouse, the Seattle Repertory, and many others, this award-winning Canadian of Welsh ancestry enjoys the respect of his wide audience. For the Frederic Wood Theatre he has directed *The Firebugs* and he has played the title role in Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

Alison Green

Set Design

Alison Green graduated from UBC in 1965 in Fine Arts. From 1967-1974 she worked as a set designer for CBC TV. Since 1974 she has been the resident designer for the Arts Club Theatre, responsible for shows like *Reflections on Crooked Walking, The Sea Horse, A Cuckoo in the Nest, Twelfth Night*, and many others,

Marsha Sibthorpe

Lighting Design

Marsha Sibthorpe is Resident Lighting Designer at the Arts Club Theatre and most recently lit Ann Mortifee's *Welcome to the Planet* and Nicola Cavendish's *Snowing on Saltspring* for that theatre. She has also worked with the New Play Centre, Axis Mime, Carousel Theatre, and has designed the lighting for Ann Mortifee's concert appearances.

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