"THE GUARDSMAN"

by

Ferenc Molnár

Monday, August 3, 1981 - 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, August 4, 1981 - 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday, August 5, 1981 - 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, August 6, 1981 - 8:00 p.m.
Friday, August 7, 1981 - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, August 8, 1981 - 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

Margaret Greenham Theatre

A Celebration of Young Talent
May through August 1981
THE BANFF CENTRE
presents
THE GUARDSMAN
written by Ferenc Molnár
translated by Frank Marcus

THE CAST
(In order of speaking)

Mother..........................Katherine Trowell+
Nandor..........................Philip Pretten**
Ilona............................Danielle Lepage**
Bela................................Andrew Lowe**
The Maid...........................Peggy Coffey**
The Creditor........................Robert M. Duncan**
The Cook...........................Nancy Oliver#
The Usherette.......................Susan Bracher#

Director.........................Leslie Yeo*
Assistant Director.............Leonard Hosios+
Music Director.................Edward Connell
Stage Manager..................Larry Farley*
Assistant Stage Managers:
Jacqueline Duclos
Cecile Fournier

* member of Canadian Actors' Equity
+ member of the Drama Master Class Program
# member of the Third Year Drama Class

Scenic Design............Laszlo L. Funtek
Costume Design...............David Lovett
Lighting Design.............Peter Urbanek
Assistant Designer.Kurt Rauchenberger

MUSIC
Madama Butterfly by Giacomo Puccini
Nocturne Opus 9 No.2 by Frédéric Chopin
Additional music by Edward Connell
Performed by
Janet Horne, violin
Kimball Sykes, clarinet
Edward Connell, piano

Act I: The action takes place in 1910 in the Budapest apartment of a famous theatrical couple.
Act II: A box at the opera that evening.
Act III: The apartment at 4 o'clock the following day.

There will be two fifteen minute intermissions.
'I wasn't smiling sarcastically. I was smiling sadly. My face is so constructed, my eyes are set in their sockets in such a way, and my lips are so shaped that every time I smile it looks sarcastic. Believe me, it does. The same thing has happened with my writing. People have misunderstood some of it - not all of it. They laughed at things of mine that weren't made to be laughed at. I got money for it, and so I was a coward and kept quiet. The audience everywhere in the world laughed at a perfectly agonizing play of mine in which a love-lorn suffering actor in disguise seduces his own loose-living wife. Although, when writing it, in a hospital, I wanted to work off the most searing pain of my young life. According to one of his German biographers, Molière, the deathless master of all comedy-writers, "sometimes put his own painful experiences in a comic light... his laughter is the laughter of a skeptic staggering under repeated blows of fate, who keeps putting on a comic show for others, and putting down his thoughts in comic plays." That's how people laughed at the plays of Molière's unworthy pupil, myself.'

From Ferenc Molnár's Companion in Exile: Notes for an Autobiography

The drama department has chosen high comedy for its Festival presentation this year and, in keeping with The Banff Centre's current Hungarian exploration, has turned to the work of Ferenc Molnár.

The "perfectly agonizing play" referred to above was "The Guardsman" and the translation you are about to see was especially commissioned for Britain's National Theatre and first staged there in 1977. A year later it was presented with considerable success at Canada's Stratford. An earlier translation brought together in New York, for the first time, the legendary acting team of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne.

Of all Molnár's works "The Guardsman" constitutes the happiest conjunction of his two favorite themes: the theatre and marriage. The seemingly ludicrous situation of a husband impersonating a prospective lover in order to test his wife's virtue would appear to belong more in the realms of farce than high comedy. But such is the skill with which Molnár treats the situation that it never breaks the bonds of realism.

There will be a cash bar available in the foyer of the Eric Harvie during the intermissions and after the performance.