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# Scene set for conflict: TAG mounts God of Carnage

September 24, 2012 - 4:01am BY ANDREA NEMETZ ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER



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## Tony-award winning production at Pond Playhouse until Oct. 6



Actors Ellen Oldford, Mike Taylor, Stephanie Mason and Frank MacLean play two sets of parents whose hostilities escalate when they meet to discuss their children's playground fight in God of Carnage. The Theatre Arts production is onstage at the Pond Playhouse in Halifax until Oct. 6. (INGRID BULMER / Staff)

Michele Moore has a rule.

"I never see anything I'll be staging or be in," says the actor-director who estimates she's been in 18 plays in 18 years, most with the Theatre Arts Guild in Halifax and a couple at Neptune Theatre.

She's also acted with Bedford Players and Dartmouth Players, produced several pantomimes and staged managed Sylvia at TAG, which she describes as "terrifying."

So Moore hasn't seen either the stage or screen version of God of Carnage, which she's directing for the Theatre Arts Guild this week and next.

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The Tony-winning play by Yasmina Reza tells the story of two couples. Both are parents of 11-year-old boys, and one boy has hurt another in a public park. The parents meet to discuss the matter in a civilized manner but by the end of the meeting they are behaving more childishly than their kids.

"Reza writes caustic comedy, it's biting witty. There are certain moments when I think 'what a great line,'" says Moore, who loved Reza's play Art.

She doesn't think Roman Polanski's movie would work as well as the stage version that won Tonys for Best Play, Best Actress and Best Direction.

"A movie, in one set is not as interesting. As a play, it's like a dance."

And she says she doesn't find the behaviour of the parents – played at Theatre Arts Guild by Frank MacLean and Stephanie Mason (in the roles in the film played by John C. Reilly and Jodie Foster) and Michael Taylor and Ellen Oldford (in the roles played by Christoph Waltz and Kate Winslet) – as vicious.

"It's very realistic. They're trying to be ultra diplomatic, trying to hold back and then the veneer comes off....none of the characters are likeable, but you see a lot of humanity.

"It's a great season opener. We have four intuitive actors who are prepared to peel off layers and Reza has given them great characters to work with."

The "veiled comedy" with "hard-hitting words that may be offensive to some" is the second work Moore has directed. She made her directorial debut with Daniel MacIvor's How It Works at TAG in 2010.

Now 71, Moore is retired from full-time work, though she still acts as a simulated patient for Dalhousie University's Department of Medicine.

And she'd like to get back on the stage as an actor, though she acknowledges there are fewer roles out there for "senior ladies."

God of Carnage, which runs 85 minutes without intermission, is at the Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Rd., Halifax till Oct. 6. Shows are Wednesdays to Saturdays with a matinee on Sunday, Sept. 30 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$13 and \$16 and are available at Ticket Atlantic, [www.ticketatlantic.com](http://www.ticketatlantic.com), 451-1221, at the Ticket Atlantic box office at the Halifax Metro Centre and at participating Atlantic Superstores.

About the Author »

By ANDREA NEMETZ Entertainment Reporter

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