Swiss writer Max Frisch is one of the greatest playwrights and thinkers of the post-war 20th century, author of some truly seminal works in the European canon. So what a pleasure it is to be able to share with you his masterpiece - *The Arsonists* - in this spot-on new translation by British playwright Alistair Beaton. Part farce, part morality play, part mea culpa of a dedicated pacifist, *The Arsonists* is a deliciously layered play that provokes laughter and debate in equal portions.

Not quite a decade after the end of the Second World War, (*The Arsonists* dates from 1953) the Swiss writer set out to examine some of the causes that might have led to the horrors of the Nazi regime, but more generally to any form of social wrong that - through passive complicity, laziness, excess comfort or guilt - we put up with or even foster, unwittingly or not. Swiss neutrality was one way for an entire nation to absolve itself of any responsibility for the battles that raged on all sides, but in the microcosm of the home, Herr Biedermann is equally and amply capable of finding his own reasons not to take a stand against the forces of evil that loom large in his neighbourhood. For if I speak out, who knows what corpse might be found in my very own closet?!

Biedermann, after all, is essentially a good guy, like you and me. Except that (unlike you and me, right?) he somehow gets infected by the virus of greed, refusing to share the profits from an invention with his business partner, Herr Knechtling. No sooner is this decision made and Knechtling excluded, a stranger arrives at Biedermann’s doorstep, forcing his way into the attic of his home without further ado. This usurper is soon joined by a second, while all around fires rage. Could there possibly be a connection? And if only Herr Knechtling’s widow (for the poor penniless sod has since put his head in the oven) would disappear, then perhaps the problem would as well...

Creative masterminds Morris Panych and Ken MacDonald have once again allied their forces to bring this delightful, provocative comedy to us, assembling a team of artists that we are beyond-words proud to have on our stage. As singer-songwriter Justin Rutledge and his fellow musicians lead the chorus of firemen, we can all sit around the bonfire in a rousing chant: “Fire’s burning, fire’s burning…”

The Flex-Me Pass is available now (perfect timing for holiday giving)
This performance runs approximately 90 minutes. There is no intermission.
I was first approached by Matthew Jocelyn to direct Yasmina Reza’s God of Carnage; a proven commercial success with some degree of social relevance. We had great luck with ‘Art’ in a previous season, so I suppose the thinking was – well – obvious. Moderate intellect plus light comedy equals big box office. However, a week or two after presenting me with his offer, Matthew called me, a tremble in his voice, asking me to come down to the office. “I have something to tell you.”

“Have you read the script?”

“Still aren’t convinced. I have something to tell you.”

“Michael Ball is hailed as one of the most experienced Shawian actors of the English-speaking theatre, with over forty productions for the Shaw Festival since 1976. Notable performances: Captain Shotover in Heartbreak House, The Count in The President (2011/2008), his scene-stealing portrayal of butler Burrows in Ways of the Heart, Alderman Collins in Getting Married, Dr Sloper in The Heiress, John Rutherford in Rutherford and Son, Sheridan Whiteside in The Man Who Came to Dinner. Jack Tanner in Man and Superman (1989), Dr Moriarty in Sherlock Holmes, Sir Colenso Ridgeon in The Doctor’s Dilemma (1991), and Charles McFadden in Counsellor-at-Law. In his thirty-third season at the Shaw Festival, Mr. Ball was seen in French Without Tears and The Millionairess.”

Morris Panych

**CAST**

**BIEDERMANN**

Michael Ball

**FIRE BRIGADE**

**SCHMITZ/FIRE BRIGADE/ MRS. KNECHTLING**

Dan Chameroy

Canadian Stage credits: Into the Woods, Side by Side by Sondheim and Rock ‘n’ Roll. Dan recently completed his 11th season at The Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Credits there include Henry V, Wanderlust, Pentecost, Oklahoma!, The Winters Tale, Palmer Park, The Tempest, As You Like It, Camelot, Timon of Athens, Gigi and Cymbeline. Toronto credits include Beauty and the Beast (Dora Award), The Drowsy Chaperone, 4 Ross Petty Pantomimes, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum and Les Miserables. Elsewhere: High Society and The Magic Fire (Shaw Festival); Camelot, Blood Brothers and Forever Plaid. Mr Chameroy can currently be heard on the animated series Babar, Franklin and Oh No! He is a founding artist of Theatre 20. Love to Christine and Olivia.

**FIRE BRIGADE**

Sly Juhas

Sly Juhas’ dynamic performances have earned this young, ardent drummer the opportunity to perform and record with some of the world’s leading musicians. He’s shared the stage with Holly Cole, Pat Labarbera, Molly Johnson, Kenny Wheeler, Oliver Jones, Sophie Millman, Brandi Disterheft and Jane Bunnet, among others. Sly has been a part of numerous recordings including the Juno award-winning Brandi Disterheft 2007.

**FIRE BRIGADE**

Christine Bougie

Christine Bougie is a guitarist and multi-instrumentalist who regularly performs, records, and tours alongside artists such as Gretchen Peters, Eliza Gilkyson, and Amy Millan. In addition to her work as a session musician, she has released three albums of her original, instrumental compositions.

Go behind the scenes!

Visit The Arsonists page on our website for video interviews, costume sketches, design images, media links and more. www.canadianstage.com
CAST (CONT.)

release Debut, and the 2009 release Second Side on Justin Time Records. Performances of note include Carnegie Hall, opening for Diana Krall in 2005 at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, Pharoah Sanders and Kenny Garret in 2006 at the Toronto International Jazz Festival, Dave Brubeck in 2009, and most recently, for Herbie Hancock in 2010.

**ANNA/FIRE BRIGADE**

Sheila McCarthy

Sheila McCarthy is a multiple Genie, Gemini, and Dora Award-winning actress in the classic Canadian films I've Heard the Mermaids Singing and The Lotus Eaters. McCarthy has appeared in films such as Being Julia, Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen, The Day After Tomorrow, and Year of the Carnivore. Recently, she starred in the feature film Antiviral, the directorial debut of Brandon Cronenberg, and has 2 films to be released in 2013, Public Service and Algonquin. A lead in CBC’s hit series Little Mosque on the Prairie, Sheila McCarthy shines on the screen and stage with many credits including Die Hard 2, Disney’s Paradise, Stepping Out, and Picket Fences. In Stratford, McCarthy played Sally Bowles in Cabaret, Helena in Midsummer Night’s Dream and Adelaide in Guys and Dolls. McCarthy also wrote, produced and acted in Virtual Mom. She received Best Actress Gemini Awards for her roles in Emily of New Moon and Sesame Street.

**BABETTE**

Fiona Reid

Selected Canadian Stage credits include: Rock 'n' Roll, Arcadia, Indian Ink, Hayfever, Fallen Angels (Dora), How I Learned to Drive, Sweeney Todd, 6 Degrees of Separation (Dora), Death and the Maiden. Fiona has worked across Canada, in the USA and UK in such diverse roles as Blanche Dubois in A Streetcar Named Desire, Martha in Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and Lady Bracknell in The Importance of Being Earnest. Last year she appeared in Calendar Girls (Mirvish). At Edmonton’s Citadel Theatre, she recently played Amanda in The Glass Menagerie, Violet in August Osage County (Sterling Award) and Veronica in God of Carnage. Notable Film & TV appearances include Cathy King in King of Kensington and mother of the groom in My Big Fat Greek Wedding. A veteran of the Shaw and Stratford Festivals, Fiona has been awarded the Order of Canada, has an honorary degree from Bishop’s University and received ACTRA’s Award of Excellence (2010) and the Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award (2008). She is currently Vice President of the Actors’ Fund of Canada.

**FIRE CHIEF/POLICE OFFICER/ DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY/ COMPOSER/MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Justin Rutledge

Justin Rutledge is a Juno-nominated songwriter from Toronto. Justin’s fifth album, Valleyheart, will be released by Outside Music in January 2013. Other theatre credits include Michael Ondaatje’s Divisadero, directed by Daniel Brooks (2011/2012), and EURYDICE, directed by Kristina Nicoll (2011). Justin also has a dog named Penny and a band in Los Angeles called Early Winters.

**EISENRING/FIRE BRIGADE/ MR. KNECHTLING**

Shawn Wright

Rose's production of Not Wanted on the Voyage with the great Goldie Semple. He most recently played John in Oleana at TNB directed by Alisa Palmer. Also, Stratford Festival (13 productions including Moby Dick directed by Morris Panych), Shaw Festival (5 productions including the lead in Good News), National Arts Centre Acting Ensemble 2011, the original Canadian cast of Jersey Boys and the original USA cast of Mamma Mia. Shawn’s career began alongside Gordon Pinsent in Cyrano de Bergerac and he has since played a slew of roles both comic and tragic by dramatists as diverse as Moliere, Euripides and Tennessee Williams. He trained at Shakespeare and Company in Massachusetts.

**CREATIVE**

**WRITER**

Max Frisch

Max Frisch (1911-1991) was a Swiss novelist and playwright. When WWII broke out in 1939, Frisch was drafted into the army but never fought due to the neutral status of Switzerland. The diary Frisch kept during the war years was published in 1940 as Blätter aus dem Brot sack (Pages from a Knap sack). Frisch wrote his first play, the symbolic German Bin, or the Voyage to Peking, in 1944, and began writing again, in earnest, shortly after WWII. His two most famous plays, Andorra and Biedermann und die Brandstifter (The Arsonists), were written during this period. He received many honours and awards for his plays and fiction from foundations and universities around the world. Among the later ones were: the German Book Trade Freedom Prize, 1976; commander, Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, 1985; Commonwealth Award, Modern Language Association, 1985, and the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, 1986.

Adapted from Encyclopedia of World Biography.

**TRANSLATOR**

Alistair Beaton

Alistair Beaton is a political satirist whose work spans theatre, television, radio and publishing. Select theatre credits include Caledonia (Edinburgh International Festival 2010); King of Hearts (Hampstead Theatre 2007); and Feelgood (winner the Evening Standard Best Comedy Award in 2001). Beaton is fluent in German, Russian, French and English. He translated and adapted The Government Inspector for Michael Frayn’s play Noises Off for the Royal Shakespeare Company and Alistair Fraser’s adaptation of the German novel Less Than Zero for the Finborough Theatre.

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from Russian for the Chichester Festival Theatre in 2005, which was remounted at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco in 2008. He has also written new English versions of Johann Strauss’ Die Fledermaus and Jacques Offenbach’s La Vie Parisienne. In 2007 Beaton translated Max Frisch’s The Arsonists, which premiered at London’s Royal Court Theatre. Beaton’s work for television has earned him honours such as a Broadcasting Press Guild Awards for Best Single Drama and nomination for a BAFTA in 2007. Additionally, Beaton has done work for radio and is a best-selling author.

DIRECTOR
Morris Panych
One of Canada’s most celebrated playwrights and directors, Morris’ plays have garnered countless awards including two Governor General’s Literary Awards for Drama (for The Ends of the Earth and Girl in a Goldfish Bowl), fourteen Jessie Richardson Awards, and five Dora Mavor Moore Awards. Productions for Canadian Stage include Sweeney Todd, ‘Art’ and The Overcoat, which toured internationally to great acclaim. Productions of the much lauded Vigil, Girl in a Goldfish Bowl, Gordon, The Trespassers and Lawrence and Holloman are being mounted throughout Canada, the US, Europe, Asia and Australia. His plays have been produced in over two dozen languages. Mr. Panych has directed over 80 productions across Canada and the U.S.

SET DESIGNER
Ken MacDonald
Selected Credits: My Fair Lady, The Admirable Crichton, The Doctor’s Dilemma, Hotel Peccadillo (Shaw Festival); Wanderlust, The Trespassers, Moby Dick (Stratford Festival); Vigil (Mark Taper Forum, L.A. and A.C.T. San Francisco) and The Overcoat (A.C.T. San Francisco, world tour); ‘Art’, The Overcoat (national tour), 7 Stories (Canadian Stage); Ghosts, Parfumerie, Glengarry Glen Ross, Bilteh Spirit, The Government Inspector, Faith Healer (Soulpepper Theatre Company); The Dishwashers, Girl in a Goldfish Bowl (Tarragon); Hamlet, Gordon (Arts Club Theatre, Vancouver); Susannah, Threepenny Opera (Vancouver Opera Association); Macbeth (Pacific Opera Victoria). Upcoming: The Amorous Adventures of Anatol (Tarragon Theatre); Our Betters (Shaw Festival).

CREATIVE (CONT.)

Tarragon Theatre, and upcoming will be designing the costumes for The Amorous Adventures of Anatol at the Tarragon. Charlotte has received five Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Outstanding Design, and is the 2009 recipient of the Virginia and Myrtle Cooper Award. She has been nominated for the Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Award and the Betty Mitchell Award, is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada, and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from York University.

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Jason Hand
Recent theatre credits include A Midsummer Night’s Dream and The Winter’s Tale (Canadian Stage); Turn of the Screw (Against the Grain); The Ugly One (Theatre Smash); See How They Run (Theatre Aquarius). Other credits include: The Trespassers (Stratford); Gorey Story (The Thistle Project); La Bohème (Against the Grain Theatre); Dido & Aeneas (Opera on the Avalon); Guilio Cesare (Orchestra London); productions for Theatre Smash, George Brown College and Lighthouse Theatre Festival. Last Year, Jason collaborated with director Joel Irvay and designer Camellia Koo on a production of I Capuletti e i Montecchi that placed third in the biennial European Opera-Directing Prize. Upcoming: THIS (Canadian Stage); The Tales of Hoffmann (Edmonton Opera); The Amorous Adventures of Anatol (Tarragon); Blue Planet (YPT).

STAGE MANAGER
Joanna Barrotta
Joanna is a stage manager who divides her time between theatre and opera. Favourite theatre credits include: paper SERIES (Magnetic North Calgary Tour, Cahoots Theatre Company); Beckett: Feck It! (Queen of Puddins in association with Canadian Stage); Brothel #9, And So It Goes (Factory Theatre); and 3 seasons at the Blyth Festival. Favourite opera credits include: Semele, Ariadne auf Naxos, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, as well as Götterdämmerung, the 4th opera in Wagner’s Ring Cycle (Canadian Opera Company); La Bohème, Turandot (Opera Lyra); Acis and Galatea, Actéon/Dido and Aeneas (Korea Tour - Opera Atelier); Svdab (Toronto)

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CREATIVE (CONT.)

premier), Beauty Dissolves in a Brief Hour, Inés (Queen of Puddings). Upcoming: Svadba (Edmonton Tour - Queen of Puddings); carried away on the crest of a wave (Tarragon Theatre). Joanna was the General Manager for the SummerWorks Theatre Festival in 2011.

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
AJ Laflamme
Die Zauberflöte, Le Tragedie de Carmen (Highlands Opera Studio); The Intuition of Iphigenia, Elektra in Bosnia, Ajax in Afghanistan (Ryerson Theatre School); Red, Another Africa (Canadian Stage); Cabaret, A Chorus Line (Rose Theatre); Everything Must Go (Andrea Martin); Criminals in Love, A Funny Thing Happened..., Thirteen Hands (Hart House Theatre); Pinocchio (Solar Stage Children’s Theatre); Oklahoma! (Georgetown Globe); Les Miserables (Stage Door); as an apprentice: Love, Loss, and What I Wore (M. Rubinoff Productions); The Africa Trilogy (Volcano Theatre); Death and the Maiden (Osculum Productions). AJ is a graduate of the Sheridan College/UTM Theatre program where she now works as a stage manager. She is very excited be returning to Canadian Stage with such a wonderful and talented collection of artists.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Stagehands and wardrobe/wig attendants engaged by Canadian Stage are represented by Locals 58 and 822, respectively, of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. Canadian Stage is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors’ Equity Association. Canadian Stage is a member of the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA).

Special thanks to Theatre Passe Muraille and the Canadian Opera Company.

Canadian Stage develops, produces, and exports the best in Canadian and international contemporary theatre. The company strives to enrich the quality of community life by constantly raising the standards of the theatrical arts in Canada and abroad.

CIBC is proud to sponsor Canadian Stage's 2012-2013 Berkeley Season.

Enjoy tonight's performance.

"CIBC For what matters." is a TM of CIBC.
The city has a problem - arsonists are burning down houses all over town. Gottlieb Biedermann is sure it could never happen to him, but when a mysterious stranger (Schmitz) comes knocking on his door, Biedermann agrees to let the man sleep in his attic. Schmitz is soon joined by a second stranger (Eisenring). The two set about filling the Biedermanns’ attic with petrol, while Biedermann tries to ignore what seems to be going on in his very own home. All the while, the ever-ready chorus of firefighters is standing by, watching, waiting. Written in the years following World War II, this dark comedy brings to light the human tendency towards complacency in the face of evil.

ABOUT THE SHOW

SYNOPSIS

The idea for The Arsonists first appeared as an entry in Frisch’s personal diary in 1946. It then became a radio play called Mr Biedermann and the Arsonists in 1953, evolving into a play for the stage in 1958. There are several historical events that occurred prior to and throughout the span of the play’s development that are known to have had an influence on Frisch’s writing.

The German name Biedermann can be roughly translated as “Mister Average-Guy” – or Everyman.

THE RISE OF THE NAZI PARTY

The Nazi party was officially re-founded by Adolf Hitler in 1925, posing threats on the German government and the nation. It was not until the burning of the Reichstag (or Parliament building) in 1933, however, that governments around the world started to understand the scope of the ambitions of the Nazis. It was this event that triggered a General Election, ultimately giving the Nazi party increased representation in the Federal government and paving the way to ultimate power.

In this context, Biedermann can be read as a representation of the cowardice or lack of vision both of Western Europe and of the many Germans who supported the Nazis, either actively or passively.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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SWITZERLAND’S NEUTRALITY DURING WWII

Max Frisch was born and educated in Switzerland. The neutrality of his nation throughout the Second World War was a cause of concern for the writer. Frisch often wrote about his homeland, interrogating Switzerland’s conception of itself as a respected consensus democracy, a cradle of human rights and a model of liberalism. It is possible to read The Arsonists as a comment on the neutrality of Switzerland during World War II, in particular its “don’t ask, don’t tell” response to the rise of Nazism.

THE RISE OF COMMUNISM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In 1948, Communist forces seized power in Czechoslovakia. This socialist regime lasted until the Velvet Revolution in 1989. For 41 years there was a steady economic deterioration and suppression of human rights. In much of Europe, the threat posed by this Communist regime was ignored, despite the brutality and violence it was capable of.
25 YEARS AND COUNTING
AND WE HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR IT.

As we celebrate our 25th season, we are grateful to our donors, sponsors, and friends who have been with us through the years. To say thank you, we host many events and special opportunities all season long for our Partners and Artistic Patrons’ Circle (APC) members. For instance, several donors enjoyed an intimate backstage tour of the *Tear the Curtain!* set, led by the show’s Director Kim Collier and Canadian Stage’s Director of Production Vlad Vukovic. Additionally, many of our donors were the first to see *The Arsonists*. At the private dress rehearsal, they were introduced to the work by Director Morris Panych before watching the cast and crew put the finishing touches on the production.

If you haven’t supported us in the past, please begin now by making a gift before December 31st, for which you’ll receive a 2012 tax receipt. We look forward to welcoming you into our circle of valued supporters and giving you a behind-the-scenes look at the magic that goes into each of our productions.

Canadian Stage is committed to developing long-term relationships with its volunteers and does so through a hands-on approach that sees volunteer responsibilities tailored to the skills and interests of each participant. Canadian Stage has built a loyal “family” through careful attention to each volunteer’s personal experience as well as specialized social events that allow volunteers to get more engaged in our art, while building lasting friendships.

“*It’s a life-changing experience. Ever since I started volunteering with Canadian Stage and just volunteering in general, I’ve felt so much better and happier. You’re helping out a whole bunch of people and an arts organization, and you’re making it work!*”

—SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH PARK VOLUNTEER

25 SEASONS
OF SPECTACULAR
PERFORMANCES

To make a gift and join our partnership program, visit www.canadianstage.com or contact Marielle Bryck, Patron Development Officer, at 416.367.8243 x327 or mbryck@canadianstage.com.

DONATE TODAY TO CELEBRATE YOUR FAVOURITE!

THE CANADIAN STAGE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Canadian Stage is fueled by the passion and commitment of over 300 volunteers who offer their time, dedication and skills to our organization. With the generous sponsorship of Manulife Financial, we have developed a leading Volunteer Program, which profoundly impacts our ability to carry out quality programming, supports the creative community and provides a meaningful experience for the individuals involved.

Volunteers help us in significant and essential capacities, acting as bar servers, ushers, or greeters at our Berkeley Street Theatre and High Park Amphitheatre. They also support our day-to-day operations with administrative support for various departments in our office and at special events. The benefits of their contributions are incalculable.

Canadian Stage is committed to developing long-term relationships with its volunteers and does so through a hands-on approach that sees volunteer responsibilities tailored to the skills and interests of each participant. Canadian Stage has built a loyal “family” through careful attention to each volunteer’s personal experience as well as specialized social events that allow volunteers to get more engaged in our art, while building lasting friendships.

Tenny Nigoghossian
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

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“*It’s a life-changing experience. Ever since I started volunteering with Canadian Stage and just volunteering in general, I’ve felt so much better and happier. You’re helping out a whole bunch of people and an arts organization, and you’re making it work!*”

—SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH PARK VOLUNTEER

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We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage

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Cellphones, pagers, candy wrappers and beeping watches are distracting for performers and audience members. For those who must have access to devices for emergencies, please leave them with the House Manager who will record your seat number and name.

Please respect other patrons with sensitivity to perfumes.

LATE ARRIVALS
As a courtesy to the audience and artists, latecomers will be seated at an appropriate break in the performance if possible.

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The use of cameras and recording devices during performances is strictly prohibited.

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