


COMPANY THEATRE PRESENTS

ARMS AND THE MAN

BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



DIRECTED BY REG WILLIAMS

A ROMANTIC COMEDY FROM 1894



WELCOME

from Stephen Hood

President of Company Theatre

Arms and the Man hides pearls of wisdom amongst its literary brilliance and comic genius: So it's fair to say that I'm a big fan of this play! The cast and director - both young and young-at-heart - successfully combine the play's content with their own interpretation for a performance that will make you laugh until you think about some of the words being said and go "wow".

Arms and the Man is a fine complement to the other two plays Company Theatre has presented this year - Stones in His Pockets and Steel Magnolias. Please join us again in 2020, when from March 21st to April 4th we present Gary Henderson's Peninsula: A bittersweet coming of age story, rich with 60's Kiwi nostalgia.

THOUGHTS ON THE PLAY

from Reg Williams

Director of 'Arms and the Man'

I first came across this delightful play some 35 years ago, so it is truly a dream to be able to present it for you. Shaw's wit, insight and awareness is at its sharpest in this piece. Its relevance for us today is that it still serves to challenge our paradigms of love and war, class and money, and is introduced in a light and funny comedy in the way that only George Bernard can do. Our cast is a special one and has been drawn from all over the North Shore from Devonport to Hatfields Beach.



I hope that you enjoy our production. I am grateful to the entire committee at Company Theatre for this opportunity to present it to you



There will be **ONE INTERVAL** of 15 minutes
Refreshments, Ice Creams, Chocolates and a
variety of drinks will be available



THE CAST

Raina Petkoff		<i>Savannah Schreuder</i>
Bluntschli		<i>Matthew J. Smith</i>
Sergius		<i>Adam Pomeroy</i>
Major Petkoff		<i>John Bower</i>
Catherine Petkoff		<i>Kate Birch</i>
Louka		<i>Natasha Birch</i>
Nicola		<i>Kelaan Schloffel-Armstrong</i>

THE SCENE

The play is set in Bulgaria during the brief Serbo-Bulgarian War in the 1880s. It opens with the young romantic Raina Petkoff and her mother Catherine, talking excitedly about a successful cavalry charge led by the handsome and heroic Sergius, to whom Raina is betrothed.

ACT 1

There is a scene change between Act 1 and Act 2

ACT 2

Interval

ACT 3



THE CHARACTERS



Raina Petkoff is a young Bulgarian girl who, at first, daydreams and idealises the heroism in battle of her fiancé, Sergius.



Bluntschli is a Swiss professional soldier who fights with the other side, the Serbians, during the 1880s Serbo-Bulgarian war in the play. He has no romantic notions about war. He thinks courage is overrated and that war is more often ugly than noble.



Sergius is a major in the Bulgarian military. He is engaged to Raina. He quits the military after failing to get promotion and with his pride hurting, he acts in a world-weary fashion, with extreme passions, against the social currents of the day.



Major Petkoff is a Bulgarian landowner, the father of Raina. He does not want to change with the times.



Catherine Petkoff is his wife, the mother of Raina. She is an aristocrat and is outraged by peace, believing her country should annex Serbia. She tries to control the situation and hide things from her husband.



Louka is the earthy and spirited maidservant of the Petkoffs. She is rebellious, proud, and insolent to Raina. She is Raina's rival for Sergius.



Nicola is the manservant of the Petkoffs. He is controlled, calm and calculating. Although he accepts class distinctions, he is plotting to open his own shop.



REG WILLIAMS
Director of Arms and the Man

Reg is directing his first play for Company Theatre, having appeared in Kate Birch's *Deathtrap* and Sian Davis's *All My Sons*. He recently directed *The Crucible* for Centrestage's main theatre and an exciting in the round production of *12 Angry Men* introducing the Extension Studio for the first time at the venue. Other directorial credits

include *A Chorus Line*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *42nd Street* and *Kiss Me Kate*.

As a performer his favourite roles include Frank in *Educating Rita*, Kippis in *A Woman in Black*, Byck in *Assassins* and classically Mercutio, Buckingham and Petruchio. He mentors students for Trinity College of London in both grade exam and at diploma level.



MEET THE CAST



SAVANNAH SCHREUDER

Raina Petkoff

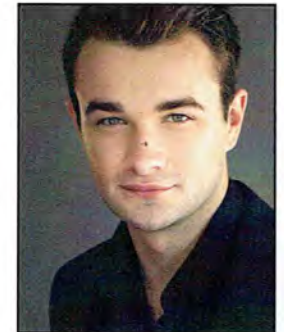
This is Savannah's first production with Company Theatre. With a foundation built from Musical Theatre and drama studies back at Long Bay College, Savannah has appeared in *Les Miserables* in an ensemble role and in *Beauty and The Beast* as Mrs. Potts. Last year she appeared in *The Crucible* as Mercy Lewis at Centrestage, directed by none other than our Reg Williams! She is excited to be back in the theatre space working with a group of fun, talented people. When she isn't performing, you'll find her flinging around a sword and shield with the New Zealand Stage Combat School,

studying as a retail student at Massey University or spending time with her wee menagerie back home. Savannah has loved every minute of exploring this play and hopes you enjoy the show as much as everyone has had putting it together - and that's A LOT!

MATTHEW J. SMITH

Bluntschli

Matthew J. Smith has a lifelong passion for performance that just won't die. He recently appeared in *Shortland Street* as Doctor Simon Ashton. He has also appeared in the *Shannara Chronicles* and a plethora of theatre productions around the country. This is Matthew's first show with Company Theatre at The Rose Centre and one he is very excited to be a part of.



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NATASHA BIRCH

Louka

Natasha studied drama at Takapuna Grammar School; here she reached the finals of the SGCNZ competition, winning best 'delivery and truthfulness of text and communication with the audience' in her role as Viola in *Twelfth Night*. Her other previous productions include playing Hermia in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, and with Adapt Drama Company in *Claire's Aunt* and *Envy in the Soul Incentive*. Having recently left AUT with a Bachelor of Communications degree, she now works in Advertising.



ADAM POMEROY

Sergius

Adam has been performing in theatre for a decade now. He is delighted to be with Company Theatre again to help bring this production of *Arms and the Man* to life. He's had a number of varied roles in the past with Company Theatre, including as Algernon Moncrieff in *The Importance Of Being Earnest* as well as Clifford Anderson in *Deathtrap*. Adam is once again working under the direction of Reg Williams as he did in *12 Angry Men* in which he played Juror #5.

KATE BIRCH

Catherine Petkoff

Kate is excited to be back on stage performing again, since her last acting role as Myra in *Hayfever*. She's really enjoying working on this fun production and bringing the part of Catherine to life. Her last role with Company Theatre was behind the scenes as the Director of the 2017 production of *Deathtrap*. Previous acting roles were in the UK and include Helena in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Elizabeth in *Pride & Prejudice*, Jacqueline in *Don't Dress for Dinner* and Gwendoline in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Off the stage, Kate works at AUT in the People & Culture team.



JOHN BOWER

Major Petkoff

This is John Bower's first role at the Rose Centre. He recently played the Foreman in *12 Angry Men* at Centrestage Theatre in February. He says that it is terrific to be working again with director Reg Williams and a wonderful cast and crew. John was Deputy Governor Danforth in *The Crucible*, which was also directed by Reg Williams and performed at Centrestage Theatre in 2018. He was Tevey in Manukau Performing Art's (MPA) 2018 production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and Kevin Rosario in MPA's 2017 production of *In the Heights*. John says that "*Arms and the Man* is a delightful play that deals with issues of war, love, romance, courage and social class".



KELAAN SCHLOFFEL-ARMSTRONG

Nicola

Kelaan Schloffel-Armstrong loves acting and it's lucky he does, because it's one of his only skills. Jokes aside, Kelaan has featured in an Independent Feature Film called *No Turning Back, In The Cul de Sac*, and a few short films, but his true love is theatre. He has performed for many years with many people but it's his first time with Company Theatre and The Rose Centre, so he's very happy to be involved and excited to perform!



CREW FOR ARMS AND THE MAN

Director	Reg Williams
Set Design	Reg Williams
Wardrobe	Cathie Sandy
Stage Manager	Janet Lyons
Props	Kathy Gent
Lighting Design	Stephen Hood
Assistant Stage Manager	Victoria Silvey, Annie McGrath
Lighting Operator	Alylai Flynn
Set Dressing	Anne Rimmer, Caroline Parker
Set Painting	Tony Sandy, Maureen Kenny
Set Construction	Dave Best
Costume Sewers	Marion Mitchell, Marilyn Healey
Box Office	Kathy Gent, Sarah Dettwiler
Billboards	Sherry Ede, Alastair Fletcher
Graphic Design	Hayley Atkins
Photography	Kathryn Nobbs, Anne Rimmer
Social Media	Stephen Hood, Sherry Ede
Bar Managers	Alastair Fletcher, Linda Camplin
FOH Manager	Lesley Hawkey



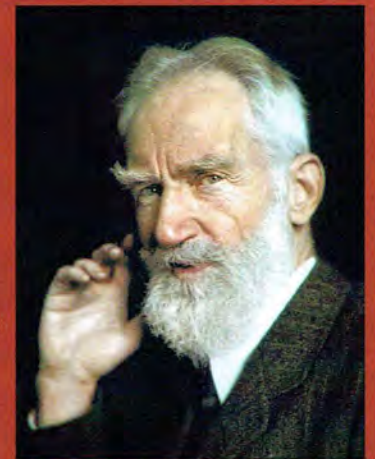
THANKS TO

A special thank you to the volunteers who look after front of house. Thank you to our major sponsors **Harcourts Devonport, William Sanders and Rowley Funerals.** Thank you also to **North Shore Music, Dolphin Theatre, Torbay Theatre and The Rose Centre.**

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Playwright of Arms and the Man

Known at his insistence simply as Bernard Shaw, he was an Irish playwright, critic, and political activist. His influence on Western theatre, culture and politics extended from the 1880s to his death and beyond. He wrote more than sixty plays, including major works such as *Man and Superman* (1902), *Pygmalion* (1912) and *Saint Joan* (1923). With a range incorporating both contemporary satire and historical allegory, Shaw became the leading dramatist of his generation, and in 1925 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.



Born in Dublin on 26th July 1856, Shaw moved to London in 1876, where he struggled to establish himself as a writer and novelist and embarked on a rigorous process of self-education. By the mid-1880s he had become a respected theatre and music critic. Following a political awakening, he joined the Fabian Society. Shaw had been writing plays for years before his first public success, *Arms and the Man* in 1894. Influenced by Henrik Ibsen, he sought to introduce a new realism into English-language drama, using his plays as vehicles to disseminate his political, social and religious ideas. By the early twentieth century his reputation as a dramatist was secured with a series of critical and popular successes that included *Major Barbara*, *The Doctor's Dilemma* and *Caesar and Cleopatra*.

Shaw's expressed views were often contentious; he promoted reform and opposed vaccination and organised religion. He courted unpopularity by denouncing both sides in the First World War as equally culpable, and although not a republican, castigated British policy on Ireland in the postwar period. These stances had no lasting effect on his standing or productivity as a dramatist. In 1938 he provided the screenplay for a filmed version of *Pygmalion (My Fair Lady)* for which he received an Academy Award. His appetite for politics and controversy remained undiminished; by the late 1920s he often wrote and spoke favourably of dictatorships of the right and left—he expressed admiration for both Mussolini and Stalin. In the final decade of his life he made fewer public statements but continued to write prolifically until shortly before his death, aged ninety-four, having refused all state honours, including the Order of Merit in 1946.

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Our upcoming show 21 March - 4 April 2020

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ARMS AND THE MAN
BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

DIRECTED BY REG WILLIAMS

A ROMANTIC COMEDY FROM 1894
16-30 NOVEMBER 2019

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AT THE ROSE CENTRE, BELMONT

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COMPANY THEATRE presents

ARMS AND THE MAN
BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Raina Petkoff craves more out of life. Having read every book in the library, including all the romance novels, she's sure there is more in store for her - she wants adventure, she wants love, she wants to get the hell out of town. So, when a charming soldier on the hop from the battlefield clambers into her bedroom, what's a clever, practical minded girl to do?

Offer him sanctuary, feed him chocolate and fall in love. It's only natural.

The problem is, she's already engaged. To the most eligible man in town. Raina needs to decide if she stays true to her gallant fiancé, or if she elopes with this dashing, mysterious stranger. Will the battlefield hero conquer her heart, or will the suitor with the most chocolate win?

Book at www.iticket.co.nz
Phone (09) 361-1000
Tickets \$27, Concessions \$22 plus booking fee

www.companytheatre.co.nz

Mother and daughter duo debut in Arms and The Man



Mother-and-daughter act... Kate and Natasha Birch are among the cast of Arms and the Man at the Rose Centre

Mother and daughter, Kate and Natasha Birch, from Belmont, are acting together for the first time in the Company Theatre production *Arms and The Man* at the Rose Centre this month.

The play is a comedy by George Bernard Shaw. Its title comes from the opening words of Virgil's *Aeneid*, "Arma virumque cano", which translates as "I sing of arms and the man".

First performed in 1894, it was one of Shaw's first commercial successes. It takes aim at the futility of war and deals comedically with the various hypocrisies of human nature.

The story centres around a young girl, Raina Petkoff (played in the Company Theatre production by Savannagh Schreuder), the daughter of a Bulgarian military man, and already engaged to a heroic soldier, Sergius Saranoff (played by Adam Pomeroy).

Raina yearns for adventure. So when

another soldier, escaping the battlefield, clambers into her bedroom, what's a clever, practical-minded girl to do? Offer him sanctuary, feed him chocolate or fall in love?

Kate Birch plays Raina's mother, Catherine, and Natasha Birch plays the insolent, servant girl, Louka. Both have some wonderful comic moments.

Shaw's ideas were quite revolutionary at the time, as the play maintains that there is no inherent difference between a member of the working class and a member of the aristocracy, beyond the way they are treated by society.

"Shaw's wit, insight and awareness is at its sharpest in this piece," says play director Reg Williams.

• Book early for the \$20 ticket special for opening night on Saturday 16 November. The two Sunday matinees are at 2pm (17 and 24 November). Go to iticket.co.nz or phone 09 361-1000.

Mayor bypasses Devonport-Takapuna

Locals hoping to meet Auckland Mayor Phil Goff at the inauguration of Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members last week were left holding their breath.

Goff was pencilled in on the board's online agenda to attend. But a spokesman for the Mayor's office said he was listed on all local board agendas as having the opportunity to speak, "should he be in attendance". Four

board inaugurations took place earlier this month.

Asked why the mayor opted to attend Albert-Eden instead of Devonport-Takapuna, the spokesman said: "It was selected because it best fit the constraints of his schedule.

"The mayor gets to Devonport-Takapuna regularly, as he does across the region and he will continue to do so," the spokesman said.