



# **ENGAGING SHAW**



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#### ENGAGING SHAW at the Old Globe Theatre

##### *More Than Enough Words*

By [Welton Jones \(http://www.sandiego.com/writers/welton-jones\)](http://www.sandiego.com/writers/welton-jones) • Thu, Aug 4th, 2011

Word association: What is the first word you think of when someone says...Shaw?

The answer may well be "words."

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Or as Eliza Doolittle says/sings in PYGMALION/MY FAIR LADY, "Words! Words! WORDS!"

In ENGAGING SHAW, a play *about* George Bernard Shaw now on display at the Old Globe Theatre, John Morogielo has nailed together excerpts from Shaw's work (and that of some friends) to show the famously eccentric playwright at what might be considered his single most human moment, when he decided to marry.

The very air in the Globe's White Theatre crackles with a connoisseur's collection of Shavian wit and ego as 40-year-old politician/pamphleteer/critic is just about to blossom into the playwright of the age. He is the summer house-guest of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, fellow English Socialists who founded the London School of Economics, themselves riding a gathering wave of fame. The arrival of each post brings new developments and all seems possible, even romance.

Well maybe not romance, exactly. These are, after all, late Victorians sworn to social reform and disdainful of encumbering conventionality. The fact that Beatrice Webb is trying to find a wife for Shaw is less romantic than politically expedient. And this Charlotte Payne-Townshend not only is smitten with the Socialist cause but also a delightfully wealthy spinster. A plot thickens. And, a year later, she's typing his manuscripts in laborious two-finger style as he dictates ever longer prologues to his printed plays while they continue to argue about their relationship.

But all this brilliant creativity has come at a price. Celibacy hangs over the shared work-table like a dusty shroud. There is a certain excess of billing and cooing by the Webbs but their actual marital relations take place each Saturday, right after he's wound the clock. Payne-Townsend is widely on record as a celibate with no intention of marrying and Shaw himself revels in a philandering reputation largely a product of his imagination.

"Is sex pleasurable?" she timidly asks, after they've gotten to know each other well. "Yes," he answers, "if I remember correctly."

The play is mostly elaborate dodge-ball among four ambitious, middle-aged, middle-class exhibitionists, one of whom is a genius. The language is florid and the gaming is quaint but the game itself is as old as the human genome. Eventually Shaw succumbs, but not until he can find reassurance that a sexless marriage is itself the ultimate in unconventionality.

Rod Brogan is a fine broth of a lad as Shaw, tossing beautifully rounded witticisms about like Mardi Gras souvenirs. He's like a non-languid Oscar Wilde in full gotcha mode and his accent wanders all over the place. But the self-love never flickers.

As his future wife, Angela Pierce is trim, handsome, quick and supremely self-possessed right up to the moment when she isn't. It's an altogether unlikely portrait of the stolid, obscure wife who shared a half-century with GBS, but I savored it as a beguiling performance.

Natalie Gold and Michael Warner play the Webbs in faithful period-documentary style, moving easily through the choreography of director Henry Wishcamper.

Scene changes involve some unusual actor labors but the low-lying Wilson Chin design, stuffed with luxurious period detail, is worth the trouble. Precise period costumes by Alejo Vietti and invisible lighting by Matthew Richards are Globe givens and Paul

Peterson drapes some yearning Wagner over the edges to remind us perhaps that romance does keep a seat at all tables.

But even careful scholarship and polished theatricality can't find the whole truth. In reality, Payne-Townsend had come back from one of their bitter separations to nurse GBS through a serious foot injury when the marriage thing happened.

"I thought I was dead," Shaw told a friend later. "Charlotte had me at her mercy. I should never have married if I had thought I should get well."

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<b>Dates</b>	7 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Sundays, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 4, 2011.
<b>Organization</b>	The Old Globe Theatre
<b>Phone</b>	619 234-5623
<b>Production Type</b>	<a href="http://www.sandiego.com/related/production-type/play">Play (http://www.sandiego.com/related/production-type/play)</a>
<b>Region</b>	<a href="http://www.sandiego.com/related/region/balboa-park">Balboa Park (http://www.sandiego.com/related/region/balboa-park)</a>
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## THEATER REVIEW



Rod Brogan (from left) as George Bernard Shaw, Michael Warner as Sidney Webb, Natalie Gold as Beatrice Webb and Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend perform in John Morogiello's "Engaging Shaw" at the Old Globe. ED KRIEGER

## OLD GLOBE'S 'SHAW' IS ENGAGING INDEED

**ANNE MARIE WELSH**  
SPECIAL TO THE U-T

The exasperating George Bernard Shaw of "Engaging Shaw" at the Old Globe is as much a brand — self-invented, self-promoted — as a person, which is exactly what the real Shaw wanted, and apparently, what the woman who married him needed.

Playwright John Morogiello based this comedy of battling lovers on the real-life, 1890s romance of Shaw and the wealthy socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend, a relationship in which his fear of having his "wings clipped" gave way to his need for this clever and determined woman who understood him.

In the classic tradition of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" and Congreve's "The Way of the World," the action proves the truth of one of Shaw's paradoxical witticisms: "The fact that she hates me proves that she loves me."

The Globe production, expertly directed by Henry Wishcamper, depends less for its effect upon the 42-year-old windbag and genius Shaw, who's adequately if not powerfully played by the youngish Rod Brogan, than upon Charlotte, who is beautifully, fully and persuasively embodied by actor Angela Pierce.

The romance of the crusading writer and the 40-year-old virgin, who fell under the spell of his proto-feminist essay "The Quintessence of Ibsenism," unfolds under the watchful eyes of their friends, Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Like Shaw, they were Fabian socialists who fought for working-class rights, and with him, founded the London School of Economics. The Webbs — well detailed as an odd couple themselves by actors Natalie Gold and Michael Warner — delight in play-

### "Engaging Shaw"

Old Globe Theatre

**When:** 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays, through Sept. 4.

**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Old Globe, Balboa Park

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

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ing matchmaker.

Wisely, Morogiello does not soften or explain the fact that for the most part, "Bernie" and Charlotte's love (and 40-year-marriage) was chaste. The first act ends tremulously with Charlotte's brave decision to lose her virginity, though the effect proves surprising in Act 2.

As Charlotte, Pierce is radiantly authoritative throughout, but especially so in this Act 1 closer, and again, in her scenes of fierce conflict with Gold's Beatrice. These two strong women, first as antagonists and then as soul sisters, reveal both the tragically limited options for early 20th-century women and the ways in which some women maneuvered to find love and useful work in the world.

Despite witty repartee by the lovers and snappy pacing by Wishcamper, the early scenes sometimes feel artificially talky, whereas the better writing in the second half of the play derives in part from Morogiello's use of Shaw and Webb's own revolutionary writing.

Production values are tiptop, with the women's finely wrought costumes by Alejo Vietti and the period in-the-round design especially striking.

Anne Marie Welsh is a former Union-Tribune theater critic and a San Diego arts writer.

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## THEATER REVIEW

# Old Globe's 'Shaw' raw at first, then engaging

## Henry Wishcamper expertly directs comedy

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By Anne Marie Welsh |  
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Rod Brogan (from left) as George Bernard Shaw, Michael Warner as Sidney Webb,







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**Natalie Gold as Beatrice Webb and Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the West Coast premiere of John Morogiello's "Engaging Shaw," directed by Henry Wishcamper. Ed Krieger**

The exasperating [George Bernard Shaw](#) of "Engaging Shaw" at the Old Globe is as much a brand — self-invented, self-promoted — as a person, which is exactly what the real Shaw wanted, and apparently, what the woman who married him needed.

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**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, [Old Globe](#), Balboa Park

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

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### Theater review: 'Engaging Shaw' at the Old Globe

August 8, 2011 | 12:18 pm



"No woman has defeated me yet," George Bernard Shaw, at 41, pointedly tells a friend who's dared to suggest should propose.

Marriage, Shaw feels, is a distraction, a diminishment. Or, as he later puts it, "an abomination and a nightmare." These sentiments are expressed in a play called "Engaging Shaw," about the acquaintance and early relationship between Shaw and Charlotte Payne-Townshend, in the middle 1890s. We know how the story ends before it's begun, but getting there -- through Shaw's occasional flinty spark of desire -- is thought-provoking fun.

[John Morogiello](#)'s comedy, being given its West Coast premiere at [the Old Globe](#), incorporates material from Sidney Webb and diary entries by wife Beatrice Webb. The Webbs, like Shaw, were leaders of the Fabian movement. Shaw, the critic, playwright, devoted socialist and playful egotist, is front and center not only as a character but as a playwright ("Pygmalion," for instance), with talk zipping in thrilling, dizzying circles. Rod Brogan plays him with a sprightly wit. Angela Pierce, as Payne-Townshend, gives as good as she gets. Whenever she squares her shoulders to face Beatrice Webb, Natalie Gold and Michael Warner provide an image of well-partnered marriage, momentary barks and growls notwithstanding. Anti-romantics that they are, Shaw and the independently wealthy, independent-minded Payne-Townshend make a life. The marriage was never consummated, so the real story goes, and Shaw maintained a long, intimate correspondence with Beatrice Webb, the basis of another Shaw-inspired play, Jerome Kilty's "Dear Liar." A game of marital cat and mouse. Henry Wishcamper keeps the energy, like the conversation, crackling around the huge octagonal writing table in the in-the-round staging.

"Engaging Shaw" sends audiences home feeling stimulated and pleasantly diverted, though not rousingly so. Still, one leaves with the satisfaction of seeing two people come together as equals, in a true meeting of minds.

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-- Daryl H. Miller, from San Diego

**"Engaging Shaw,"** the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, the Old Globe, Balboa Park, San Diego. 7 p.m. Tuesdays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends Sept. 4. \$29 to \$67. (619) 234-5623 or [theoldglobe.org](#)

*Photo: Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw and Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend in "Engaging Shaw" at the Old Globe.*

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**'Shaw' at the Old Globe**  
George Bernard Shaw's spirited courtship with his future wife is an engaging cat-and-mouse game. **D8**



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**WITS:** Rod Brogan, left, Michael Warner, Natalie Gold and Angela Pierce star in "Engaging Shaw."

#### THEATER REVIEW

DARYL H. MILLER  
FROM SAN DIEGO

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Marriage, Shaw feels, is a distraction, a diminishment. Or, as he later puts it, "an abomination and a nightmare."

These sentiments are expressed in a play called "Engaging Shaw," about the acquaintance and early relationship of Shaw and his future wife, Charlotte Payne-Townshend, in the

middle 1880s. We know how the story ends before it's begun, but getting there — through spirited debate, heated emotion and the occasional flinty spark of desire — is thought-provoking fun.

John Morogiello's comedy, being given its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe, incorporates material from Shaw's works and letters, as well as essays by Sidney Webb and diary entries by wife Beatrice Webb. The Webbs, like Shaw, were leaders of the Fabian movement of socialism.

Shaw, the critic, playwright, devoted socialist and playful egotist, is front and center not only as a

character but also as a model. The play is written like one of his ("Pygmalion," for instance), with talk zipping in thrilling, dizzying circles. Rod Brogan portrays him with a sprightliness that suggests he likes to shock people.

Angela Pierce, as Payne-Townshend, gives as good as she gets. Whenever she squares her shoulders to face Brogan's Shaw, you know a sporting match is afoot. As the Webbs, Natalie Gold and Michael Warner provide an image of well-partnered marriage, momentary barbs and banishments aside.

Anti-romantics that they are, Shaw and the independently wealthy, independent-minded Payne-Townshend aren't destined to share a conventional-seeming life. The marriage was never consummated, so the real story goes, and Shaw maintained a long, intimate correspondence with the actress Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the basis of another Shaw-inspired play, Jerome Kilty's "Dear Liar."

A game of marital cat and mouse ensues nevertheless, and director Henry Wishcamper keeps the energy, like the conversation, crack-

#### 'Engaging Shaw'

Where: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, the Old Globe, Balboa Park, San Diego

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends Sept. 4.

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Running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes

ling around the huge octagonal writing table at the center of Wilson Chin's set design for this in-the-round staging.

"Engaging Shaw" sends audiences home feeling stimulated and pleasantly diverted, though not rousing. Something essential fails to get under the skin. Still, one leaves with the satisfaction of seeing two people come together as equals, in a true meeting of minds.

[daryl.miller@latimes.com](mailto:daryl.miller@latimes.com)

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## THEATER REVIEW: Globe's 'Engaging Shaw' a warm, witty charmer

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THEATER REVIEW: Globe's 'Engaging Shaw' a warm, witty charmer

By PAM KRAGEN pkragen@nctimes.com North County Times | Posted: Wednesday, August 10, 2011 8:00 am |  
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Ed Krieger

Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend and Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw in the West Coast premiere of John Morogiello's "Engaging Shaw," directed by Henry Wishcamper, July 29 - Sept. 4, 2011 at The Old Globe. Photo by Ed Krieger.

**"Engaging Shaw"**

**When:** 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through Sept. 4

**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, The Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

**Info:** 619-234-5623

**Web:** [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

### **Critic's Choice.**

British playwright George Bernard Shaw is known for many things ---- biting wit, clever turns of phrase and sharp satire ---- but one thing he lacked was the gallant gene.

A serial philanderer, he vowed never to marry. Then when he finally met Irish heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend in his mid-40s, he warned her to run. "Don't fall in love: be your own, not mine," he wrote. "From the moment that you can't do without me, you're lost...."

But Charlotte was determined to marry Shaw, and the rocky two-year battle of wits that resulted in their long-lasting marriage is the subject of "Engaging Shaw," John Morogiello's smart and charming new play at the Old Globe.

Staged in the round by director Henry Wishcamper with a four-cornered set by Wilson Chin that's not unlike a boxing ring, these linguistic pugilists thrust and parry in a witty war of wills that has Shaw the victor in the first few rounds, Charlotte fighting back in the second act, and the combatants agreeing to a tie at the closing bell.

Set in England in 1896, the play begins with the pair's first meeting at the home of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, idealistic intellectuals who, with Shaw, were leaders in the Fabian Society (which sought to peacefully expand socialism). Payne-Townshend was a wealthy spinster who underwrote the Society and was accustomed to getting whatever she wanted ---- in this case, Shaw. Ultimately she proposed marriage, but when he rejected her offer, she left the country and he spent 10 months desperately trying to lure her back.

Actor Rod Brogan is roguish and likable as "Bernie" Shaw, and Angela Pierce is bold and quick-witted as Charlotte. They also share great chemistry and spark as the brainy sparring partners. He boasts of his romantic appeal to women, she gently undercuts his bravado. He opines forcefully on women's role in society and she quickly backs him down. He defends his vow of celibacy ("having sex made me a man, rejecting it made me Shaw") and she persuades him to take her virginity.

Yet as skillfully as Charlotte works her way into Bernie's life as his indispensable secretary, she gradually loses her independence and vitality. And when Bernie refuses to formalize their relationship, she leaves and soon he's the needy, sickly one.

At first hindering and then helping the couple down their thorny road to matrimony are the Webbs, a sympatico (if chaste) couple played well by Michael Warner and Natalie Gold. As Sidney, Warner is a brainy intellect, but he's woefully unequipped at interpreting feminine wiles. And as Beatrice, Gold is a patient, prodding presence who must first recognize her own attachment to Shaw before she can aid Charlotte in capturing her prey.

The play is longish at 2 1/2 hours but never dull, and Wishcamper's visually appealing direction ramps up the whimsy, particularly in the second act. He also knows how to skillfully direct in the round, as when the befuddled Shaw sits on a table mid-stage as a deluge of his letters to Charlotte wafts down from the rafters.

You needn't be a Shaw scholar to appreciate how well Morogiello creates his exhaustively researched characters (their lines are a seamless mix of their own letters and writings, and Morogiello's creation). Even a newbie to the famously self-absorbed and eccentric Irishman will enjoy the journey in "Engaging Shaw."

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## THEATER REVIEWS

# Globe's 'Engaging Shaw' a warm, witty charmer

By PAM KRAGEN  
 pkragen@nctimes.com

British playwright George Bernard Shaw is known for many things — biting wit, clever turns of phrase and sharp satire — but one thing he lacked was the gallant gene.

A serial philanderer, he vowed never to marry. Then when he finally met Irish heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend in his mid-40s, he warned her to run. "Don't fall in love: be your own, not mine," he wrote. "From the moment that you can't do without me, you're lost...."

But Charlotte was determined to marry Shaw, and the rocky two-year battle of wits that resulted in their long-lasting marriage is the subject of "Engaging Shaw," John Morogiello's smart and charming new play at the Old Globe.

Staged in the round by director Henry Wishcamper with a four-cornered set by Wilson Chin that's not unlike a boxing ring, these linguistic pugilists thrust and parry in a witty war of wills that has Shaw the victor in the first few rounds, Charlotte fighting back in the second act, and the combatants agreeing to a tie at the closing bell.

Set in England in 1896, the play begins with the pair's first meeting at the home of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, idealistic intellectuals who, with Shaw, were leaders in the Fabian Society (which sought to peacefully expand socialism).

Payne-Townshend was a wealthy spinster who underwrote the Society and was accustomed to getting whatever she wanted — in this case, Shaw. Ultimately she proposed marriage, but when he rejected her offer, she left the country and he spent 10 months desperately



Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend and Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw in "Engaging Shaw" at The Old Globe. Photo courtesy of Ed Krieger

## "Engaging Shaw"

### CRITIC'S CHOICE

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through Sept. 4

**WHERE:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, The Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

**TICKETS:** \$29-\$67

**INFO:** 619-234-5623  
 theoldglobe.org

trying to lure her back.

Actor Rod Brogan is roguish and likable as "Bernie" Shaw, and Angela Pierce is bold and quick-witted as Charlotte.

They also share great chemistry and spark as the brainy sparring partners. He boasts of his romantic appeal to women, she gently undercuts his bravado. He

opines forcefully on women's role in society and she quickly backs him down. He defends his vow of celibacy ("having sex made me a man, rejecting it made me Shaw") and she persuades him to take her virginity.

Yet as skillfully as Charlotte works her way into Bernie's life as his indispensable secretary, she gradually loses her independence and vitality.

And when Bernie refuses to formalize their relationship, she leaves and soon he's the needy, sickly one.

At first hindering and then helping the couple down their thorny road to matrimony are the Webbs, a sympatico (if chaste) couple played well by Michael Warner and Natalie Gold.

As Sidney, Warner is a brainy intellect, but he's woefully unequipped at interpreting feminine wiles. And as Beatrice, Gold is a patient, prodding presence who must first recognize her own attachment to Shaw before she can aid Charlotte in capturing her prey.

The play is longish at 2 1/2 hours but never dull, and Wishcamper's visually appealing direction ramps up the whimsy, particularly in the second act.

He also knows how to skillfully direct in the round, as when the befuddled Shaw sits on a table mid-stage as a deluge of his letters to Charlotte wafts down from the rafters.

You needn't be a Shaw scholar to appreciate how well Morogiello creates his exhaustively researched characters (their lines are a seamless mix of their own letters and writings, and Morogiello's creation).

Even a newbie to the famously self-absorbed and eccentric Irishman will enjoy the journey in "Engaging Shaw."

The above material first appeared in the North County Times on the above date.

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# Let's Review: Engaging Shaw charms Old Globe audiences in a classic battle of the sexes

By Diana Saenger

## *Let's Review!*

In The Old Globe's West Coast premiere of "Engaging Shaw," two couples play cat-and-mouse with each other's intentions and emotions. Excellent casting enhances John Morogiello's smart script that plays out in a superior set design in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. All capture the essence of the history behind this romantic drama, while delightfully unveiling the charm of the unpredictable situations.



Charlotte Payne-Townshend (Angela Pierce) and George Bernard Shaw (Rod Brogan) enjoy a flirtatious relationship in John Morogiello's 'Engaging Shaw.' Photo Ed Krieger.

When George Bernard Shaw (Rod Brogan) becomes bored with waiting for his submitted plays to be produced, he's invited to the home of friends Sidney (Michael Warner) and Beatrice Webb (Natalie Gold), founders of the Fabian Society in England, an organization that promotes socialism. What their houseguest lacks in success, he more than makes up for in his day-to-day complaints about his tedious career and boasts about his accomplishments with the ladies. He spends his time penning letters to married women or courting others.

An "adversary" arrives in the form of another Webb quest, wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend (Angela Pierce). She's immediately drawn to "Bernie," but cautiously observant of his philandering ways and his obvious affection toward Mrs. Webb. Charlotte and Bernard eventually acknowledge their interest in each other and agree to an intimate relationship with no strings attached.

Brogan and Pierce are excellent in their portrayals. Brogan nails Bernard's anxious side while waiting for

success and also his staunch stubbornness about refusing to get married – “I will not have my wings clipped.”

Pierce has somewhat of a Katharine Hepburn persona; while she adores Bernie and longs to be his bride, she’s perfectly able and ready to walk away if she doesn’t get her way, and which she does for some time.

Sidney and Beatrice are the opposites of their guests. The two actors are married in real life and probably a reason why they create such believable characters. Sidney is not only absorbed with his foundation, he’s totally enthralled by his wife and marriage, and takes every minute with his guests to let them know his feelings. Gold plays Beatrice closer to the sand, sinking into the unburdened life with Sidney, but also toying with Bernard’s impression of women.

Director Henry Wishcamper has an even hand blending this production of fiction based on historical fact. He offers an intriguing peek into what George Bernard Shaw might have been like, while engaging with characters whose lives and decisions fascinate like a Wimbledon tennis match.



**: In an opening scene, the cast is from left: Rod Brogan, Michael Warner, Natalie Gold and Angela Pierce.**

## **If you go**

**What:** ‘Engaging Shaw’

**When:** Matinees, evenings July 29–Sept. 4

**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

**Tickets:** \$29-67

**Box Office:** (619) 23-GLOBE

**Web:** [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org)



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Page 1 of 2

## 'Engaging Shaw' charms Old Globe audiences in classic battle of the sexes



### Let's Review BY DIANA SAENGER

In The Old Globe's West Coast premiere of "Engaging Shaw" (now in its final week), two couples play cat-and-mouse with each other's intentions and emotions. Excellent casting enhances John Morogiello's smart script as it plays out in a super set design in the Sheryl and Harvey White



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**Shaw attempts to convince Charlotte that she is better off with him than striking out on her own.**

COURTESY PHOTOS

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Page 1 of 2

# Lifemates

*Shaw's objection to marriage "had ceased with my objection to my own death."*

**'G**eorge Bernard Shaw" may have been his best fictional creation. The cantankerous genius loved to rant, like a spoiled brat, and turn conventions upside down. He renounced capitalism, organized religion, and social injustice, along with "flesh, fish, fowl, tea, coffee, tobacco, or spirits." The vegetarian once proclaimed "a man of my spiritual intensity does not eat corpses."

For most of his 94 years, he also renounced sex. A virgin until age 29, he said that before he married he had fewer mistresses than fingers on his hand (he offered facile reasons for abstention: his idolized mother never loved him; and he needed to avoid "the complications of sex"). His 40-year marriage, to Charlotte Payne-Townshend, was celibate. How the two came together is the subject of John Morogielo's witty, talky *Engaging Shaw*.

As with Shaw's life, the play probably combines fact with Shaw's fictionalizing. It begins in 1896. Shaw isn't the white-bearded icon of his later years. Although already deep into his "character," G.B.S., he's brown-haired and broke. He can't produce a play and is beholden to Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Fabian socialists on the rise, for his livelihood. The play follows a transitional year in his life. In the process, he makes the changes that enable

him to flourish.

To hear Shaw tell it, in a letter to Beatrice Webb, his left foot had necrosis of the bone and he was emotionally bankrupt (when a doctor said Shaw was killing himself, he replied, "the prospect was not in the least disagreeable to me"). Charlotte nursed him back to health in the country. He married her, he says, to prevent a "senseless scandal." His objection

to marriage "had ceased with my objection to my own death." Of course, he adds, Charlotte had to get beyond "such illusions as love interest, happiness interest, and the rest of the vulgarities of marriage."

According to *Engaging Shaw*, it was the other way around. At first Charlotte grows accustomed to his face and bluster. Then she falls in love and pursues him. When that doesn't work, she takes an "unconventional," Shavian approach: she stops wooing him and hooks a platonic lifemate.

Whether accurate or not, the play becomes *The Taming of the Shaw*. As Charlotte, Angela Pierce builds a sweeping arc and almost doubles in size by the finale. With each new scene, she becomes more forthright and relentless. It's as if she bursts from the constraints in Alejo Vietti's Victorian costumes.

**THEATER  
REVIEW**  
JEFF SMITH



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PHOTOGRAPH BY ED KRIEGER

**Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw (left), in the *Old Globe's* *Engaging Shaw*, gives Shaw the right amount of cocksure centeredness.**

**Engaging Shaw**, by John Morogielo

**Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre**, Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

**Directed by Henry Wishcamper**; cast: Rod Brogan, Natalie Gold, Angela Pierce, Michael Warner; scenic design, Wilson Chin, costumes, Alejo Vietti, lighting, Matthew Richards, sound, Paul Peterson

**Playing through September 4:** Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Sunday at 7:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 619-234-5623

Rod Brogan, whose Irish accent comes and goes, gives Shaw the right amount of cocksure centeredness, though his farcical breakdown plays like pure fiction. Brogan has the script's best lines. These come straight from Shaw himself and spice the play with so much wit it makes the regular dialogue often feel pedestrian.

Michael Warner and Natalie Gold play the Webbs, who apparently had a marriage of true minds as well. Warner makes Sidney a stiff, comic figure (who could put more genuine belief into his political speeches). Gold's Beatrice devises schemes within schemes. She also wishes, her eyes suggest, that she could be Shaw's equivalent to Dante's Beatrice.

Wilson Chin's richly detailed set boasts a grand, octagonal table surrounded by an eight-sided room and bookshelves. As details depart, the set literally traces Shaw's gradual unpeeling. The set also has an unintended effect. *Engaging Shaw* is entertaining. But it's a paltry imitation of the master, and makes one yearn for some real Shaw on that stage, and soon.

STORIES BALBOA PARK | THEATER REVIEWS

## Engaging Shaw at the Old Globe

By Jeff Smith | Published Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2011

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Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw (left), in the Old Globe's *Engaging Shaw*, gives Shaw the right amount of cocksure centeredness.

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San Diego is in the midst of a rock-musical festival. *The Who's Tommy's* at the Rep (through this weekend); *Hairspray* opens at Moonlight on the 17th; *Rocky Horror Show's* at the Old Globe in September; and *Jesus Christ Superstar* comes to La Jolla in November.

Cygnnet Theatre's keeping the festivities in high gear with a sprightly staging of *Little Shop of Horrors*. Directed by Sean Murray, the production goes back to the musical's black-and-white, B-movie roots: Roger Corman's 1960 basement-budget, comedy classic — filmed, he claimed, in two days and a night. On Sean Fanning's soot-clogged, Skid Row set, everything's a shade of gray, even the flowers (which look like they just came from their own funeral). In a Kansas-to-Oz flip, the carnivorous plant, Audrey II, is in Technicolor.

Every musical has “get it right or else” songs. Along with the girl-group chorus for Little Shop, which must be up-to-the-minute hip and brimming with attitude (and is at Cygnnet), the woman playing Audrey must steal hearts with “Somewhere That's Green.” Melissa Fernandes does just that, and more. As she sings, it's as if psychologically bedraggled Audrey imagines a caring, adult relationship for the first time.

Brandon Joel Maier and Phil Johnson hit all the right notes as Seymour and Mr. Mushnik, and Geno Carr shows impressive versatility as a passel of baddies (including the dentist from hell “paid to be inhumane”). David McBean gives Audrey II the requisite booming voice and a drooling urge to convert all of humanity into “plant food.” ■

**Engaging Shaw**, by John Morogiello

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**Little Shop of Horrors**, music by Alan Menken, book and lyrics, Howard Ashman

**Cygnnet Theatre**, 4040 Twiggs Street, Old Town

**Directed by Sean Murray**; cast: Brandon Joel Maier, Melissa Fernandes, Geno Carr, Phil Johnson, David McBean, Jacob Caltrider, Cashae Monya, Heather Paton, Rhea Elizabeth De Armas; scenic design, Sean Fanning, costumes, Shirley Pierson, lighting, Chris Rynne, sound, Matt Lescault-Wood, musical director, Tim McKnight.

**Playing through September 11**; Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Sunday at 7:00 p.m. Matinee Saturday at 3:00 p.m. and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 619-337-1525

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## SAN DIEGO

Regional Reviews by Bill Eadie

### *Engaging Shaw*

The Old Globe

George Bernard Shaw has been a source of endless fascination for playwrights. Three plays have already been written based on his correspondence, and now the Old Globe is presenting the West Coast premiere of a fourth, *Engaging Shaw*, by John Morogiello. Mr. Morogiello's play speculates on how Shaw met and eventually agreed to marry Charlotte Payne-Townshend, a strange relationship that Mr. Morogiello's play does little to enlighten.



Angela Pierce and Rod Brogan

Shaw was an inveterate correspondent, often sending many letters per day to individuals he admired, whether or not he had met them. Hugh Whitmore's *The Best of Friends* describes an ongoing correspondence Shaw had with both Dame Laurentia McLachlan, an abbess who fought to improve conditions for cloistered women, and Sir Sydney Cockerell, a museum curator and collector who rose from poverty to his position. Anthony Wynn's *Bernard and Bosie: A Most Unlikely Friendship* is based on correspondence Shaw undertook with Lord Alfred Douglas, the poet and sexual protégé of Oscar Wilde. The two corresponded for years but only met once in person. Finally, arguably the most famous of the plays is Jerome Kilty's *Dear Liar: A Comedy of Letters*, which is based on Shaw's romantic correspondence with Mrs. Patrick Campbell, a stage actress.

Famously introverted and socially inept, Shaw's passion emerges in his writing, which is lively, assertive and highly witty. So, having actors perform Shaw's letters typically results in a good deal of comic repartee. Portraying Shaw as a person who happens to be a writer, though, is more problematic.

Mr. Morogiello's play is set in a country cottage that Sidney (Michael Warner) and Beatrice (Natalie Gold) Webb have taken for the summer. Shaw (Rod Brogan), who, as usual, has lots of projects but no money, is staying with the Webbs, and the trio is visited by Charlotte Payne-Townshend (Angela Pierce), a middle-aged woman of means who has developed a fascination with Shaw. Beatrice, who has been unsuccessfully trying to match-make between Shaw and a succession of women she knows, quickly recognizes that Charlotte might be the one who could break through to him. So, she enlists with her visitor's plan to make herself "indispensable" to Shaw. Much resistance and debate follow.

Mr. Morogiello seems to have gotten his facts either right or plausible, but his narrative of how Charlotte wears down her confirmed bachelor prey is entertaining but unlikely to have any basis in reality. The psychology of his play is similar to the notion of "friends with benefits": Shaw and Charlotte have sex, and Charlotte falls in love (it's always the woman in these stories, isn't it?). We may not know exactly why Shaw and Charlotte actually married

(and stayed married for 45 years, until Charlotte died) but we do know that the marriage was never consummated. A forty-five year relationship without sex may be highly plausible, given Shaw's introversion and aversion to romance, but its basis was unlikely to have been a one-night stand.

Despite its faulty psychology, the play's bona fides as a romantic comedy are genuine, and after a bit of a slow start, the Old Globe cast settles into a groove that both moves along the plot and emphasizes the laughs. Director Henry Wishcamper's fluid staging takes good advantage of Wilson Chen's scenic design, which includes a large central table that consumes much of the central area of the White Theatre's stage. Alejo Vietti has dressed the cast in lovely period costumes, and Matthew Richards and Paul Peterson contribute quality lighting and sound designs. I was more than a little annoyed with the accents (coached by Ursula Meyer), however. The actors attempt to keep their accents suggestive, rather than exact, and that tact works reasonably for everyone but Mr. Warner, whose vowels consistently sound American, not British. I would have been happier with a bit more accent from each of the performers, and a lot more accuracy from Mr. Warner.

Despite my reservations about the play, the Old Globe production makes the best case for it.

Performances continue through September 4 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre on the Old Globe campus, 1363 Old Globe Way, in San Diego's Balboa Park. Tickets (\$29-67) available by calling (619) 23-GLOBE [234-5623] or by visiting [the Old Globe's website](#).

The Old Globe presents *Engaging Shaw*, by John Morogielo. Directed by Henry Wishcamper, with Wilson Chin (Scenic Design), Alejo Vietti (Costume Design), Matthew Richards (Lighting Design), Paul Peterson (Sound Design) and Lavinia Henley (Stage Manager).

The cast includes Rod Brogan (George Bernard Shaw), Natalie Gold (Beatrice Webb), Angela Pierce (Charlotte Payne-Townshend) and Michael Warner (Sidney Webb).

*Photo: Ed Krieger*

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## Shavian Wit On Display At Old Globe Theatre



Jack Lyons Theatre and  
Movie Critic

George Bernard Shaw was irritatingly intelligent and a brilliant playwright. He was also an author, essayist, a Nobel Laureate in Literature, and a prodigious letter writer – rumored to have written 250,000 letters and memos in his lifetime. Also, he was an Irishman who took great delight in poking his literary finger into the vulnerable eyes of English class-conscious Edwardian society with its many foibles.

However, he was not above having a few foibles in his own life, such as an eye for the ladies, and a penchant for publicity. His public image and persona, with all its quirks and Socialist political ideology, put him squarely at odds with (and in the crosshairs of), the media of his day, as well as with the ruling Tory Party of British politics.

The life of the charismatic Shaw, who lived to be 94, makes him an ideal subject for a play; which is exactly what 21st century American playwright John Morogielo thought and thus, his rom/com play “Engaging Shaw”, is receiving its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe’s Sheryl and Harvey White Arena stage.

The play, cleverly mounted and directed for an arena theatre by Henry Wishcamper, is set in Stratford, England, in July of 1896. The action revolves around the protracted courtship of George Bernard Shaw played by Rod Brogan, and a determined Charlotte Payne-Townshend vibrantly and strongly portrayed by Angela Pierce.

Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Shaw’s close friends and colleagues in the Fabian Society and co-founders of the London School of Economics are delightfully and winningly played in this four-hander by Natalie Gold and Michael Warner.

For me, however, Morogielo’s romantic comedy fails to connect the Shavian dots and lacks crispness and clarity in its writing. It becomes at times, an overly verbose battle of wits and banter between the real-life romance of wealthy Irish socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and her “targeted” confirmed bachelor G.B. Shaw, or as Charlotte calls him “Bernie”. Their relationship is an unusual mating dance to watch. He obviously doesn’t want to be captured in matrimony by anyone at the moment, but still wants to keep his options nearby. She comes to Stratford for the express purpose of wearing down this somewhat notorious public figure’s aversion to marriage.

Charlotte, an intellectual equal to Shaw, realizes that she and Shaw would be an excellent match, and sets out to convince him of this. Pierce’s Charlotte gets stronger in the second act, but Brogan’s Shaw remains stuck in first gear. Where, for example, is the biting Shavian wit that he so insightfully infused into his plays? Where is the conceit, the giant intellect, the swagger and self satisfaction of a superior individual who is comfortable being the Alpha male? After all, these are the very qualities that made Henry Higgins such an appealing, and dare I say it, a likable rogue in Shaw’s play “Pygmalion”.

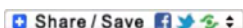
Brogan’s Shaw is skin deep. He is a one-dimensional character, and there is very little in the way of emotional chemistry happening between these two actors. They’re working hard, but spinning their wheels. Yes, I realize we’re watching characters in the Victorian era, but these are real life historical people. Where is the passion? It still takes two to tango for a romance to flourish, no matter what period of history we’re watching. Granted, Shaw eventually does marry Charlotte, but it’s such a long-winded struggle to watch. It’s an even money wager on which character the audience is pulling for. Geniuses can be prickly and extremely difficult to live with, and I’m not so sure this Shaw is worth the time or the effort. Frankly, it’s a bit difficult to tell whether the problem lies with the character development in the text or in the performance of the actor.

In the case of Michael Warner and Natalie Gold, however, their on stage chemistry is evident from the get-go and works very well for these two fine actors portraying Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Sidney is a workaholic for the Fabian Society and a bit clueless as a husband, but Warner the actor, displays excellent comedy timing in all his scenes. Beatrice is a study in control and reliability and Gold plays her with an aura of suppressed patrician sexuality that makes her an interesting character to watch and to discover what she might do.

On opening night I heard more laughs emanating from the distaff side in the audience. Most of the males sat either bewildered or sort of stone-faced as female points were being made. Perhaps, we men, are indeed, as clueless as Sidney Webb; once we’re comfortably ensconced in the married state.

The creative team for the show under the direction of Henry Wishcamper gets high marks for: A very functional Set Design by Wilson Chin; for the Costume designs of Alejo Vietti, especially for the ladies, which are period-looking perfect; for the Lighting Designs of Matthew Richards, which are very effective in making sure that all the playing areas of the arena stage are properly lighted, both on stage and in those areas in the audience, requiring illumination without distraction; and for the Sound Design by the ever-reliable Paul Peterson.

“Engaging Shaw” runs through September 4, 2011. For tickets and reservation information go online at [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org)



Michael Warner as Sidney Webb  
and Natalie Gold as Beatrice  
Webb in the West Coast  
Premiere of John Morogielo's  
Engaging Shaw, directed by  
Henry Wishcamper, July 29 -  
Sept. 4, 2011 at The Old Globe.  
Photo by Ed Krieger.



Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw,  
Michael Warner as Sidney Webb, Natalie  
Gold as Beatrice Webb and Angela Pierce as  
Charlotte Payne-Townshend. ~Ed Krieger



Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw and  
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## THEATER REVIEW: "Engaging Shaw" is a terrific show at Old Globe

JEAN LOWERISON - SDGLN THEATER CRITIC  
August 8th, 2011

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Watching four extremely verbal and highly intelligent characters discuss politics and personal relationships with cleverness and wit is my idea of theatrical heaven. So forgive me if I wax ecstatic about John Morogiello's delightful "Engaging Shaw."

Henry Wishcamper directs a terrific cast in the show's West Coast premiere through Sept. 4 in the Old Globe's Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre. The play will receive its European premiere at Vienna's English Theatre next spring.

One of the quartet is that well-known curmudgeon and iconoclast George Bernard Shaw, who manages to be a successful ladies' man despite also being a vegetarian, teetotaling, egotistical, anti-marriage, anti-sex socialist.

I'm not sure whether that says more about women or about Shaw, but in any case Morogiello lets us look in as the irascible but sometimes charming Shaw (Rod Brogan) meets his match in one Charlotte Payne-Townshend (Angela Pierce).

The year is 1896; the place, the country home of dedicated Fabian socialists Sidney (Michael Warner) and Beatrice Webb (Natalie Gold). Beatrice, also an indefatigable matchmaker, interrupts Sidney's pontification about socialist theory for a more important topic: the nice artist she means to introduce to their friend Shaw.

But it's too late: he's already met Miss Townshend by inadvertently running her into a ditch on her bicycle.

Charlotte, as it happens, is a wealthy heiress, and Beatrice had someone else in mind for her. But Beatrice does want Shaw to chat her up nicely and get her to contribute to the Webbs' latest effort, the founding of the London School of Economics.

The verbal sparring begins immediately, and Shaw will find that not only is Charlotte enlightened (she can afford to be) and Irish (Shaw is a Dubliner), but also has opinions as definite and fixed as his own.

They agree about one thing: marriage. They're both agin it – loudly, insistently and repeatedly. Shaw puts it this way: "Mrs. Webb has an amusing notion that the best cure for freedom is slavery."

[ENLARGE](#)

Photo credit: Ed Krieger

**Angela Pierce as Charlotte and Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw in John Morogiello's "Engaging Shaw."**



Charlotte agrees, though this nice 40-something Victorian virgin can't resist pestering Shaw for details about the one sexual experience he admits to. And she eventually changes her mind about marriage and enlists Beatrice's help in her campaign.

Step one is that Charlotte becomes his secretary, typing his rants and plays and essays.

Brogan and Pierce prove formidable acting colleagues and debating adversaries as they bring this relationship (based largely on Shaw's letters) to life. My only quibble is that both suffer from peekaboo Irish accents.

Warner is excellent as the political man par excellence, amused and a little put off by his equally committed wife's apparent need to dabble in the emotional lives of their friends.

Gold is equally fine and especially effective in the scene in which she tells Sidney he's out of his league when women get together to talk relationships.

This is a handsome production, anchored by Wilson Chin's book-crammed in-the-round set design and Alejo Vietti's lovely costume design, especially for the women. Matthew Richards' lighting and Paul Peterson's sound design complete the excellent team.

I'll leave you to find out whether Charlotte bags her man. Rest assured that this theatrical journey is one of the most delightful you will have this season.

### The details

"Engaging Shaw" plays through Sept. 4 at the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre in Balboa Park.

Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 pm; Thursday through Saturday at 8 pm; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 pm.

For tickets call (619) 234-5623 or visit [HERE](#).

To read more reviews by SDGLN Theater Critic Jean Lowerison, click [HERE](#).

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Vol. II, No. 3 - August 11, 2011

THESE SHOWS ARE UP FOR REVIEW

## Where's George?

**Globe's *Engaging Shaw* is perky enough; the main problem is that it's poorly titled**

BY MARTIN JONES WESTLIN

"Some men see things as they are and say why," George Bernard Shaw once declared in a quote often misattributed to Bobby Kennedy; "I dream things that never were and say why not." There's lots more where that came from, as Shaw—the social critic, journalist and playwright who left an indelible mark on the 19th and 20th centuries amid virtually no formal education in his native Dublin—flooded the market with socialist ideals and barbs on man's general incompetence. He wasn't exactly shy when it came to his private persona, either, particularly about his rumored asexuality.



*George Bernard Shaw (Rod Brogan) looks lonely, and Charlotte Payne-Townshend (Angela Pierce) thinks she can help. (Photos by Ed Krieger)*

"Having sex," he once told his eventual wife Charlotte Payne-Townshend, "made me a man. Rejecting it made me Shaw."

*Hee!*

That quip comes from *Engaging Shaw*, The Old Globe Theatre's West Coast premiere about the battle of wits between Shaw and Payne-Townshend and the (probably) inevitable marriage that followed. Shaw reluctantly falls for Payne-Townshend amid her colossal superbia; Charlotte swoons over her "Bernie" amid his colossal ego. It's a talky story (exactly what you'd expect with one so erudite as the central figure), and the outcome is predictable but happy.

But for all its good production values, it loses something important in the translation: Despite the title, there's simply not enough Shaw to go around.

We do know Shaw was close to Sidney and Beatrice Webb, prominent Stratford socialists and, as the play opens, would-be founders of the London School of Economics. The Webbs try to solicit the wealthy Payne-Townshend for funding when Shaw happens along; his erudition and callousness intrigue

Charlotte, whose formidable wiles play counterpoint to Shaw's prickly *bons mots*. Charlotte, a virgin and almost an old maid at 40, sets out to land this enigmatic new friend—and her scheming and pining culminate in a hobbled, humbled Shaw conceding his love for her.

Playwright John Morigiello uses some clever anecdotes to advance his story: Shaw met Charlotte after sideswiping her leg with his bicycle; Beatrice fancies herself a great matchmaker; and Charlotte actually asks *Shaw* to marry *her*. The devices work pretty well, and Rod Brogan nicely underplays the jut-jawed Shaw, whose detachment infuriates the resolute Charlotte.

Morogiello also makes reference to the Fabian Society, dedicated to the advancement of socialist principles. Shaw was a dedicated Fabian, all right, but his ardent sensibilities led him to also join the elite Socialist League and take up with people like Eleanor Marx, Karl's youngest daughter.

You'll never learn any of that in this show. Any more than you'll discover things about Shaw you never knew—like the fact that he never touched alcohol, owing to his dad's legendary drunkenness. Or that his so-called “unpleasant plays” were based on his fiercely leftist political bents. Or that his arrival in London in 1876 would mark a 30-year exodus from his native Dublin. Or that he's partly responsible for the modern adaptation of the swastika.

These traits and more unfolded during and prior to his courtship of Payne-Townshend, and they're sorely overlooked. Without such references, Shaw reads like any other arrogant bastard, hardly the pious armchair man of letters for whom Charlotte fell so hard. There's just not enough exposition to make him believable, and the gaps often leave his relationship with Charlotte (an adorable Angela Pierce) looking rather brotherly-sisterly.

Not so with Michael Warner and Natalie Gold, who play Sidney and Beatrice Webb to the hilt. The Webbs are so on point with their school plans and mutual idealism that they almost look alike, and Warner and Gold are perfect illustrators of their deep commitments. There's also some nice undertow between Gold and Pierce, with Beatrice fairly cackling as Charlotte gradually gives in to her desires.

Matthew Richards' lighting design is conspicuously one-note, which is great for a show so dependent on dialogue. Alejo Vietti's period costumes and Wilson Chin's scene design reflect the creators' unity of purpose.

We don't get to see much Shaw anymore, for whatever reasons—suffice it to say that Shavian actors and directors, who color their work with a light, dry touch, are at a premium. With *Engaging Shaw*, director Henry Wishcamper bring us an imperfect but tidy piece that evinces these traits. It doesn't give us enough George, but it does say plenty about the others, and that's better than nothing.

*This review is based on the opening-night performance of August 4. Engaging Shaw runs through Sept. 4 at The Old Globe Theatre's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. 619-23-GLOBE, [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org)*



*Sidney Webb (Michael Warner) and wife Beatrice (Natalie Gold) are as happy in their marriage as two clams can possibly be.*

## Audrey II's hungry; so's Charlene

### Talented cast is trying too hard in Cygnet's underwhelming *Little Shop*

BY CHARLENE BALDRIDGE

Why am I so underwhelmed by the *Little Shop of Horrors* that opens Cygnet Theatre's ninth season? All the elements that spell success are present: director Sean Murray, music director Tim McKnight and a five-piece, crackerjack live band and production values that could not be better, from a plethora of Audrey II puppets—the only spots of color—to Sean Fanning's shades of black and white set. The company is admirably gifted and suited to the roles.

*Little Shop*, built by Alan Menken (music) and Howard Ashman (book and lyrics) in 1982 off a B movie originally called *The Passionate People Eater*, is a veritable romp of considerable cult status, sending up the *film noir* style and a bit of sci-fi to boot. Of course, the characters are stereotypes, and the situation is ridiculous—just wholesome, scary, gory fun for those who relish the voracious man-eating plant (voice by the versatile David McBean; puppetry one could call inhabitation by Jacob Caltrider), the nebbish florist's assistant Seymour (Cygnet newcomer Brandon Joel Maier), the sexy and vacuous female clerk Audrey (the extraordinary Melissa Fernandes, vocally subtle despite the chaos), the mean boss Mr. Mushnik (Phil Johnson, master of shtick), the abusive, sadistic dentist Orin Scrivello (Geno Carr, a scream in leather, sporting gorgeous gams), the Skid Row street urchins (the fabulous trio of Rhea Elizabeth de Armas, Cashae Monya and Heather Paton) and the sleazy media types eager to capitalize on sensational flora and missing fauna and move on.





## ABOUT ME

### About me and Brenda

San Diego, California, United States

My writing partner is Brenda. She writes what I dare not. I am a member of the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and write for numerous publications regionally and nationally. Brenda showed up unbidden on a paper tablecloth one night. Her maiden name – McGillicutty – and Burgoo – whatever that is – came along years later, after she'd settled in as my most adventurous companion -- she dances while I sit on the sidelines and weep. She rejoices in young men with curly hair who play "Vocalise" on the cello in a Japanese pagoda, while I hang out with wise old Jews who have long, white beards, listen to chamber music and admire my writing and, secretly, Brenda. Though Brenda adores fine dining, she occasionally confuses octopus and squid and truly does not write well. Where I would give up a good duck pâté for sex any day, Brenda hangs out in bars and goes home with someone new every night. It's not that she is promiscuous; she's just wildly epicurean.

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FOL

## Engaging Shaw, Spring Awakening, Olga Kern and more



Charlene Baldrige by Ken Howard

### Gnarly Shaw engaged

Readily available reference tools define the word *gnarly* (slang) first as "extremely difficult, risky and challenging"; and second, as "extraordinarily good or pleasurable."

Theatergoers experiencing **John Morogiello's** *Engaging Shaw* (playing in the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre through September 4) receive more than a *souçon* of the extraordinary, multifaceted, self-made George Bernard Shaw. As a matter of fact, the playwright's portrait presents him splendidly as all the above. Morogiello captures Shaw's exquisite language because he puts into the mouth of the actor portraying Shaw quotations from the master playwright's works and letters. When reading Shaw's plays, the preface and the endnotes are almost as enjoyable as the plays.

Morogiello also enhances two other characters, Sidney Webb and his wife, Beatrice, by quoting from Sidney's *Fabian Essays* and Beatrice's diaries. The action, set in 1896, takes place in the Webbs' rented cottage in Stratford, England. Shaw, 40, is a teetotaler and vegetarian, immensely contrary, a confirmed bachelor and admirer of women, and is rooming with the Webbs, with whom he shares socialist ideals. Shaw is engaged in daily romantic correspondence with an unseen character, actress Ellen Terry.





Rod Brogan as Shaw and Angela Pierce as Payne-Townshend  
Photo: Ed Krieger

Along comes the fourth character, Charlotte Payne-Townshend, a self-possessed, opinionated, 39-year old Irishwoman of immense wealth and independence. The Webbs hope to persuade Payne-Townshend to support the school they intend to establish and also to support the work of the left-leaning Fabian Society, which later becomes responsible for the founding of the British Labor Party.

Actor **Rod Brogan** (who received his MFA from Old Globe/USD Professional Actor Training Program in 2004) captures Shaw's brilliance, wit, prickly self-assurance and attitude. The classical training and his subsequent professional experience show.

**Angela Pierce** portrays the equally determined and brilliant Payne-Townshend, who becomes Shaw's wife in what Morogiello presents as the most fraught courtship of all eternity. It is absolutely delicious in intensity, sexual chemistry and romance, despite Shaw's protestations to the contrary. Some historians maintain that the marriage was entirely chaste; however, Morogiello indicates that the preamble was not. The delicious frisson is due to the actors' chemistry and no doubt to the brilliance of director Henry Wishcamper, who stages their battles around a gigantic octagonal library table that takes center stage in the White, a theatre in the round.

**Natalie Gold** and **Michael Warner** are also effective as the Webbs, whose relationship changes and deepens over the course of the play, especially following their self-exile to a speaking tour of the States. Payne-Townshend is like a field marshal in her plot, with Beatrice Webb's complicity, to wear down and marry the intractable Shaw. She makes herself indispensable and then



Rod Brogan as Shaw  
Photo: Ed Krieger

leaves him to stew in his own hypochondria while she tours Europe. To see Shaw poor-me like, nursing multiple ailments while growing more and more petulant, is excruciatingly funny, perhaps because it is reminiscent of Henry Higgins after Eliza deserts him in the musical version of *Pygmalion*, titled *My Fair Lady* (which Shaw detested, by the way).

Because they have their being in Shaw's life, Morogiello's characters are pure Shaw. Endlessly, one who adores the playwright, knows his works and admires his rise from largely self-educated lad to world-renowned playwright, revels in the language and the audacity of it all. I've not experienced such a joyous, intellectual and theatrical romp for quite a long time.

The experience is a visual delight as well: Two gorgeous women garbed by costume designer **Alejo Vietti**, striding around **Wilson Chin's** detailed Victorian cottage, lighted by **Matthew Richards**, with **Paul Peterson's** Wagnerian sound enhancing all (Shaw was a great admirer of the composer).

*Engaging Shaw* continues in the White Theatre, Old Globe, Balboa Park, nightly except Monday through September 4. More information and tickets: [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or (619) 23-GLOBE.

## Burgoo Rating: FIVE

### Brenda zooming around



Other

Brenda Burgoo as sketched by Charlene Baldridge

theatergoing forays this week included **New Village Arts'** production of Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* and **Dangerhouse's** *The Love Suicides at Amijima* (review written for *North County Times*) and Cygnet's production of *Little Shop of Horrors* (review to be found at [Words Are Not Enough](#)). Next week while Brenda and Charlene are at the opera (five in seven days!), reviews of *Mary Poppins* will run in *Words Are Not Enough* and *North County Times*, respectively.

Before leaving for Santa Fe on Sunday, Aug. 14, Brenda managed a couple of SummerFest concerts and ACT San Diego's *Spring Awakening*, seen at Coronado School of the Arts Theatre, aka CoSA. Here is her review of *Spring Awakening* and comments on *An Evening With Olga Kern* at SummerFest. The 25<sup>th</sup> annual SummerFest continues through August 27, produced by La Jolla Music Society at Sherwood Auditorium in

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# San Diego, CA



## Hershey's love letter to Leonard is bittersweet



Carol Davis, San Diego Theater Examiner

August 7, 2011 - Like this? [Subscribe to get instant updates.](#)



Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein  
**Credits:** The Old Globe

**Rating for Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein:**

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San Diego, CA---*Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein* is Hershey Felder's personal love letter to Leonard Bernstein. Felder, the consummate master of bringing musical genius alive by adopting the persona of the masters and becoming them has been a treat for yours truly in the past. He has paid tribute to George Gershwin, Chopin, and Beethoven. Somehow or other though, his tribute or valentine to Bernstein struck a different note. With Bernstein, who is obviously more contemporary than the others and audiences might still have recollections of his life, Hershey brings out the best and the worst of the maestro.

That he admired and followed Bernstein's career is evidenced throughout. Felder does draw the parallels between his art and that of Bernstein's. While Bernstein's art was making music, "the most difficult and complex music—accessible to all", Felder's art is creating "rich characters from the lives of these composers"... and delves into the art that goes into composing it.

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And the fact that their early years followed similar paths makes Bernstein's life even more meaningful to Hershey, the storyteller and maestro. Bernstein was born of Jewish Ukrainian émigré parents who settled in Lawrence, Mass. They later moved to Boston where he attended Boston Latin and Harvard.

Felder was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada to parents of Polish and Hungarian backgrounds. In their early years they both attended Hebrew Schools and Hebrew Academies. Both sets of parent's Eastern European traditions dominated their early upbringing up to and including some of the compositions they later penned. (*Kaddish* in 1963 by Bernstein and *Alayih, Concerto on Israeli Themes* by Felder)

Starting out on a rather wistful note, Felder opens his show with Bernstein's "Somewhere" from *West Side Story* and for the remaining one hundred minutes we get the impression that with all the praise and covet Bernstein was awarded during his lifetime his ambitions of becoming the next great American composer were never were satisfied, still asking "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" and "Am I a great composer?"

His fame as musical director of the New York Philharmonic, conductor, teacher, mentor, creator, Maestro, Broadway star and composer seemed a payback to his observant father who turned his nose down at the young Bernstein who yearned to play the piano and who paid for his own lessons when he realized that was the only way he would grow!



But it is Bernstein's personal journey with Felder in the driver's seat that cuts through the greatness and shows a more selfish and anguished soul than could be heard in his recordings and works. With Boston accent in hand (somewhat) and becoming each of the important characters (Bernstein's religious father who had a deep Yiddish accent, his two daughters and son, his sister and his wife) in Bernstein's life, Felder takes us on the trajectory of Bernstein's wanting to do it all in his lifetime without looking back and at the cost to those near and dear to him, particularly his wife of over 25 years. (Especially his homosexual indiscretions that haunted him throughout his life.)

With Felder sitting at the piano, as Maestro Bernstein sang cigarettes and gravely voice, his life unfolds from his humble beginnings to his impossible dream. He is the consummate, musicologist, conductor and teacher as he was to millions of children during his Young Peoples Concerts. The story of Bernstein's legacy is told in a way that incorporates the process, the examples and the personality while playing snippets from *West Side Story*, Bernstein's *Piano Sonata*, *Lamentations (from Symphony #1: Jeremiah)*, *Glitter and be Gay* from *Candide* and Maria from *West Side Story*.

But the peace de resistance is Felder, (the accomplished musician) who wrote the book, and is the number one guy. The theatre comes alive when he plays! It is exhilarating to watch and listen. Along with his long time director Joel Zwick and Felder's masterful playing that brings this (and all) of his works together. They have the exercise down pat. Having worked together on four collaborations they know what works and what doesn't. With the help of Erik Carstensen's sound design, Francois-Pierre Couture's lighting design and Andrew Wilder's video projections *Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein* brings back memories, although deceased for a mere 20 years, leading up to the golden age of Bernstein and then some.

And somewhere out there, somehow, Bernstein is looking down with approval at this bittersweet valentine.

It's another brilliant work not to be missed.

See you at the theatre.

Dates: through Aug. 28th

Organization: Old Globe Theatre

Phone: 619-234-5623

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Where: 1363 Old Globe Way

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By **Carol Davis**

**San Diego Theater Examiner**

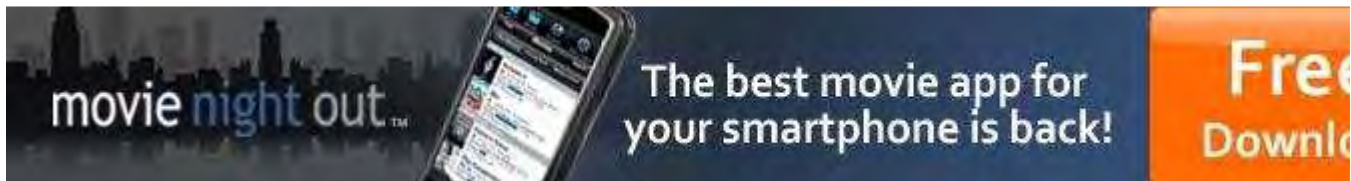
Carol Davis is a regular contributor to sdjewishworld.com. Before that she wrote for The San Diego Jewish Times for over twenty years. Carol has...

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## Engaging Shaw at the Old Globe is just plain good theatre

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By Carol Davis



Carol Davis

SAN DIEGO — There's something intriguing about watching two intelligent adults spar over their intended romance leading up to their ultimate marriage...or not.

In playwright John Morogiello's witty and appealing *Engaging Shaw* now on the Sheryl and Harvey White Stage at the Old Globe Theatre, Rod Brogan (Shaw), Angela Pierce (Charlotte Payne-Townshend), Michael Warner (Sidney Webb) and Natalie Gold (Beatrice Webb) create their own Web of conspiracy (wink, wink) about the relationship between the writer and fellow traveler and how it all went down between G.B. Shaw and his accidental lover Charlotte Payne-Townshend.

Accidental? Well, they did meet over a biking accident (according to Morogiello) when Payne-Townshend and Shaw collided as they were both approaching the Webb's home. Sidney Webb was a famous socialist. He and his wife Natalie headed up the *London School of Economics* of which Shaw was a committed member.

But the organization was in financial trouble: enter Charlotte Payne-Townshend beautiful, rich and celibate and not making any bones about it, at the age of 40. She was a well known a socialite, a rebel without a cause, and an heiress money to contribute to the Webb's position and a good catch, in Webb's mind, for Shaw as well.

'When an irresistible force (Payne-Townshend) meets an immovable object (Shaw) ... You can just be sure as long as you live, Somethin's gotta give'. And so the games begin with conversations between Shaw and Payne-Townshend that are laced with doubt, self-aggrandizement, intellectual posturing, long winded speeches and an on again-off again budding romance (though thoroughly anti- romantic) that chugs along until they reach, what was known all along, their coming together.

Morogiello bases his romantic comedy on the real life romance between the two. Shaw who penned *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* makes perfectly clear that he liked strong willed women, harbored a fascination with them and had them speak their beliefs way ahead of their time. But, he didn't want to marry. There in is the rub in *Engaging Shaw*, Morogiello's play on words comedy.

It's just fascinating, under Henry Wishcamper's strong direction, watching and listening to the characters as they



take on their specific roles. The Globe's production in the theatre in the round seems the perfect venue for the strong headed and conceited Shaw as portrayed by Rod Brogan. When he spars and dances with the cooler more level headed (in the beginning) Charlotte the sparks fly, the heat is on. Of course dancing with an ego the size of Shaw's has to have been exasperating and oft times led nowhere. "I would never call myself the greatest man in England. I would wait politely for you to say it. —And I'm certain you will some day. All women do."

Angela Pierce, lovely and attractive in Alejo Vietti's period costumes, is just what the doctor ordered for the strong-headed antics of Shaw as she matches him (Bernie as he wishes to be referred) intellect for intellect (.."I have yet to find the woman who is my intellectual peer".) ("I should pity my sex if we harbored the equal of you"). Later on in their relationship when she leaves him helpless and alone he is still bound and determined NOT to have his 'wings clipped' by her. She though is bound and determined to marry the man.

As catalysts, both Natalie Gold and Michael Warner make a handsome couple as the Webb's handling themselves beautifully as they organize and prepare for bigger things to come for their London School of Economics. Not subtle at all in her matchmaking efforts though, Beatrice Webb is anything but a wallflower. But when Charlotte approaches her plot in making the romance become a reality, the conversations turn more personal and detailed and the play takes on a more dramatic and sentimental but meaningful turn. First seen as partners in business then rivals they soon discover that by working together they could get more done than by being rivals.

It all turns out well though and Morogiello's (with excerpts from George Bernard Shaw) revelations are spot on as to Shaw's feelings on sex, and women and chasteness. Bottom line though, as clever and as witty as Shaw professed to be he finally agreed to marry Charlotte after he finds himself helpless being his own secretary. They were married 45 years until her death.

There were no bones made about the fact that it was a chaste marriage. S. "What about sex?" C. "I assumed that, having experienced it together once, we need not expect it again". S "Marriage is not a sexual contract but a social one".

This is one show I highly recommend to anyone and everyone who enjoys fine acting with a strong cast, high production values and stimulating dialogue. It is delightful and yes engaging, through and through.

See you at the theatre.

Dates: Through Sept. 4th

Organization: The Old Globe Theatre

Phone: 619-234-5623

Production Type: Romantic Comedy

Where: Balboa Park

Ticket Prices: \$29.00- \$67.00

Web: theoldglobe.org

Venue: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre

\*

Davis is a San Diego-base theatre critic. She may be contacted at [carol.davis@sdjewishworld.com](mailto:carol.davis@sdjewishworld.com)

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## Engaging Shaw at The Old Globe is Just Plain Good Theatre



Carol Davis, San Diego Theater Examiner

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Charlotte and Shaw

**Credits:** Ed Krieger

**Rating for Engaging Shaw:**

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cause, and an heiress with money to contribute to the Webb's position and a good catch, in Webb's mind, for Shaw as well.



‘When an irresistible force (Payne-Townshend) meets an immovable object (Shaw) ... You can just be sure as long as you live, Somethin’s gotta give’. And so the games begin with conversations between Shaw and Payne-Townshend that are laced with doubt, self-aggrandizement, intellectual posturing, long winded speeches and an on again-off again budding romance (though thoroughly anti- romantic) that chugs along until they reach, what was known all along, their coming together.

Morogiello bases his romantic comedy on the real life romance between the two. Shaw who penned *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* makes perfectly clear that he liked strong willed women, harbored a fascination with them and had them speak their beliefs way ahead of their time. But, he didn’t want to marry. There in is the rub in *Engaging Shaw*, Morogiello’s play on words comedy.

It’s just fascinating, under Henry Wishcamper’s strong direction, watching and listening to the characters as they take on their specific roles. The Globe’s production in the theatre in the round seems the perfect venue for the strong headed and conceited Shaw as portrayed by Rod Brogan. When he spars and dances with the cooler more level headed (in the beginning) Charlotte the sparks fly, the heat is on. Of course dancing with an ego the size of Shaw’s has to have been



exasperating and oft times led nowhere. "I would never call myself the greatest man in England. I would wait politely for you to say it. ---And I'm certain you will some day. All women do."

Angela Pierce, lovely and attractive in Alejo Vietti's period costumes, is just what the doctor ordered for the strong-headed antics of Shaw as she matches him (Bernie as he wishes to be referred) intellect for intellect (.."I have yet to find the woman who is my intellectual peer".) ("I should pity my sex if we harbored the equal of you"). Later on in their relationship when she leaves him helpless and alone he is still bound and determined NOT to have his 'wings clipped' by her. She though is bound and determined to marry the man.

As catalysts, both Natalie Gold and Michael Warner make a handsome couple as the Webb's handling themselves beautifully as they organize and prepare for bigger things to come for their *London School of Economics*. Not subtle at all in her matchmaking efforts though, Beatrice Webb is anything but a wallflower. But when Charlotte approaches her plot in making the romance become a reality, the conversations turn more personal and detailed and the play takes on a more dramatic and sentimental but meaningful turn. First seen as partners in business then rivals they soon discover that by working together they could get more done than by being rivals.

It all turns out well though and Morogiello's (with excerpts from George Bernard Shaw) revelations are spot on as to Shaw's feelings on sex, and women and chasteness. Bottom line though, as clever and as witty as Shaw professed to be he finally agreed to marry Charlotte after he finds himself helpless being his own secretary. They were married 45 years until her death.

There were no bones made about the fact that it was a chaste marriage. **S**. "What about sex?" **C**. "I assumed that, having experienced it together once, we need not expect it again". **S** "Marriage is not a sexual contract but a social one".

This is one show I highly recommend to anyone and everyone who enjoys fine acting with a strong cast, high production values and stimulating dialogue. It is delightful and yes engaging, through and through.

See you at the theatre.

Dates: Through Sept. 4th

Organization: The Old Globe Theatre

Phone: 619-234-5623

Production Type: Romantic Comedy

Where: Balboa Park

Ticket Prices: \$29.00- \$67.00

Web: theoldglobe.org

Venue: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre

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By **Carol Davis**

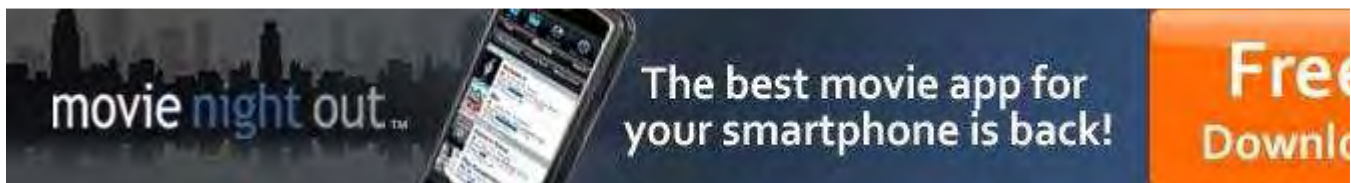
**San Diego Theater Examiner**

Carol Davis is a regular contributor to sdjewishworld.com. Before that she wrote for The San Diego Jewish Times for over twenty years. Carol has...

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## Theatre Review: Engaging Shaw

Posted by [admin](#) on 8/19/11 • Categorized as [Arts & Entertainment](#), [Theater](#)



“Engaging Shaw” at the Old  
Globe

Merely pleasant

**By Patricia Moris Buckley | SDUN Theater Critic**

It’s sad that “Engaging Shaw” isn’t more, well, engaging. It’s a pleasant comedy with highly amusing characters talking about the true nature of humankind in witty, smart quips. And, at its heart, it’s a love story. But it never lives up to its own premise.

“Engaging Shaw” is the story of Irish playwright/novelist/music critic George Bernard Shaw, who charmed many of his peers, especially the ladies. He flirted and preened with many lovers at the same time, all the while declaring himself a permanent bachelor and totally unconventional (and also kind of non-sexual, an interesting twist).

The play begins the summer he spent with Sidney and Beatrice Webb, founders of the London School of Economics and active members of the socialist Fabian Society (Shaw was also a member), in a cottage in Stratford, England. There Shaw meets fellow Irish immigrant Charlotte Payne-Townshend, a smart, wealthy woman who has vowed to remain unmarried as well—until she falls madly in love with Shaw.

How she sets out to catch him is rather interesting, but there comes a point where he really, really won’t be caught, which turns Charlotte into a whiny baby and the whole premise collapses like a poorly timed soufflé. In

a play about unconventional people, what could be more conventional than girl falls for boy, gets boy, loses boy, gets boy again? Shaw would have been appalled.

At one point, it almost seemed as if Charlotte would turn to Shaw and say, “I’m just a girl, standing in front of a boy, asking him to love me.” It’s that much of a rom-com.

The casting doesn’t help. Rod Brogan is technically excellent in the role of Shaw, nimbly handling difficult dialogue and playing all the many facets of this complex character. But he lacks the overwhelming charm and appeal of Shaw (who was never a looker, but always a favorite with the ladies). The same could be said of Michael Warner as Sidney, who fails to mine the material to its greatest depth.

However, the two women in the cast do more than make up for the men. Angela Pierce is sharp, crisp and subtle as Charlotte. Yet even she struggles when the character turns into an emotional puddle. The stand out performance belongs to Natalie Gold as Beatrice, who has a public and a private face. Gold admirably keeps them separate, but the moments they clash are some of the best in the show, thanks to Gold’s deft touch and exquisite comedic timing.

Henry Wishcamper’s fast-paced direction fits the script, but I wish he’d kept a better hand on the actors’ accents, which seemed to come and go. Wilson Chin’s drawing room set is versatile, although the rectangular rug under a hexagonal table seems to clash visually. But I loved the moment where papers fell like snow from the ceiling. Alejo Vietti’s costumes for the women really suit the period and the characters.

I wanted to fall in love with “Engaging Shaw,” and I came close. But although it’s worth seeing, it’s not much better fare than can be seen at the local multi-plex.8.

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## ►► THEATER P. 11



"Engaging Shaw" merely pleasant



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Page 1 of 2

# Engaging Shaw

## Merely pleasant

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### "ENGAGING SHAW"

**When:** Through Sept. 4

**Where:** Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

**Info:** (619) 23-GLOBE

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**see Shaw, page 14**



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FROM PAGE 11

## SHAW

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Wednesday, Aug 24, 2011

# Old Globe successfully engages the unbendable will of George Bernard Shaw

Engaging Shaw and the rest of this week's theater

By [David L. Coddon](#)



Engaging Shaw

We have George Bernard Shaw himself to thank for his thundering polemics; his fierce turns of phrase in drama, fiction and in public life; and for his sheer eloquence of character. We have playwright John Morogielo's *Engaging Shaw* and an irresistibly complex portrayal of Shaw by Rod Brogan to thank for humanizing the man who would be superman.

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*Engaging Shaw*, making its West Coast premiere in The Old Globe's intimate Sheryl and Harvey White

Theatre, immerses the audience in Shaw the Socialist, Shaw the Egoist and, at the same time



least likely and most likable, Shaw the Unconventional Romantic—the key word being “unconventional.” So contemptuous is the Irish playwright / author / activist of all things conventional, particularly those pertaining to war and wooing between man and woman, that no adulation or declaration of love or force of nature can bend his will.

The force of nature in *Engaging Shaw* is wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend (Angela Pierce), an Irish spitfire more than up to the task of going quip-for-quip, barb-for-barb, salvo-for-salvo against a “sprite” who believes women will someday have their day—just not today.

Charlotte’s quest to “engage” Shaw, and not only in promised matrimony, is just part of the appeal of this light, but definitely not lightweight, story of romancing and politicking. The Globe has cast four superior actors—Brogan, Pierce, Michael Warner and Natalie Gold, the latter two as married sociopolitical reformers Sidney and Beatrice Webb. What seems as uncomplicated as a late-19th-century battle of the sexes becomes a series of stirring and affecting revelations—about both Sidney’s and Beatrice’s relationship to friend and house-guest (at a Stratford cottage) Shaw; about the piquancies of marriage; about the significance of The Cause (the advancement of democratic socialism); about art; and, in the end, about love.

Brogan, in wool suit and wooly beard, and Pierce, unfettered neither by chignon nor Shaw’s chauvinism, circle each other like stalking cats, though they do so with gleam in eye, sharpness of tongue and more than a bit of sexual tension. Chaste as their few kisses are, we can be sure that this pair, when they finally reach common ground, will flare as much in action as in words. It’s great fun watching them get there.

There’s just enough restraint and use of dramatic pauses in Brogan’s and Pierce’s interchanges to ensure that the bickering becomes neither tiresome nor reminiscent of an old rerun of *Maude*. On the theater-in-the-square White stage, there’s no place for either to hide from the other—not that this is ever going to happen. Like it or not, this pair is made for each other.

*Engaging Shaw* runs through Sept. 4 at The Old Globe’s Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

Write to [davidc@sdcitybeat.com](mailto:davidc@sdcitybeat.com) and [editor@sdcitybeat.com](mailto:editor@sdcitybeat.com).

## Opening

**Hairspray:** The venerable rock musical set in ’60s Baltimore is based on the cult John Waters film. It opens Aug. 17 at the Moonlight Amphitheatre in Vista. \$27-\$50. [moonlightstage.com](http://moonlightstage.com)

**2 Pianos 4 Hands:** In this return engagement, two actors seated opposite each other at grand pianos tinkle the ivories and relive their piano-prodigy pasts. Opens Aug. 18 at North Coast Repertory Theatre in Solana Beach. \$30-\$47. [northcoastrep.org](http://northcoastrep.org)

**Grace:** The real-estate boom comes back to bite a religious-minded Florida couple in this local premiere of Craig Wright’s play. Produced by Ion Theatre Company. It opens Aug. 20 at BLKBOX @ 6th & Penn in Hillcrest. \$10-\$29. [iontheatre.com](http://iontheatre.com)

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—David L. Coddon

Write to [davide@sdcitybeat.com](mailto:davide@sdcitybeat.com)  
 and [editor@sdcitybeat.com](mailto:editor@sdcitybeat.com).



*Engaging Shaw*

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## ENGAGING SHAW

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WOW!

If it's true that the human brain is our largest erogenous zone, then things must have gotten pretty darned erotic between George Bernard Shaw and Charlotte Payne-Townshend, or at least such is the case in *Engaging Shaw*, John Morogiello's highly intelligent, highly entertaining, and yes, highly engaging romantic comedy, now getting its West Coast Premiere at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre.



"Bernie" Shaw is about to turn forty when we first meet him in the summer of 1896, by which point he'd already written *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Arms And The Man*, and *Candida* (among other titles)—though it wasn't until two years later with *The Devil's Disciple* that his success as a playwright truly began. It's during this summer holiday at the English country cottage of close friends Beatrice and Sidney Webb that Shaw first runs into Charlotte—quite literally—while out on a bicycle jaunt. The Webbs have invited the Irish heiress in hopes of persuading her to bankroll their London School Of Economics. Before long, Charlotte has set her eyes on Shaw and made a deal with her matchmaking friend Beatrice: "Tell me I have an ally, and you shall have a school!"

At the time *Engaging Shaw* takes place, our titular (anti)hero has become a self-described philanderer (though it seems that most of his philandering takes place in the hundreds of letters he writes each month, a large portion of them to British stage star Ellen Terry). The last thing he wants is what we now call "a relationship," and as for sex, well that seems to be the last thing on either his or Charlotte's minds, the latter insisting to Beatrice that what she wants from Shaw is "no sex, just exclusivity."

And so the two women friends conspire to engage Shaw in the most engaging way possible



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—through that aforementioned erogenous zone, with the aim of getting the confirmed bachelor down on one knee, white flag flying and engagement ring in hand.



Since this is a play about George Bernard Shaw, it should come as no surprise that *Engaging Shaw* is more than a tad talky, particularly in its first act, though admittedly it is talkiness of the most intelligent sort, much of it revolving around its four characters' passion for Socialism and social causes.

It isn't until Act Two that *Engaging Shaw* truly takes flight, but when it does, it soars high indeed. There's an international letter exchange sequence among the four friends that, staged in the round by director Henry Wishcamper, becomes quite heady stuff. Playwright Morogiello sets the romantic stakes so high in the second act that you will likely find yourself on the edge of your seat in anticipation of the happy ending history tells you is coming but which Morogiello adroitly keeps you in doubt of till the play's final moments.

As Shaw, a particularly engaging Rod Brogan gives as multilayered a performance as you're likely to see any time soon, conveying the complex mix of self-importance, wit, seductiveness, vulnerability, ill-temper, brilliance, and charm that was G.B.S. Opposite Brogan, a stunning Angela Pierce gives as good as she gets as a Charlotte every bit Shaw's equal and therefore his perfect match, if she can just get him to see what (or who) is right before his eyes.

Michael Warner provides fine comedic support as Sidney, but it is the exquisite Natalie Gold's work as Beatrice that is likely to stick with you long after the final fadeout. Watch the complex play of emotions on Gold's face when Beatrice realizes that her feelings for Shaw run far deeper than she has admitted and you will what star quality and acting prowess are all about.



An in-the-round staging fits *Engaging Shaw* to a T, making the audience virtual flies on the Webbs' walls and keeping the drama as up close and personal as if this were a 99-seat

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**WOW**



As editor of Stage:  
 Los Angeles' most  
 author of *Morocca*  
 English Language  
 Los Angeles since

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theater rather than one 2.5 times that size. True, there are moments when one side will have a better view than the opposite one (I felt particularly fortunate to have Charlotte facing me in one pivotal scene where so much was etched on Pierce's face), but director Wishcamper gets high marks for keeping these as few as possible.

Scenic designer Wilson Chin's beautifully appointed drawing room has been handsomely lit by Matthew Richards, with Paul Peterson's sound design providing just-right musical moods. Costume designer Alejo Vietti has garbed the cast in elegant late 19th Century garb, the women looking particularly striking in their long skirts, high ruffled collars, and fancy hats. Lavinia Henley is stage manager.

You don't have to be a George Bernard Shaw lover to find yourself thoroughly engaged by Engaging Shaw, and it just might make your next attempt at sitting through an actual Shavian work more engaging that it's been in years past. Knowing a bit more about the man who wrote those talky plays that I've found a bit tough going at times, I'm actually starting to look forward to my next walk on the Shaw side.

Old Globe Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through September 4. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:00, Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00, Saturdays at 2:00 and 8:00, Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00. Wednesday matinee on May 18 at 2:00. Reservations: 619 234-5623

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—Steven Stanley

August 21, 2011

Photos: Ed Krieger

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From left, Rod Brogan, Michael Warner, Natalie Gold, and Angela Pierce in "Engaging Shaw"

*Photo by Ed Krieger*

## 'Engaging Shaw'

By John Morogiello  
 Directed by Henry Wishcamper  
 The Old Globe, San Diego  
 July 29 to Sept. 4, 2011

[George Bernard Shaw](http://www.theoldglobe.org/tickets/production.aspx?performanceNumber=8776)

[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1925/shaw-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1925/shaw-bio.html)): writer, raconteur, visionary, socialist and, as we learn in "[Engaging Shaw \(http://www.theoldglobe.org/tickets/production.aspx?performanceNumber=8776\)](http://www.theoldglobe.org/tickets/production.aspx?performanceNumber=8776)," ladies man. Yes, the ladies love Shaw, but not in the carnal sense. This is Victorian England after all. And what's not to love? Shaw is brilliant, erudite and so self-absorbed and arrogant he's charming. Women swoon.

Smartly written by [John Morigiello](http://www.johnmorigiello.com/Welcome.html) (<http://www.johnmorigiello.com/Welcome.html>), with some assistance from Shaw, "Engaging Shaw" is a very amusing window into Victorian mores and the many facets of affection. Shaw, played ably by [Rod Brogan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0111161/bio) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0111161/bio>), is sharing a cottage with Beatrice ([Natalie Gold](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1932619/) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1932619/>)) and Sidney Webb ([Michael Warner](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1940284/) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1940284/>)), his partners in both Fabian socialism and the founding of the London School of Economics. The latter is on tenuous financial ground, and the Webbs seek a benefactor to help them through. Secretly, Beatrice seeks a woman to bring Shaw to ground.

Enter Charlotte Payne-Townshend ([Angela Pierce](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1668848/) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1668848/>)), a wealthy spinster. Like Shaw, she spurns marriage but, as the story progresses, she too succumbs to Shaw's magnetism. Payne-Townshend pursues Shaw with capitalistic fervor, dispatching competitors and slowly making herself indispensable. Shaw is alternately conciliatory and resistant, not wanting any woman to "clip his wings," but also liking the attention.

The play revolves around the one-to-one interactions, which sparkle under [Henry Wishcamper](http://americantheatrewing.org/biography/detail/henry_wishcamper) ([http://americantheatrewing.org/biography/detail/henry\\_wishcamper](http://americantheatrewing.org/biography/detail/henry_wishcamper))'s direction. The Webbs share a dry but slyly passionate relationship. Charlotte and Beatrice alternate between collaboration and deep mutual discomfort. Shaw and Payne-Townshend engage in verbal duels and she, for the most part, keeps up her end.

The production's strength lies in Brogan's bratty and often hilarious Shaw. It loses comic energy whenever he is offstage. However, Gold and Pierce have great chemistry in their sisterly confidences and disagreements. Warner plays Sidney Webb with a profound stoicism. His comic flourishes are quite satisfying for being completely unlooked for.

The costumes and sets are finely done and the "rain" in the second act is brilliant. The lighting is a bit aggressive in the first half but is suitably tempered later on.

Overall, "Engaging Shaw" is a funny, enjoyable journey into George Bernard Shaw's psyche with an interesting side commentary on women's roles in Victorian society.

**Zane Turner**

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### “Engaging Shaw” – The Old Globe

Another quarreling couple is airing its dirty laundry at the Old Globe. Outdoors on the Festival stage, Beatrice and Benedick are going at it in “Much Ado about Nothing.” And on the circular stage of the White Theatre next door, Bernie and Charlotte are defiantly espousing their anti-spouse opinions in “Engaging Shaw.”

All four marriage-disdaining iconoclasts will wind up walking down the aisle by play’s end. The only difference, besides the 400-year gulf between playwrights, is that Bea and Ben are fictional; Bernie and Charlotte are based in cold, hard fact.

The Bernie is George Bernard Shaw, Nobel Prize-winning playwright, novelist, essayist, music critic, prolific letter-writer, vehement socialist, vegetarian and teetotaler, who was also a self-involved, self-promoting bon vivant and self-proclaimed ‘philanderer.’ He wanted no part of marriage, and decried the institution in his writings. But like many staunchly confirmed bachelors, at long last he met his match.

Charlotte Payne-Townsend was of Irish descent, like Shaw, but she was independently wealthy, an unorthodox heiress who scorned rules and expectations. They were in their early 40s when they met in 1896, both being members of the Fabian Society, an organization dedicated to spreading socialism. He was a charter member of the Fabians, and with his friends Sidney and Beatrice Webb, a co-founder of the London School of Economics. It was Mrs. Webb, another intelligent woman in an unconventional marriage, who introduced the two. She and her husband provide foils for the couple in the West coast premiere of John Morogielo’s 2008 comedy, “Engaging Shaw.”

The play follows the early history of the idiosyncratic courtship, while mimicking Shaw’s own style. It’s stuffed with political rhetoric which is overshadowed by the witty, often intellectually dizzying repartee, much of which is taken from Shaw’s works and letters. It just gives the tiniest taste of the multi-faceted Shaw, and even less of the other three characters. All are quite broadly sketched. But it’s high-spirited and droll, in that veddy English way -- even though it’s written by an American.

The set, by Wilson Chin, cleverly converts from the Webbs’ Stratford cottage to Shaw’s cluttered studio, where he suffers hypochondriacally in Charlotte’s globetrotting absence. She tries every trick in the book to win him over, and win him she does, though reportedly, the 45-year marriage was never consummated.

Director Henry Wishcamper keeps the tone light and the action briskly paced. His cast is accomplished and convincing. The Webbs aren’t half as interesting as the Shaws, but the scheming relationship between the two women is delectable, amusingly paralleled by the men’s awkwardness in non-political conversation.

Though the play is smart, high-spirited and well-written, it feels like a trifle. Despite the protagonists’ nonconformity and eccentricity, their story is presented as a romcom, but it is engaging.

“Engaging Shaw” runs through September 4 at the Old Globe in Balboa Park.





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## Theater preview: Marriage and the man

Globe's 'Engaging Shaw' romances a beloved, unorthodox writer

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Rod Brogan is George Bernard Shaw and Angela Pierce is Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the Old Globe Theatre staging of John Morogiello's comedy "Engaging Shaw." — Sandy Huffaker


 Written by  
**James  
 Hebert**

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unlikely engagement to be wed.

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"For many years, I was calling it an unromantic romantic comedy," says Morogiello of the play, now getting its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe Theatre. "Because Shaw was not known for romance. But it is a tremendously sweet play, and very heartfelt."

The story centers on the relationship that bloomed in the 1890s between Shaw, then in his early 40s, and [Charlotte Payne-Townshend](#), an heiress and women's-rights advocate who shared many of the playwright's political views.

Although Shaw "had a long history of flirting with women," as Morogiello puts it, none had ever really held sway over him until Payne-Townshend came along.

"He saw all sexual relationships as power relationships," Morogiello explains. "If he became intimate with a woman, she had power over him. So the way he got power over women was by getting them to fall in love with him, and then telling them to go away. And of course that made them fall in love with him all the more.

"So this woman, Charlotte Payne-Townshend, falls in love with him, as all the other women have. But she comes up with a plan to make herself indispensable. When he says 'Go away,' as he inevitably would do, she actually went away. And at that point, Shaw said, 'Well, come back! Where are you going?'

"He realized he needed her. And at that point she said, 'I'll only come back if we're husband and wife.' "

The two were married in 1898.

In the production, Shaw is portrayed by Rod Brogan, a 2004 graduate of the Old Globe/University of San Diego MFA program who had roles in such Globe shows as "The Food Chain" and "Pentecost" while still in school.

The [New York City](#) native's acting experience stretches back further than that: He began in the business at 8 years old, going on to do sitcoms,

## DETAILS

"Engaging Shaw"

Old Globe Theatre

When: Previews begin Friday. Opens Aug. 4. Schedule: 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays, through Sept. 4.

Where: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$29-\$67

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including “Major Dad.” His post-USD work includes roles in Broadway’s “Mauritius” and in the national tour of “Doubt.”

In researching the role and working with director Henry Wishcamper — who was last at the Globe with “Irma Vep” in 2009 — Brogan learned that Shaw was “a bit of a dandy, and a ladies’ man. But only through letters. He carried on affairs through the mail, and he loved flirting with women through the mail.

“He’s a funny character — he’s contradictory. He claims the marriage was never consummated. Other women claim he had affairs with him while he was married. It’s hard to know who was the real Bernard Shaw. And the last person to ask,” Brogan adds with a laugh, “is Bernard Shaw.”

Shaw certainly had his quirks — he was an almost reflexive contrarian who for health reasons sometimes rode a bicycle in a wool suit in the middle of July.

When Townshend came along, though, the wheels came off his proud self-reliance. (Townshend is played by Angela Pierce, a Globe newcomer whose Broadway credits include “A Streetcar Named Desire” and the recent revival of “The Norman Conquests”).

“This woman beat him at this own game,” Brogan says. “He kept talking about this Nietzschean concept of the ‘superman,’ and suddenly he met this superwoman. He met his match.

“And she got him intellectually. That was the hook. The best way to a man’s heart is through his stomach — well, for Shaw, the best way to his heart was through his mind.”

For all of Shaw’s impact on the theater and beyond, playwright Morogiello acknowledges that “nowadays, there’s probably less knowledge of him. I’m hoping the play will reawaken people’s interest in him, because he was a tremendously influential figure — not just in literature but in history.”

Shaw and his friends, Sidney and [Beatrice Webb](#), portrayed in the four-character play by Michael Warner and Natalie Gold, had hands in the founding of the [London School of Economics](#) and England’s Labour Party, among other political and social developments. Morogiello also cites Brogan’s discovery during research that [Sidney Webb](#) came up with the term “collective bargaining.”

Thus, “We wouldn’t have an NFL contract without (him)!”

Some 15 years ago, Morogiello recalls, there was a resurgence of interest in another 19th-century-born literary giant, Oscar Wilde. Maybe, he says, it’s Shaw’s turn.

“I would hope that ‘Engaging Shaw’ reawakens the world to (Shaw’s) personality. Because he’s so vast and important and hilariously funny.”

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# OLD GLOBE GETTING READY TO ENGAGE 'SHAW'

'Unromantic  
romantic comedy'  
tells playwright's  
unlikely love story

JAMES HEBERT • U-T

The title of John Morogioello's play "Engaging Shaw" comes with a twist of wit. The work aims to engage playgoers with the singular Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw. But it also tells a real-life story of Shaw's own, unlikely engagement to be wed.

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**Old Globe Theatre**

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**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Balboa Park

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

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## 'SHAW' • He was a contrarian who flirted with women then dismissed them

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Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw and Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the West Coast premiere of "Engaging Shaw." SANDY HUFFAKER

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## THEATER FEATURE: Romantic comedy peeks into famed playwright's unconventional courtship

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THEATER FEATURE: Romantic comedy peeks into famed playwright's unconventional courtship

By PAM KRAGEN pkragen@nctimes.com North County Times | Posted: Wednesday, August 3, 2011 9:26 am |  
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Rod Brogan, Angela Pierce, Michael Warner, Natalie Gold, director Henry Wishcamper and playwright John Morogiello. The West Coast Premiere of Morogiello's 'Engaging Shaw' will run July 29-Aug. 4, 2011 at The Old Globe. Photo by Sandy Huffaker.

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**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, The Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

**Info:** 619-234-5623

**Web:** theoldglobe.org



Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw was known as a man of great conviction. His plays usually contained long prologues and scripted debates that advanced his indefatigable opinions on politics, religion and class distinctions.

One topic on which Shaw never wavered was women. He generally avoided sex because he believed women would always end up in control of the relationship, and he publicly vowed never to marry.

Then in the mid-1890s, he met Charlotte Payne-Townshend. The Irish heiress and political activist was determined to marry Shaw, but she knew his history. He was known for getting women to fall hopelessly in love with him and then cruelly discarding them. So Payne-Townshend decided to play Shaw's own game ---- and won.

The unusual courtship that preceded the Shaws' 45-year marriage is the subject of John Morogiello's play "Engaging Shaw," which has its West Coast premiere tonight at the Old Globe.

Since the play's New York premiere last year, Morogiello said he has whittled the script by more than a third and made significant changes with the help of director Henry Wishcamper. "Old Globe audiences," he said, "will be in for a treat."

Morogiello, a self-described history buff who teaches playwriting in the public schools for the Maryland State Arts Council, said he was fascinated by Shaw's contradictory personality and was surprised to learn that nobody had ever written a play about the Shaws' unconventional relationship.

"Here's this guy who was tremendously brilliant and a big celebrity of his time who took a very public stand never to marry. And by the end of the play, he's married," Morogiello said. "I found it fascinating that someone who believes in something so strongly could change their mind that quickly."

Morogiello said he stumbled upon the subject while doing research on Shaw's life for an education project. "I had to read a number of biographies and letters, and that's when I discovered the story of Charlotte. I couldn't stop laughing at how wonderfully she ensnared him. It was fantastic."

Shaw's *modus operandi* in relationships was to control women by making them swoon over him, then telling them to "go away and they'd crumble in a heap at his feet," Morogiello said. "But with Charlotte, when he said 'Go away,' she said, 'OK, I'm leaving.' Then he said, 'Wait a minute!'"

Payne-Thompson traveled to Italy in 1897, and for 10 months Shaw wrote her a series of letters begging her to come back. She relented only when he was hospitalized with a serious foot infection and she returned upon the condition that he would marry her.

At the time, Shaw told a fellow writer that he only married Payne-Townshend because he expected to die from infection, but he was in fact devoted to her until her death in 1943 (even though the marriage was never consummated, at her insistence). When he died in 1950, he asked that his ashes be combined with hers and planted in the garden of their longtime home in Hertfordshire, England.

Shaw's plays are known for their intellectually stimulating debates, witty wordplay and biting humor, so Morogiello said writing the play in a Shavian way was a stimulating exercise.

"Shaw was so clever and brilliant and the most difficult thing for me was to find his voice," said Morogiello, who said he wrote his first plays at age 8, when he found his mother's typewriter in a closet and began plagiarizing scripts from the television series "F Troop." "Only about 10 percent of what Shaw says in my play is actual Shaw. The rest is me, and I had to weave that together as seamlessly as I could."

It was even more difficult finding Payne-Townshend's voice because very little of her writing is available in the public domain. Instead, he fleshed out her character from Shaw's letters and from the diaries of her best friend,



Beatrice Webb.

Beatrice and Sidney Webb were members of the Fabian Society, a political movement that promoted socialism through peaceful means, and it is through the society that Shaw and Payne-Townshend first met. The Webbs are also characters in Morogiello's play.

Morogiello said he's very pleased with the Globe production, which opened in previews last week.

"I'm very happy," he said. "Audiences are laughing and they're loving it. The cast is fantastic and the set and sound ... Henry has done such a fantastic job with it and I'm learning so much more about it as I go. I think audiences will have a good time."

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### **“Engaging Shaw”**

The Old Globe presents the West Coast premiere of a new comedy about George Bernard Shaw’s unconventional courtship.

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## 'Shaw' peeks into playwright's unconventional courtship

By PAM KRAGEN

[pkragen@nctimes.com](mailto:pkragen@nctimes.com)

Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw was known as a man of great conviction. His plays usually contained long prologues and scripted debates that advanced his indefatigable opinions on politics, religion and class distinctions.

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**The cast of the Old Globe's "Engaging Shaw" with playwright John Morogiello, right.** Photo courtesy of Sandy Huffaker

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## 'Shaw'

Continued from Page 18

unconventional relationship.

"Here's this guy who was tremendously brilliant and a big celebrity of his time who took a very public stand never to marry. And by the end of the play, he's married," Morogiello said. "I found it fascinating that someone who believes in something so strongly could change their mind that quickly."

Morogiello said he stumbled upon the subject while doing research on Shaw's life for an education project. "I had to read a number of biographies and letters, and that's when I discovered the story of Charlotte. I couldn't stop laughing at how wonderfully she ensnared him. It was fantastic."

Shaw's modus operandi in relationships was to control women by making them swoon over him, then telling them to "go away and they'd crumble in a heap at his feet,"

Morogiello said. "But with Charlotte, when he said 'Go away,' she said, 'OK, I'm leaving.' Then he said, 'Wait a minute!'"

Payne-Thompson traveled to Italy in 1897, and for 10 months Shaw wrote her a series of letters begging her to come back. She relented only when he was hospitalized with a serious foot infection and she returned upon the condition that he would marry her.

At the time, Shaw told a fellow writer that he only married Payne-Townshend because he expected to die from infection, but he was in fact devoted to her until her death in 1943 (even though the marriage was never consummated, at her insistence). When he died in 1950, he asked that his ashes be combined with hers and planted in the garden of their longtime home in Hertfordshire, England.

Shaw's plays are known for their intellectually stimulating debates, witty word-play and biting humor, so

### "Engaging Shaw"

**WHEN:** Opens Thursday and runs through Sept. 4; showtimes, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays

**WHERE:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, the Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

**TICKETS:** \$29-\$67

**INFO:** 619-234-5623  
[www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org)

Morogiello said writing the play in a Shavian way was a stimulating exercise.

"Shaw was so clever and brilliant and the most difficult thing for me was to find his voice," said Morogiello, who said he wrote his first plays at age 8, when he found his mother's typewriter in a closet and began plagiarizing scripts from the television series "F Troop." "Only about 10 percent of what Shaw says in my play is actual Shaw. The rest is

me, and I had to weave that together as seamlessly as I could."

It was even more difficult finding Payne-Townshend's voice because very little of her writing is available in the public domain. Instead, he fleshed out her character from Shaw's letters and from the diaries of her best friend, Beatrice Webb.

Beatrice and Sidney Webb were members of the Fabian Society, a political movement that promoted socialism through peaceful means, and it is through the society that Shaw and Payne-Townshend first met. The Webbs are also characters in Morogiello's play.

Morogiello said he's very pleased with the Globe production, which opened in previews last week.

"I'm very happy," he said. "Audiences are laughing and they're loving it. The cast is fantastic and the set and sound ... Henry has done such a fantastic job with it."





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Page 1 of 2

## Globe's 'Engaging Shaw' celebrates snaring a confirmed bachelor

BY DIANA SAENGER

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**Playwright  
John  
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### If you go

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- **When:** Matinees, evenings July 29-Aug. 4
- **Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park
- **Tickets:** \$29-\$67
- **Box Office:** (619) 23-GLOBE
- **Website:** TheOldGlobe.org



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Rod Brogan  
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Shaw) and Angela  
Pierce (Charlotte  
Payne-Townshend)  
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Shaw' at The Old  
Globe Theatre.

SANDY HUFFAKER





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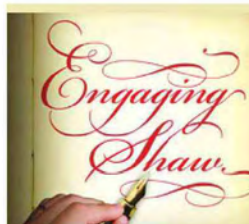
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Rod Brogan (George Bernard Shaw) and Angela Pierce (Charlotte Payne-Townshend) star in 'Engaging Shaw' at The **Old Globe** Theatre.

PHOTO: SANDY HUFFAKER



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By Diana Saenger





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(Charlotte Payne-Townshend)  
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Sandy Huffaker.

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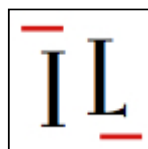
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## feature - engaging shaw

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### engaging shaw

playwright john morogiello puts  
george bernard shaw front and center  
in his new play at the old globe theater

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With his play "Engaging Shaw," writer John Morogiello achieves what George Bernard Shaw strove to accomplish his entire life: he puts George Bernard Shaw center stage.

This unexpected new comedy at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego follows the battle of wits and the real life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and Shaw. When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on the famed author of *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and *Major Barbara*, the challenge of romancing this

confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories.

In creating Shaw the character, Morogiello has borrowed liberally from Shaw's letters and essays, allowing him to speak in his own words. In so doing, Morogiello captures some of the tension between the public persona and the private man, and he stages some of the contradictions suggested by Shaw's life and work. Many critics of Shaw's plays have complained of their lack of emotion or "heart"—many of the women in Shaw's life complained of the same.

Shaw is perhaps best remembered as a playwright. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925, and he received an Academy Award for Best Writing, Screenplay for the film version of his play *Pygmalion*. However, Shaw was also an economic reformer, street-corner orator, music critic, novelist, amateur photographer, socialist pamphleteer and prolific letter-writer (by some accounts, more than 10 per day his entire life).

He was also a performer – not an actor, but a man who carefully cultivated an unconventional public image. In her journals from 1893, Beatrice Webb wrote, "Vain is he? A month ago I should have said that vanity was the bane of his nature. Now I am not so sure that the vanity itself is not part of the

mise en scène – whether, in fact, it is not part of the character he imagines himself to be playing in the world's comedy.”

Who was this Shaw character? Born in Dublin in 1856, Shaw saw his family's livelihood damaged by an alcoholic father. His mother left the family, and Shaw later followed her to London hoping to start a literary career. His novels floundered, but he found work as a music and theatre critic, creating the persona G.B.S. and launching himself as a well-known troublemaker, satirist and proto-pundit. He wrote, “A musical critic, if he is to be any good, must put off the learned commentator and become a propagandist, versed in all the arts that attract a crowd, and wholly regardless of his personal dignity.”

Shaw would soon seek to merge his crowd-pleasing skills with his growing political interests. After hearing a lecture by American politician Henry George in 1882, Shaw considered himself a confirmed socialist. He quickly became a major player in the Fabian Society, dedicating himself to the advancement of the socialist cause in England. Inspired by Henrik Ibsen's model of social criticism embodied in drama, he turned to playwriting. He had his first major success with *The Devil's Disciple*, and by the mid-1890s, his work was widely produced in England and abroad.

Shaw was an unabashedly partisan playwright who wrote with a social and political purpose. In this, he saw himself following in Ibsen's footsteps. He wrote, “*A Doll's House* will be as flat as ditchwater when *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will still be as fresh as paint; but it will have done more work in the world, and that is enough for the highest genius.” Shaw's published plays were often accompanied by lengthy prefaces on the social issues and political contexts of the works. On occasion, the prefaces were longer than the plays themselves. (“Shaw's plays are the price we pay for Shaw's prefaces,” quipped critic James Agate.)

However, Shaw was also an unfailing showman who knew how to capture an audience's attention, to amuse and entertain. He combined Ibsen's social conscience with some of the barbed wit of his contemporary Oscar Wilde. His plays may replace denouement with debate, but their seriousness is leavened with satire, and their chattiness is shot through with conflict. His style would influence later playwrights like Bertolt Brecht, Eugene O'Neill and Tony Kushner, as well as writers as diverse as T.S. Eliot and Gore Vidal.

Renowned critic Eric Bentley described Shaw's work as having “unusual energy coupled with unusual intellect.” The same could be said of Shaw the man, who did not shy away from the spotlight. He dramatized his own romantic life in his early play *The Philanderer*, and in one of his last works, *Shakes Versus Shaw*, he stages a puppet debate between himself and Shakespeare. Oscar Wilde was said to have remarked to William Butler Yeats, “Shaw has no enemies but is intensely disliked by all his friends.” Shaw was proudly unorthodox: a well-known vegetarian and teetotaler, a scrupulous but unconventional dresser, a man unafraid to meddle in his friends' lives (and even, reportedly, rearrange their furniture).

“Engaging Shaw” is an unconventional romance about an unusual relationship. Some biographers say Bernard and Charlotte's marriage was never consummated; all agree that it did not proceed along traditional “romantic” lines. (Of course, the only inside information we have on the workings of the Shaws' marriage comes from Shaw himself, that notoriously unreliable source.) Like characters in any Shaw play, Morogioello's Bernard and Charlotte dispute and debate and discuss. They also amuse and entertain, undergo reversal after reversal and finally find satisfaction in a highly unorthodox domesticity.

The production runs through September 4.

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## What's Going On: Summer of Onstage Fun

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6



By Eileen Sondak

The entertainment scene really heats up in July, with the addition of the San Diego Pops, the welcome return of Hershey Felder to the Old Globe, the continuation of the Globe's Shakespeare Festival, two fascinating works at the La Jolla Playhouse and a smorgasbord of other shows and attractions tempting audiences around town.

Summer Pops starts the month with a bang, when Marvin Hamlisch shows his patriotic spirit through a series of concerts titled "Star Spangled Pops." The three performances to kick off the season run July 1-3 at Embarcadero Marina Park South. Pops goes Motown July 8-9, with "Motown's Greatest Hits," starring Spectrum and Radiance.

Michael Feinstein arrives July 15-16, singing his brilliant interpretations of beloved classics by Gershwin, Porter and other legends. Guest star Josie James will sing the music of James Bond July 17, and July 21 (coinciding with Comic-Con), Pops will present the U.S. premiere of "Martial Arts Trilogy." "Cirque Musica" will bring soaring aerialists and other circus acts to Marina Park July 22-23, and "A Tribute to Neil Diamond" is headed this way July 29-30. The eclectic month of Pops will culminate July 31 with "Broadway's Tony Winners." Theater lovers won't want to miss this fabulous finale.

North Coast Repertory Theatre is ready to unveil a San Diego premiere, Gregg Coffin's "Five Course Love." The play, which runs July 16-Aug. 7, is a hilarious musical roller coaster ride about the elusive search for love. It focuses on five dates at five restaurants and adds up to just one chance at love. The show is a screwball comedy with a merry mix of musical styles, from pop and country to Motown.

The Old Globe's annual Shakespeare Festival dominates the outdoor theater scene this summer. Aficionados of alfresco entertainment will want to catch all three shows, running in rotating repertory through Sept. 25. The exciting potpourri includes "Much Ado About Nothing," Shakespeare comedy of delightfully ill-matched lovers trading comic barbs; "The Tempest," the Bard's masterpiece of redemption and forgiveness; and Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus," a powerful drama about Mozart that features some of the greatest music ever composed.

The arrival of Hershey Felder is more reason to celebrate. Felder returns to the Globe July 1-10 with his popular "George Gershwin Alone" one-man show. From July 15-Aug. 28, the talented artist performs his latest work, "Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein," a tribute to Bernstein's genius. The Globe's annual Fashion Show is set for July 14 at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront, and on July 30, the troupe will honor Audrey Geisel at its premiere fundraiser.

July 29-Sept. 4, the White Theatre at the Globe will be bristling with the wit of George Bernard Shaw and his real life romantic interest, socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend. The sparks will fly between them in a new comedy, "Engaging Shaw."

Cygnets Theatre continues to showcase Thornton Wilder's "Our Town." Set in a fictional New England town at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this insightful portrait of life, love and death is an American treasure, but it is only slated to remain at the Old Town Theatre through July 10. Cygnets finishes the month with a reimagined version of "Little Shop of Horrors" July 28. Director Sean Murray created this staging to look and feel more like the old black-and-white horror flick. It runs through Sept. 11.

The La Jolla Playhouse has two enthralling productions on the boards this month. A unique staging of Henrik Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" (adapted and directed by David Schweizer) is ensconced at the Potiker Theatre and promises a few surprises for audiences. The most famous wanderer makes his quest for fame and fortune with just five actors portraying the sweeping epic. This Ibsen classic will remain on stage through July 24.



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## Wishcamper and Silvestein to Direct at Globe in 2011



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Wednesday, December 8, 2010; Posted: 01:12 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

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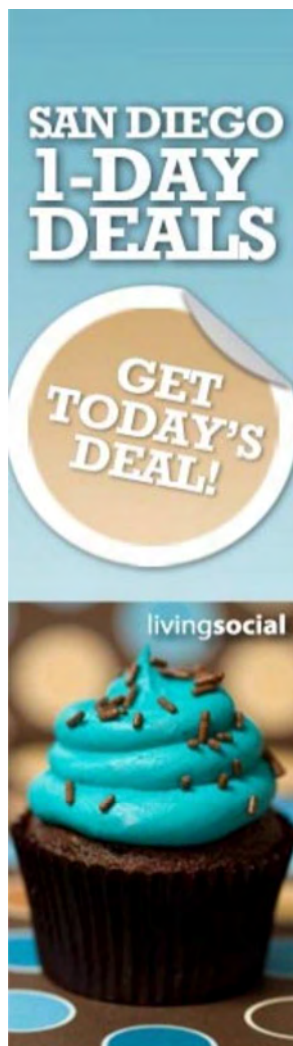
Executive Producer [Lou Spisto](#) today announced that [Jonathan Silverstein](#) will direct the Globe's upcoming production of [Ayub Khan-Din](#)'s multi-generational comedy, *Rafta, Rafta....* [Henry Wishcamper](#), originally announced to direct *Rafta, Rafta...*, will helm the summer season's West Coast premiere of John Morogielo's comedy of manners, *Engaging Shaw*. *Rafta, Rafta...* will run in the [Old Globe Theatre](#) March 19 - April 24 and *Engaging Shaw* in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre July 29 - Sept. 4. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](#), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office.

"Henry asked to be released from directing *Rafta, Rafta...* so that he could spend time with his family immediately following the birth of their second child," said Spisto. "I'm so pleased that we were able to accommodate his request and still have him with us for *Engaging Shaw*. I'm also excited to have this

opportunity to invite the talented [Jonathan Silverstein](#) to the Globe - and back to San Diego."

[Jonathan Silverstein](#) most recently directed the acclaimed Off Broadway world premiere of *The Temperamentals* by [Jon Marans](#) (Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Ensemble). His other Off Broadway credits include revivals of [A.R. Gurney](#)'s *The Dining Room* (Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Director, Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Ensemble), [Robert Anderson](#)'s classics *Tea and Sympathy* and *I Never Sang for My Father* and [John Patrick](#)'s *The Hasty Heart*, all for the [Keen Company](#), where he serves as Resident Director. His other New York credits include *Red Herring* by Michael Albanese (New York International Fringe Festival, Outstanding Direction Award), *Blueprint* by Bixby Elliot (Summer Play Festival), *Cocteau's Indiscretions* ([Phoenix Theatre](#) Ensemble), *The Dadshuttle* (Drama League DirectorFest 2003), *The Rats Are Getting Bigger* (New York International Fringe Festival and [The Public Theater](#)'s New Works Now! festival), *A Perfect Analysis Given by a Parrot* ([Phoenix Theatre](#) Ensemble), *Greater Messapia* (Queens Theatre in the Park) and *The Train Play* (Clubbed Thumb).

[Henry Wishcamper](#) recently directed the Globe's production of *The Mystery of Irma Vep*. His Off Broadway credits include *Spirit Control* ([Manhattan Theatre Club](#)), *Graceland* (LCT3), *Port Authority* ([Atlantic Theater Company](#)), *Elvis People* (New World Stages), *The Polish Play* (Katharsis Theater Company) and *Pullman Car Hiawatha* ([Keen Company](#), Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Revival of a Play). His regional credits include *Animal Crackers* ([Goodman Theatre](#), [Joseph Jefferson](#) Award nomination), *Talking Pictures* ([Goodman Theatre](#)), *Art* ([Barrington Stage Company](#)), *The Seafarer* and *Speech and Debate* (Hartford TheaterWorks) and *The Good Thief* (Portland Stage Company). He also served as Assistant Director of the Broadway productions of *August: Osage County* and *Shining City*. Wishcamper is the Artistic



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Director of Katharsis Theater Company.

TICKETS to Globe productions can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Rafta, Rafta. performances begin on Mar. 19 and continue through Apr. 24. Ticket prices range from \$32 to \$85. Engaging Shaw performances begin on July 29 and continue through Sept. 4. Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$67.

LOCATION: [The Old Globe](#) is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For additional parking information visit [www.BalboaPark.org](http://www.BalboaPark.org).

The Tony Award-winning Old Globe is one of the country's leading professional regional theaters and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for 75 years. Under the direction of Executive Producer [Louis G. Spisto](#), [The Old Globe](#) produces a year-round season of 15 productions of classic, contemporary and new works on its three Balboa Park stages: the 600-seat [Old Globe Theatre](#), the 250-seat Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre and the 612-seat outdoor Lowell Davies [Festival Theatre](#), home of its internationally renowned Shakespeare Festival. More than 250,000 people attend Globe productions annually and participate in the theater's education and community programs. Numerous world premieres such as The Full Monty, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, A Catered Affair and the annual holiday musical [Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!](#) have been developed at [The Old Globe](#) and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs on Broadway and at regional theaters across the country.

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# Jonathan Silverstein, Henry Wishcamper to Direct Upcoming Old Globe Productions

By: **Dan Bacalzo** · Dec 8, 2010 · San Diego

Jonathan Silverstein will now direct the Old Globe Theatre's production of Ayub Khan-Din's Olivier Award-winning comedy, *Rafta, Rafta...*, March 19-April 24. Henry Wishcamper, who was **previously announced** to helm that production, will instead direct the theater's staging of John Morogiello's comedy, *Engaging Shaw*, July 29-September 4.

*Rafta, Rafta...* takes a humorous look at the generational divide on sex and marriage within a close-knit Indian family living in London. Silverstein received a Drama Desk nomination for his direction of *The Dining Room*, and recent New York credits include the world premiere of *The Temperamentals* Off-Broadway.

*Engaging Shaw* follows the battle of wits and the real life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townsend and playwright George Bernard Shaw. Wishcamper's recent Off-Broadway directing credist include *Spirit Control*, *Graceland*, and *Port Authority*.

For more information, visit [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org).



Jonathan Silverstein  
(Courtesy of The Old Globe)


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# Rod Brogan, Natalie Gold, Angela Pierce, Michael Warner Set for Old Globe's *Engaging Shaw*

By: [Andy Propst](#) · Jul 12, 2011 · San Diego

The Old Globe Theatre has announced casting for John Morogiello's *Engaging Shaw*, to run July 29-September 4 in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. Henry Wishcamper will direct the production.

The comedy centers on the real-life romance and battle of wits between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw, which begin after she sets herself the challenge of wooing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man.

The company will feature Rod Brogan (George Bernard Shaw), Natalie Gold (Beatrice Webb), Angela Pierce (Charlotte Payne-Townshend), and Michael Warner (Sidney Webb).

The creative team will include Wilson Chin (scenic design), Alejo Vietti (costume design), Matthew Richards (lighting design), and Paul Peterson (sound design).

For more information and tickets, click [here](#).



Rod Brogan

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## Photo Flash: First Look at Old Globe's ENGAGING SHAW Cast

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Tuesday, July 12, 2011; Posted: 02:07 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

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Executive Producer [Lou Spisto](#) today announced the complete cast and creative team for the West Coast Premiere of John Morogiello's comedy Engaging Shaw. Directed by [Henry Wishcamper](#), Engaging Shaw will run July 29 - Sept. 4 in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, part of [The Old Globe](#)'s Conrad Prebys Theatre Center. Preview performances run July 29 - Aug. 3. Opening night is Thursday, Aug. 4 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](#), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

This new comedy follows the battle of wits and the real-life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright [George Bernard Shaw](#). When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on the famed author of Pygmalion, Mrs. Warren's Profession and Major Barbara, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories. The New York Times hailed, "Engaging Shaw is a charming romantic comedy. If there's a minute of the play that's less than clever, you'll be hard pressed to find it," and Variety cheered, "A spirited and intelligent combat of words and sparkling banter."

The cast of Engaging Shaw features [Rod Brogan](#) ([George Bernard Shaw](#)), [Natalie Gold](#) (Beatrice Webb), [Angela Pierce](#) (Charlotte Payne-Townshend) and [Michael Warner](#) (Sidney Webb).

The creative team includes [Wilson Chin](#) (Scenic Design), [Alejo Vietti](#) (Costume Design), [Matthew Richards](#) (Lighting Design), [Paul Peterson](#) (Sound Design) and Lavinia Henley (Stage Manager).

Playwright John Morogiello is a Playwright in Residence at the Maryland State [Arts Council](#) and a member of the [Dramatists Guild](#). His plays include Irish Authors Held Hostage (Greenwich Street Theatre, Warehouse Theatre and Edinburgh's Bedlam Theatre), Men and Parts (Actors Theatre of Louisville and Shadowbox Cabaret), Stonewall's Bust (Mountain Playhouse), Gianni Schicchi (Rep Stage and Harlequin Productions) and Engaging Shaw (Abingdon Theatre Company, New Jersey Repertory Company and Oldcastle Theatre Company). Engaging Shaw will receive its European premiere at Vienna's English Theatre next spring. A new play, Blame It on Beckett will premiere Off Broadway at Abingdon Theatre Company this October. In December, a scene from A Thing for Redheads will appear in The Best Women's Stage Monologues and Scenes 2011, published by Smith and Kraus.

Director [Henry Wishcamper](#) recently directed the Globe's production of The Mystery of Irma Vep. His directing credits include Beau Williams' Spirit Control ([Manhattan Theatre Club](#)), [Ellen Fairey](#)'s Graceland (LCT3), his own adaptation of the Marx Brothers' Animal Crackers and [Horton Foote](#)'s Talking Pictures ([Goodman Theatre](#)), [Conor McPherson](#)'s Port Authority ([Atlantic Theater Company](#)), The Seafarer (TheaterWorks), The Good Thief (Portland Stage), [Lanford Wilson](#)'s The Mound Builders (The Juilliard School), [Jane Martin](#)'s Flags (59E59), [Doug Grissom](#)'s Elvis People (New World Stages), his own play, The Polish Play, A Conflation of Macbeth by [William Shakespeare](#) and Ubu Roi by [Alfred Jarry](#) (Katharsis Theater Company) and [Thornton Wilder](#)'s Pullman Car Hiawatha (Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Revival of a Play, [Keen Company](#)). He served as the assistant director on the Broadway productions of August: Osage County (directed by [Anna D. Shapiro](#)) and Shining City (directed by [Robert Falls](#)). Wishcamper is the Artistic Director of Katharsis Theater Company. He is a Drama League Directing Fellow and a graduate of Yale University. His next project will be [Conor McPherson](#)'s The Birds (Guthrie Theater).

[Rod Brogan](#) ([George Bernard Shaw](#)) received his M.F.A. from [The Old Globe](#)/University of San Diego Graduate Theatre Program and has appeared on Broadway in Mauritius and in the National Tour of Doubt. His Off Broadway credits include Treasure Island. He has appeared in [The Old Globe](#) productions of Antony and Cleopatra, As You Like It, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Much Ado About Nothing, Pentecost and The Food Chain. His other regional credits include Doubt ([Syracuse Stage](#)), Judgment Day (Bard SummerScape) and King Lear (CENTERSTAGE). He has appeared on television in "Major Dad" (series regular), "One Life to Live," "Law & Order," "Third Watch," "Oz" and "Girl Talk."

[Natalie Gold](#)'s (Beatrice Webb) theater credits include Distracted, The Language of Trees and [Howard Katz](#) (Roundabout Theatre Company), The Fever Chart ([The Public Theater](#)), Twelfth Night ([The Public Theater](#)/New York Shakespeare Festival), Festen (Broadway), Brendan ([Huntington Theatre Company](#)) and Unfold Me (Summer Play Festival). Her television and film credits include "The Good Wife," "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," "Law & Order," "Important Things With [Demetri Martin](#)," "Without a Trace," Before the Devil Knows You're Dead, Almost Perfect, Fairhaven, Love and Other Drugs and "Rubicon" (AMC).

[Angela Pierce](#) (Charlotte Payne-Townshend) is making her debut at [The Old Globe](#). Her Broadway credits include The Norman Conquests directed by [Matthew Warchus](#), Heartbreak House directed by Robin Lefevre and A Streetcar Named Desire directed by [Ed Hall](#). Her Off Broadway work includes King Lear with [Kevin Kline](#) ([The Public Theater](#)), Soldier's Wife ([Mint Theater Company](#)), Silver Nitrate (Blue Heron Theatre), The Picture of Dorian Gray (Irish Repertory Theatre) and Hedda Gabler (Theatre at St. Clement's). Regionally she has appeared in A Streetcar Named Desire ([Intiman Theatre](#)), Proof (Hartford Stage, TheaterWorks and [Arizona Theatre Company](#)), Love's Labour's Lost ([Royal Shakespeare Company](#) and The [Shakespeare Theatre Company](#)), Henry VI and The Bald Soprano (The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey), A Flea in Her Ear (The Denver Center for the Performing Arts), Suddenly Last Summer (Studio Arena Theater), Noises Off, The Best Man and Crimes of the Heart ([Cape](#)



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[Playhouse](#)) and The Rivals and Macbeth ([The Acting Company](#)). Her films include You Don't Know Jack with [Al Pacino](#), directed by Barry Levinson, Mattie Fresno and the Holoflux Universe directed by Phil Gallo and Able Danger directed by Dave Herman. Her television credits include "Private Practice," "Lie to Me," "Criminal Minds," "Medium," "Law & Order," "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" and Farewell Mr. Kringle for Hallmark Channel. Pierce is a B.F.A. graduate of The Juilliard School Drama Division, Alumni Board of [The Acting Company](#) and a recipient of AFTRA and R. Lansing Memorial Scholarships.

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[Angela Pierce](#), [Rod Brogan](#)

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## Engaging Shaw Makes Its West Coast Debut at Old Globe July 29

By Kenneth Jones

29 Jul 2011



Angela Pierce stars and Rod Brogan  
Photo by Sandy Huffaker

Rod Brogan is George Bernard Shaw opposite Angela Pierce playing wealthy heiress — and romantic prospect — Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the West Coast premiere of John Morogiello's fact-inspired *Engaging Shaw*, playing July 29-Sept. 4 in The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre.

Director Henry Wishcamper's production also features Natalie Gold as Beatrice Webb and Michael Warner as Sidney Webb. Opening night in San Diego, CA, is Aug. 3.

According to The Old Globe, "This new comedy follows the battle of wits and the real-life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw. When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-

Townshend sets her sights on the famed author of *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Major Barbara*, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories."

Playwright Morogiello is a playwright in residence at the Maryland State Arts Council and a member of the Dramatists Guild. His plays include *Irish Authors Held Hostage* (Greenwich Street Theatre, Warehouse Theatre and Edinburgh's Bedlam Theatre), *Men and Parts* (Actors Theatre of Louisville and Shadowbox Cabaret), *Stonewall's Bust* (Mountain Playhouse) and *Gianni*

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*Schicchi* (Rep Stage and Harlequin Productions). *Engaging Shaw* was produced Off-Broadway by Abingdon Theatre Company. It has also been presented by New Jersey Repertory Company and Oldcastle Theatre Company.



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*Engaging Shaw* will receive its European premiere at Vienna's English Theatre in spring 2012. A new play, *Blame It on Beckett*, will premiere Off-Broadway at Abingdon Theatre Company this October.

The creative team includes Wilson Chin (scenic design), Alejo Vietti (costume design), Matthew Richards (lighting design), Paul Peterson (sound design) and Lavinia Henley (stage manager).

Brogan appeared on Broadway in *Mauritius* and in the national tour of *Doubt*. He has appeared in The Old Globe productions of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Pentecost* and *The Food Chain*.

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Tickets can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park in San Diego, CA.

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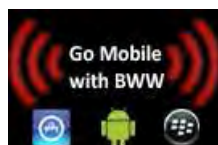
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The cast of Engaging Shaw features [Rod Brogan](#) ([George Bernard Shaw](#)), [Natalie Gold](#) (Beatrice Webb), [Angela Pierce](#) (Charlotte Payne-Townshend) and [Michael Warner](#) (Sidney Webb).

The creative team includes [Wilson Chin](#) (Scenic Design), [Alejo Vietti](#) (Costume Design), [Matthew Richards](#) (Lighting Design), [Paul Peterson](#) (Sound Design) and Lavinia Henley (Stage Manager).

Playwright [John Morogielo](#) is a Playwright in Residence at the Maryland State [Arts Council](#) and a member of the [Dramatists Guild](#). His plays include Irish Authors Held Hostage (Greenwich Street Theatre, Warehouse Theatre and Edinburgh's Bedlam Theatre), Men and Parts (Actors Theatre of Louisville and Shadowbox Cabaret), Stonewall's Bust (Mountain Playhouse), Gianni Schicchi (Rep Stage and Harlequin Productions) and Engaging Shaw (Abingdon Theatre Company, New Jersey Repertory Company and Oldcastle Theatre Company). Engaging Shaw will receive its European premiere at Vienna's English Theatre next spring. A new play, Blame It on Beckett will premiere Off Broadway at Abingdon Theatre Company this October. In December, a scene from A Thing for Redheads will appear in The Best Women's Stage Monologues and Scenes 2011, published by Smith and Kraus.

Director [Henry Wishcamper](#) recently directed the Globe's production of The Mystery of Irma Vep. His directing credits include Beau Williams' Spirit Control ([Manhattan Theatre Club](#)), [Ellen Fairey](#)'s Graceland (LCT3), his own adaptation of the Marx Brothers' Animal Crackers and [Horton Foote](#)'s Talking Pictures ([Goodman Theatre](#)), [Conor McPherson](#)'s Port Authority ([Atlantic Theater Company](#)), The Seafarer (TheaterWorks), The Good Thief (Portland Stage), [Lanford Wilson](#)'s The Mound Builders (The Juilliard School), [Jane Martin](#)'s Flags (59E59), [Doug Grissom](#)'s Elvis People (New World Stages), his own play, The Polish Play, A Conflation of Macbeth by [William Shakespeare](#) and Ubu Roi by [Alfred Jarry](#) (Katharsis Theater Company) and [Thornton Wilder](#)'s Pullman Car Hiawatha (Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Revival of a Play, [Keen Company](#)). He served as the assistant director on the Broadway productions of August: Osage County (directed by [Anna D. Shapiro](#)) and Shining City (directed by [Robert Falls](#)). Wishcamper is the Artistic Director of Katharsis Theater Company. He is a Drama League Directing Fellow and a graduate of Yale University. His next project will be [Conor McPherson](#)'s The Birds (Guthrie Theater).

[Rod Brogan](#) ([George Bernard Shaw](#)) received his M.F.A. from [The Old Globe](#)/University of San Diego Graduate Theatre Program and has appeared on Broadway in Mauritius and in the National Tour of Doubt. His Off Broadway credits include Treasure Island. He has appeared in [The Old Globe](#) productions of Antony and Cleopatra, As You Like It, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Much Ado About Nothing, Pentecost and The Food Chain. His other regional credits include Doubt ([Syracuse Stage](#)), Judgment Day (Bard SummerScape) and King Lear (CENTERSTAGE). He has appeared on television in "Major Dad" (series regular), "One Life to Live," "Law & Order," "Third Watch," "Oz" and "Girl Talk."

[Natalie Gold](#)'s (Beatrice Webb) theater credits include Distracted, The Language of Trees and [Howard Katz](#) (Roundabout Theatre Company), The Fever Chart ([The Public Theater](#)), Twelfth Night ([The Public Theater](#)/New York Shakespeare Festival), Festen (Broadway), Brendan ([Huntington Theatre Company](#)) and Unfold Me (Summer Play Festival). Her television and film credits include "The Good Wife," "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," "Law & Order," "Important Things With [Demetri Martin](#)," "Without a Trace," "Before the Devil Knows You're Dead, Almost Perfect, Fairhaven, Love and Other Drugs and "Rubicon" (AMC).

[Angela Pierce](#) (Charlotte Payne-Townshend) is making her debut at [The Old Globe](#). Her Broadway credits include The Norman Conquests directed by [Matthew Warchus](#), Heartbreak House directed by Robin Lefevre and A Streetcar Named Desire directed by [Ed Hall](#). Her Off Broadway work includes King Lear with [Kevin Kline](#) ([The Public Theater](#)), Soldier's Wife ([Mint Theater Company](#)), Silver Nitrate (Blue Heron Theatre), The Picture of Dorian Gray (Irish Repertory Theatre) and Hedda Gabler (Theatre at St. Clement's). Regionally she has appeared

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**Engaging Shaw Opens Aug. 4 in Its West Coast Debut at Old Globe**By [Kenneth Jones](#)

04 Aug 2011

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Photo by Ed Krieger

Rod Brogan is George Bernard Shaw opposite Angela Pierce playing wealthy heiress — and romantic prospect — Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the West Coast premiere of John Morogiello's fact-inspired *Engaging Shaw*, opening Aug. 4 following previews from July 29 in The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre.

Director Henry Wishcamper's production also features Natalie Gold as Beatrice Webb and Michael Warner as Sidney Webb. Performances play to Sept. 4 in San Diego, CA.

According to The Old Globe, "This new comedy follows the battle of wits and the real-life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and

playwright George Bernard Shaw. When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on the famed author of *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Major Barbara*, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories."

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*Engaging Shaw* will receive its European premiere at Vienna's English Theatre in spring 2012. A new play, *Blame It on Beckett*, will premiere Off-Broadway at Abingdon Theatre Company this October.

Playwright Morogiello told Playbill.com, "The script is four pages shorter than it was in New York. It really hums now. The biggest adjustment has been doing the show in the round. At first I didn't think the play would work in an arena, but [director] Henry [Wishcamper] and set designer Wilson Chin came up with some incredibly effective ways to physicalize the metaphors within the dialogue. It freed me to cut some sections of the script that, once on Wilson's set, became superfluous."

What's the genesis of the play?

"The idea came to me in the late 1990s, while researching Shaw for a study guide that Huntington Theatre Company commissioned me to write," the playwright said. "I found myself laughing aloud at Shaw's letters to Charlotte Payne-Townshend after they had a falling-out and she left him. The story was so hilarious and sweet, I couldn't believe no one had dramatized it before.

"I am true to the history of Shaw and Charlotte's relationship. Where scholars had differences, and supposed one thing or another, I made the choice that best suited the dramatic moment. Throughout the play I weave quotes from Shaw's letters, prefaces, and plays into the dialogue, along with quotes from Beatrice Webb's diary and an essay from Sidney Webb. In writing the play, the key was being able to match their style in my own dialogue to make the weave appear seamless. Luckily, Shaw's ego is comparable to my own."

The creative team includes Wilson Chin (scenic design), Alejo Vietti (costume design), Matthew Richards (lighting design), Paul Peterson (sound design) and Lavinia Henley (stage manager).

Brogan appeared on Broadway in *Mauritius* and in the national tour of *Doubt*. He has appeared in The Old Globe productions of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Pentecost* and *The Food Chain*.

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Rod Brogan, Michael Warner, Natalie Gold and Angela Pierce  
photo by Ed Krieger

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# Jonathan Silverstein to direct 'Rafta, Rafta...' and Henry Wishcamper will helm 'Engaging Shaw' in new productions at the Old Globe

Executive Producer Lou Spisto today announced that Jonathan Silverstein will direct the Globe's upcoming production of Ayub Khan-Din's multi-generational comedy, *Rafta, Rafta...* Henry Wishcamper, originally announced to direct *Rafta, Rafta...*, will helm the summer season's West Coast premiere of John Morogielo's comedy of manners, *Engaging Shaw*.

Spisto said, "Henry asked to be released from directing *Rafta, Rafta...* so that he could spend time with his family immediately following the birth of their second child. I'm so pleased that we were able to accommodate his request and still have him with us for *Engaging Shaw*. I'm also excited to have this opportunity to invite the talented Jonathan Silverstein to the Globe - and back to San Diego."



Director Henry Wishcamper

***Rafta, Rafta...*** Winner of the 2008 Olivier Award for Best New Comedy for its acclaimed run at The National Theatre in London, and a hit with critics and audiences in New York, *Rafta, Rafta...* takes a hilarious look at the generational divide between sex and marriage within a close-knit Indian family living in London. Following their wedding, two newlyweds find that starting their life together under the roof of the groom's family is no honeymoon. With warmth and humor, this British comedy examines what happens when the young couple must choose between saving money or their marriage.

***Engaging Shaw*.** This unexpected new comedy follows the battle of wits and the real life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townsend and playwright

George Bernard Shaw. When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townsend sets her sights on the famed author of *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and *Major Barbara*, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer, and unromantic man, is more complicated than in any of his stories. *The*



*New York Times* hailed *Engaging Shaw* as "...a charming romantic comedy. If there's a minute of the play that's less than clever, you'll be hard pressed to find it" and *Variety* cheered, "A spirited and intelligent combat of words and sparkling banter."

*Rafta, Rafta...* will run at the Old Globe Theatre March 19 - April 24 and *Engaging Shaw* in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre July 29 - Sept. 4. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at 619-23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office. ♦



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Page 1 of 1



Adrian Noble, artistic director of The Old Globe's 2011 Shakespeare Festival, will direct Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' and Peter Shaffer's 'Amadeus.' Photo by Ken Howard.

The **Old Globe Theatre's** 2011 summer season opens May 29th with the Shakespeare Festival. Adrian Noble will return as the artistic director of the festival and will direct Shakespeare's "The Tempest" and Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus." Presented in repertory

in the outdoor Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, the festival also will include "Much Ado About Nothing" directed by Ron Daniels. The season also features "Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein" in the Old Globe Theatre. Preceding "Bernstein" is a 10-day limited engagement of "Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone." The West Coast Premiere of John Morogiello's romantic comedy "Engaging Shaw," directed by Henry Wishcamper in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre will complete the season. Tickets to the summer season range from \$72 to \$389.

**The complete 2011 summer season:**

- Shakespeare Festival / Lowell Davies Festival Theatre (runs May 29 – Sept. 25 in repertory).
- "Much Ado About Nothing" by William Shakespeare (May 29 – Sept. 24).
- "The Tempest" by William Shakespeare (June 5 – Sept. 25).
- "Amadeus" (June 12 – Sept. 22), winner of the Tony Award for Best Play and the Academy Award for Best Film.

**Old Globe Theatre:**

- "Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone" (July 1 – July 10).
- "Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein" (July 15 – Aug. 28) .

**Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre:**

"Engaging Shaw" by John Morogiello (July 29 – Sept. 4) John Morogiello's romantic comedy reveals the real-life courtship and battle of wits between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw.



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## Mid-Summer Balboa Park Happenings

**Written by**  
[Maren Dougherty](#)

1:29 p.m., Jul 25, 2011

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In July, San Diego transforms from a chill, flip-floppin' beach town to a land of extravagant hats (Opening Day at the Del Mar Races), wacky costumes (Comic-Con) and rainbow gear (Pride Festival). If you're done with the craziness but still looking for a little nighttime fun, look to [Balboa Park](#) for social events that are fun and cultural but don't require any advance apparel preparation.

### Mark Your Calendar: Mid-Summer Event Highlights at Balboa Park

This Thursday, July 28, The San Diego Museum of Art continues its [Summer Salon Series](#) with a night of art-making, art-watching, and drinks at a no-host bar. During this week's event, you can make miniature chairs inspired by the Gustav Stickley exhibition, watch the performances of pianist Jaroslaw Kapuściński in Gallery 18, and witness The Border Corps' "art psycho-drama" in the museum's auditorium. Activities are free with museum admission.

If you haven't made it out for a [Twilight in the Park](#) concert yet, you may want to make your way to the Spreckels Organ Pavilion this Wednesday, July 27, for the Cat-illacs (rock 'n' roll hits from 50's through the 90's) or Thursday, July 28, for the San Diego Civic Dance Arts group. Shows start at 6:15pm.

Preview nights of the romantic comedy "[Engaging Shaw](#)" start this Friday, July 29, at The Old Globe. The play follows the real life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw, who is described as a

"confirmed bachelor, philanderer, and unromantic man." Too bad *US Weekly* wasn't around back then.



On Wednesday, August 3, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center is presenting a [planetarium show about the Milky Way](#). Tickets (\$10 juniors and seniors, \$12 general) include admission to the exhibit galleries. Go a little early to the space in front of the outdoor fountain for free telescope viewing with the San Diego Astronomy Association.



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Vol. 1, No. 47 - July 14, 2011

## PLAY ON!

*(This issue is dedicated to the Federal Government, which stands to lose everything if it defaults on its loans next month. In the next several days, it will probably raise the debt ceiling, which is the lesser of two evils but evil nonetheless.)*



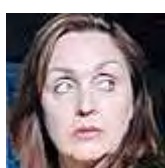
If a whole bunch of people don't start doing George Bernard Shaw's plays real fast, the theater's going to lose whatever Shavian touch it has left. Meanwhile, it's great that The Old Globe Theatre is about to mount *Engaging Shaw*, a piece on George's love life—at least that way, we'll get to know him up close and personal while his life hangs in the balance. It opens Friday, July 29.

## That which lay within



**Who Cares:** The Livin' End saw a pretty interesting cabaret show at Anthology—yes, Anthology—the other night. It reminded her of the art form's immense theatricality, and through the use of an absolutely delightful musical instrument, it reinforced the idea that theater can come from anywhere and touch anyone at any time.

**What They're Doing:** *Words Are Not Enough* serves a gentle heads-up to San Diego's other theater media. Meanwhile, Chula Vista's OnStage Playhouse was a monument to industry and inventiveness last week. From the minute five incredible teens took the stage, this year's installment of the venue's student intern program simply never ceased to amaze.



**How They Did:** ion theatre company is back in the swing with one great show out of two. And *Poster Boys*, a co-production from Diversionary and MOXIE theaters, features a former relationship that threatens a hard-won career. The show has a handle on its own elementary nature; the problem is, it never exceeds it.

**What We Eat/Drink:** Somehow, Barra Barra Saloon takes care of millions of Old Town tourists every hour. And you, sir, are the person of the moment in North Park amid the neighborhood's myriad choices of eating and drinking stations—Mosaic win bar knows this, and its waitstaff will treat you like a king accordingly.



**What You Want:** You really do need to take a break from all those theater classes you've invested your summer in. In case you don't get around to it, we're running your choices again.

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## SAN DIEGO NEWS

(<http://www.sandiego.com/news>)

### Upcoming Balboa Park Events

*What to do at Balboa Park now through August 4*

By Maren Dougherty (<http://www.sandiego.com/writers/maren-dougherty>) • Wed, Jul 27th, 2011

**Read More:** Balboa Park ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Balboa+Park](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Balboa+Park)), San Diego Museum of Art ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=San+Diego+Museum+of+Art](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=San+Diego+Museum+of+Art)), Engaging Shaw ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Engaging+Shaw](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Engaging+Shaw)), Tower After Hours ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Tower+After+Hours](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Tower+After+Hours)), Museum of Man ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Museum+of+Man](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Museum+of+Man)), Fleet ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Fleet](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Fleet)), Science Center ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Science+Center](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Science+Center)), Planetarium ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Planetarium](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=Planetarium)), The Old Globe ([http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com\\_googlesearch\\_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=The+Old+Globe](http://local.sandiego.com/index.php?option=com_googlesearch_cse&n=30&Itemid=1320&cx=013678227439384630463%3Ahpqbq4mmxui&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&hl=en&q=The+Old+Globe))

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Preview nights of the romantic comedy "[Engaging Shaw](https://www.theoldglobe.org/tickets/production.aspx?PID=8685)" (<https://www.theoldglobe.org/tickets/production.aspx?PID=8685>) start this Friday, July 29, at The Old Globe. The play follows the real life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw, who is described as a "confirmed bachelor, philanderer, and unromantic man." Too bad *US Weekly* wasn't around back then.

On Wednesday, August 3, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center is presenting a [planetarium show](http://www.rhfleet.org/site/astronomy/skytonight.html) (<http://www.rhfleet.org/site/astronomy/skytonight.html>) about the Milky Way. Tickets (\$10 juniors and seniors, \$12 general) include admission to the exhibit galleries. Go a little early to the space in front of the outdoor fountain for free telescope viewing with the San Diego Astronomy Association.

On Thursday, August 4, the San Diego Museum of Man is collaborating with the House of Finland to present [Tower After Hours: Finland!](http://www.museumofman.org/tower-after-hours-finland) (<http://www.museumofman.org/tower-after-hours-finland>), a night of Finnish music, dance, food, and drinks in the museum's rotunda. Advance tickets (\$10 members, \$15 students and military, and \$20 non-members) are available through the museum's website.

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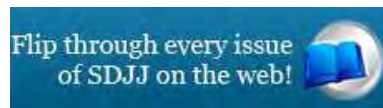
([http://static.sandiego.com/articlefiles/cde5fe76-fffd-475e-bfd0-efcc3a943ea7/engaging\\_shaw\\_325.jpg](http://static.sandiego.com/articlefiles/cde5fe76-fffd-475e-bfd0-efcc3a943ea7/engaging_shaw_325.jpg)) "[Engaging Shaw](https://www.theoldglobe.org/tickets/production.aspx?PID=8685)" at The Old Globe  
Courtesy Photo



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## What's Goin' On: A Hot Month for Music and Stage

by Eileen Sondak | [August 2011](#), Popular Stories from SDJJ | [Post your comment »](#)



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By Eileen Sondak

The weather is HOT, HOT, HOT, and so is the local entertainment scene. With the Old Globe going strong on all stages, San Diego Pops playing seaside, and local theater troupes turning out exciting performances all over town, there's no excuse not to get out and enjoy.

The Old Globe's annual Shakespeare Festival continues to dominate the outdoor theater scene this summer. The three-show repertory, which runs through Sept. 25, includes two Shakespeare classics ("Much Ado About Nothing," a comedy of mismatched lovers, and "The Tempest," the Bard's masterpiece of redemption and forgiveness). Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus," a powerful drama about Mozart, rounds out the spectacular summer smorgasbord. All three productions are outstanding.

Hershey Felder has been a major attraction at the Old Globe since his return with "George Gershwin Alone." This month, Felder is delighting audiences with his latest work, "Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein," a tribute to Bernstein's genius. You have until Aug. 28 to catch this mesmerizing ode to Bernstein.

Sparks will fly between George Bernard Shaw and his real life romantic interest, socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend, in the bristling new comedy, "Engaging Shaw."

The witty comedy will remain at the Globe's White Theatre through Sept. 4.





### FIVE COURSE LOVE

Back by popular demand, this Gregg Coffin play offers toe-tapping performances by three actors, who play 15 different characters on a five-stop culinary romp as they search for their one true love. First stop is Dean's Old-Fashioned All-American Down-Home BBQ Texas Eats for a blind date that is over before it's truly begun. Second stop is Trattoria Pericolo, where somebody better watch out who's wife they're whackin' pasta with! Stop three is Der Schlupfwinkel Speiseplatz, where a three-way strudelfest is building between Heimlich, his lover Gretchen and her lover, Klauz—a guaranteed dough-raiser! Thesouth-of-the-border fourth stop is Ernesto's Cantina where Rosalinda sparks a war between two passionate banditos. The finale and dessert stop brings us to the Starlite Diner where divine intervention is the only thing that will convince our lovelorn waitress that true love can be hers—if she'll only ask. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987D Lomas Santa Fe Drive in Solana Beach **through August 14th**. For tickets and information: [tickets.northcoastrep.org](http://tickets.northcoastrep.org) or call the Box Office at: 858.481.1055



### JUDY TENUTA

Live at Flicks, this self-proclaimed "most famous person that has ever lived" has been around for a long time, keeping us in stitches the whole time! Come by Flicks on **Thursday, August 11th** at 10 p.m. to watch the "Love Goddess" as she performs her hysterical, stand-up one-night-only comedy routine. This girl gets around and has had her own specials on Showtime, HBO and Lifetime, she has made hundreds of TV appearances on shows like *The View*, *Late Night With David Letterman*, *Larry King Live* and *Entertainment Tonight*. So get your butts down to see this "Aphrodite of the Accordion" before she takes off for her next rendezvous! For tickets and information go to [sdflicks.com](http://sdflicks.com) or call 619.922.5685.



### ENGAGING SHAW

This surprising comedy portrays the real life romance between the playwright Gorge Bernard Shaw and socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend. The wealthy heiress has set her sights on this unromantic, philandering, confirmed bachelor and it is proving much more complicated than most of his famed plot lines. While some of us may lose the romance opportunity by getting lost in shyness and sputter, these two well-heeled characters mask their romantic inclinations with razor-sharp witticisms in what *Variety* cheered as "A spirited and intelligent skirmish of witticisms and sparkling banter." Runs **July 29 through September 4** at the Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theater. For tickets and information go to [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org) or call 619.234.5623



### TRYING

Based on a true character Francis Biddle, the former U.S. attorney general under Franklin D. Roosevelt and chief judge for the Nuremberg Trials, who is at 81 in failing health and trying to put his life in order. This elegant but deeply cantankerous man is forced to accept help by his wife in the form of a bright young woman from the prairies. The two are from different times and have vastly different backgrounds, with divergent views that collide explosively as they try to communicate. Time and patience prevails and this richly scripted story shows us how two strangers, in dramatically different places in their lives, can forever influence each other. Opening night is **August 19 through September 25**. For tickets and information call 619.437.6000 or go to [lambplayers.org](http://lambplayers.org)

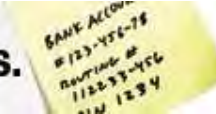
### THE BEST OF BROADWAY: IT TAKES TWO

Stan and Kirsten Chandler are set to revive the classic music of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Rogers and Hart, Stephen Sondheim and Stephen Schwartz from Hollywood's greatest pairings such as Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy to Judy Garland and Gene Kelly as they bring their unique blend of vocals to the stage. Kirsten has been involved with many national tours such as *Rocky Horror* and numerous regional theatre productions and Stan made his Broadway debut in *Cabaret* and is an original cast member from *Forever Plaid* production at the Globe and off Broadway. This husband and wife duo have sung on the Welk Theatre stage before and will present some of the best music that Broadway has to offer. Runs **July 6 to August 31**, for tickets and information call 888.802.7469 or go to [welktheatersandiego.com](http://welktheatersandiego.com).



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**ENGAGING SHAW** by John Morogiello. Directed by Henry Wishcamper.

This new comedy follows the battle of wits and the real-life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw.

When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on the famed author of *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Major Barbara*, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories.

Starring Rod Brogan (George Bernard Shaw), Natalie Gold (Beatrice Webb), Angela Pierce (Charlotte Payne-Townshend) and Michael Warner (Sidney Webb).

The creative team includes: Wilson Chin (Scenic Design), Alejo Vietti (Costume Design), Matthew Richards (Lighting Design), Paul Peterson (Sound Design) and Lavinia Henley (Stage Manager).

*Engaging Shaw*, a West Coast premiere, will run July 29 – September 4 in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, part of The Old Globe's Conrad Prebys Theatre Center in San Diego, CA.

**DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY** a romantic musical by Tony Award winners Maury Yeston and Thomas Meehan, with a book by Tony Award winner Peter Stone,. Directed by Tony Award winner Doug Hughes.

Based on Alberto Casella's beloved dramatic play, *Death Takes a Holiday*, rewritten for the American stage by Walter Ferris is billed as "an enchanting new musical in which the loneliest of souls arrives at an Italian villa disguises himself as a handsome young prince he experiences the joys and heartbreaks of life for the first time. But when he unexpectedly falls in



Rod Brogan stars as George Bernard Shaw and Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend. Photo by Sandy Huffaker



## SAN DIEGO THINGS TO DO

(<http://www.sandiego.com/things-to-do>)

Balboa Park After Dark: 5 Ways to Get Social this Summer  
*Grab a friend or go solo to one of these summer evening activities*

By [Maren Dougherty](http://www.sandiego.com/writers/maren-dougherty) (http://www.sandiego.com/writers/maren-dougherty) • Tue, Jun 28th, 2011

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Complementing the many outdoor summer events happening at [Balboa Park](http://www.sandiego.com/balboa-park) (<http://www.sandiego.com/balboa-park>) are fascinating after-hours events inside the museums and performing arts organizations. Gather some friends, or meet some new ones, at one of these Balboa Park group activities.

### Celebrate Cuba at the San Diego Museum of Man

Enjoy Cuban dance, music, and food during the San Diego Museum of Man's [Tower After Hours: Cuba](http://www.museumofman.org/tower-after-hours-cuba) (<http://www.museumofman.org/tower-after-hours-cuba>) event on June 30 from 6-8 p.m. Held in the museum's rotunda, Tower After Hours is an ongoing series of events celebrating San Diego's multicultural diversity. This Thursday's event will feature a Latin quartet, cigar rolling, and other cultural entertainment. Tickets (\$10 members, \$15 students and military, and \$20 non-members) include museum admission, food, and beverages.

### Sip Martinis at the Globe

Save your spot for August 5 or 12 for [Thank Globe it's Friday](https://www.theoldglobe.org/events/night-at-the-globe.aspx) (<https://www.theoldglobe.org/events/night-at-the-globe.aspx>) at The Old Globe. Add \$20 to your theater ticket for a fun evening that includes a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers and dessert. The events start at 6:30 p.m. prior to performances of *Amadeus*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein* and *Engaging Shaw*.

### Discuss Art and Community at The San Diego Museum of Art

Talk green space, the economy, and utopian visions during The San Diego Museum of Art's [Summer Salon Series](http://www.sdmart.org/programs-events/summer-salon-series-2011) (<http://www.sdmart.org/programs-events/summer-salon-series-2011>). Held on Thursdays from 5-9 p.m., each event in the series focuses on conversations related to the question "What does a city need?" Who knows, you could meet your soulmate! Free after museum admission.

### Discover Mariachi at Mingei

The [Mingei International Museum](http://www.mingei.org/events_travel/calendar/1263) ([http://www.mingei.org/events\\_travel/calendar/1263](http://www.mingei.org/events_travel/calendar/1263)) is collaborating with the Mexican Consulate of San Diego to "present the colorful history of what has been called Mexico's classical music". On Saturday, July 23, from 7-9 p.m., local mariachi expert Jeff Nevin will speak with Rubén Fuentes, who will share his accounts of how he created the modern mariachi though working with many of the biggest stars in mariachi history. Tickets are \$10 members, students and faculty, and \$14 nonmembers.

### Stargaze at the Fleet

Held the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, [The Sky Tonight](http://rhffleet.org/site/astronomy/skytonight.html) (<http://rhffleet.org/site/astronomy/skytonight.html>) showcases the sky in San Diego as it appears on the night of the planetarium show. Inside the Fleet's Heikoff Dome Theater, expert astronomers describe the sky and present on special topics; upcoming topics include "Summer Solstice and Constellations" on July 6 and "The Milky Way" on August 3. The more social part comes before the shows when the San Diego Astronomy Association provides free telescope viewing outside near the outdoor fountain (weather permitting).

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**California Tower at night**  
Photo by Heather Hart





Vol. 1, No. 47 - July 14, 2011

## A LOOK AT SAN DIEGO'S STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

### ***The sincerest form of flattery***

Hi.

Two recent events have evidently yielded some confusion about this website's standing in the local arts information environment. One involved an unsolicited link from a location on the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle site so readers could see a circle member's review posted here (the circle has since removed the entry). The other centers on *sdTheatreReviews.com* and its apparent appropriation of a standing *Words* headline as part of its graphics package.

The response to both instances prompts what I feel is a warranted clarification:

In the main, *Words Are Not Enough* is not, never has been and never will be actively associated with *sdTheatreReviews.com*, the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle or any other local theater-based web carrier or commentary network. The sole exceptions involve *San Diego Theatre World*, a small compendium whose site is listed on our 'Where They're At' page (founder Lizzie Silverman is *Words*' contributing editor), and the contributions of circle members Jean Lowerison and Charlene Baldrige, who are compensated for their pieces appearing on this site. Unless otherwise noted, any other such connections have been implemented without the publisher's consent.

'Bye.

--Martin Jones Westlin, publisher  
*Words Are Not Enough*

### **Diamonds in the rough**

**Interns' stellar *None of the Above* will be with us long after closing; publisher urges tour discussions**

BY MARTIN JONES WESTLIN

Last week in this space, you read a piece by OnStage Playhouse artistic director Teri Brown about the Chula Vista venue's student intern program, created six years ago as a response to wholesale funding cuts in arts programs over the last three decades. The principals in the latest student installment (now closed) check in at around 18 years old, so they don't really have a reference point for the so-called good ol' days, when formal arts education in the United States may have actually meant something and for a time was a player in the national debate.

### **Casting calls**

***Edward II:*** Diversionary Theatre puts the life of the 13th-century English king as seen by playwright Christopher Marlowe up for review, beginning with the re-call of his friend from exile and ending with the execution of his murderer. Richard Baird directs. Script calls for nine males and two females aged late teens to 60s. Rehearsals begin August 8; show opens Sept. 8. Please submit headshot, resume and availability to [byoung@diversionary.org](mailto:byoung@diversionary.org); please prepare a 2-minute classical monologue (Marlowe preferred but Shakespeare fine). \$700 stipend. Diversionary is at 4545 Park Blvd. in University Heights.

***Fat Pig:*** Patio Playhouse stages Neil LaBute's piece centering on Tom, who fits every stereotype of a man his age until he falls in love with the plus-size, very funny Helen. Script calls for two males and two females aged 25 to 35. Auditions will be held July 19 and 23; show opens Sept. 16. No appointment necessary; headshots and resumes would be appreciated. Tryouts will consist of cold readings from the script. Patio Playhouse is at 201 E. Grand Ave. in Escondido. [patioplayhouse.com/auditions](http://patioplayhouse.com/auditions). 760-746-6669.



***The Great American Trailer Park Musical:*** San Diego Repertory Theatre is looking for actors to perform Betsy Kelso's book about adultery and havoc at Armadillo Acres, Florida's most exclusive trailer park. Script calls for five females and two males aged late teens to 50s; union and nonunion performers sought. Rehearsals begin Oct. 10; show opens Nov. 5. Please send headshot and resume to casting director Jessica Byrd, [casting@sdrep.org](mailto:casting@sdrep.org), or mail to Casting Trailer Park, San Diego Repertory Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, 92101. 619-231-3586, ext. 638.

### **The shows go on**

And *still* you shirk your duty as curious theater folk, backing away from 'How They Did' like it was a ruse or something. One click on the link to the left and you'll know all you need to know about Diversionary Theatre's *Poster Boys* and the two current ion theater shows. The absence of an asterisk means Marty or Charlene either didn't like the show or hasn't seen it yet. The listings are arranged in chronological order.

#### Opening

***Teen Actor Showcase:*** This is the culmination of director Deanna Driscoll's efforts with teenagers from Point Loma Actors Theatre's summer workshop. Runs July 15 at Point Loma Assembly, 3035 Talbot St. in Point Loma. \$5. Curtian at 7 p.m. 619-225-0044.

#### **Five-Course Love:**

Fifteen characters visit five restaurants in search of one true love amid terrible blind dates, nightmare exes and a lovelorn waitress. Opens in previews July 13 at North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987-D Lomas Santa Fe Drive in Solana Beach. \$32-\$40. 858-481-1055, [northcoastrep.org](http://northcoastrep.org)



***Moon over Buffalo:*** Buffalo rep actors George and Charlotte Hay open a can of worms over which is better, the stage or the cinema. Opens July 15 at OnStage



But if necessity is the mother of invention, then maybe invention is the hottie stepchild of the call to excellence. Maybe these kids *are* better off in independent programs like OnStage's, free of traditional expectation and tired old prescriptions for the wonder of self-expression. As Brown's piece noted, that theory plays out well in several youth theater organizations throughout the area; when it does, you sit back and applaud the kids, the teachers and the apparent success of it all.



Krystal Godfrey says beer pong is America's national sport. (Courtesy photos)

And on exceptionally rare occasions, you do neither —because amid the thrill of the moment, it's all you can do to move.

I can count on the fingers of both hands the times I've been mortally shaken by a piece of theater, on any level, over my 17 years of commentary—and I'm here to tell you that the latest such experience went down at OnStage on July 8, when this year's crop of interns performed *None of the Above*, a jointly written series of speeches outlining the kids' hopes and fears and, exponentially more important, how those hopes and fears define them. Make absolutely no mistake: This script is a symphony of sight, sound and sentiment, so perfectly melded in its cadence and so uncompromisingly *adult* in its impact.

To perform this piece amounts to a welcome learning experience. To absorb its profundity simply alters the state of mind.



Jose Galvan is a free bitch, baby.

*None of the Above* was performed as a staged reading, with program director Kym Pappas shepherding Jewell Karinen, Jose Galvan, Kelly Henry, Krystal Godfrey and Taylor Fugere through the speeches and imparting the deeper meaning therein. Inexplicably, wondrously, every single passage took on a life of its own, with local dilemmas seamlessly giving way to global urgency on topics like religion, individual uniqueness, gender identification, love, war, heroism, texting, cupcakes and Lady Gaga. Pappas coaxed the right nuances at every

conceivable turn, one moment's quirky inflection yielding the next's desperate cry for help.

But above all else, *this colossal range of emotion has its genesis in exactly the same place!* Five souls converge on one indefinable landscape, the uniqueness of each complementing the other's through perfect timing and an eager give-and-take. The reflections are at once part of a greater whole and, amid their intensity, become the greater whole itself. Consider this jewel about Fugere's nearly 80-year-old grandfather, who went on to become a varsity baseball player after suffering a severe injury in boyhood:

“The bad news was that he was told he would never walk again. The good news was that my grandpa has never been the best listener.”



From left, Jewell Karinen, Taylor Fugere, Kelly Henry, Jose

Playhouse, 291 Third Ave. in Chula Vista. \$8-\$16. 619-422-7787, [onstageplayhouse.org](http://onstageplayhouse.org)

**The Who's**

**Tommy:** A deaf, dumb and blind kid plays a mean pinball and becomes the leader of a messianic cult. Produced by The San Diego Repertory Theatre, it opens in previews July 16 at The Lyceum, 79 Horton Plaza Downtown. \$42-\$48. 619-544-1000, [sdrep.org](http://sdrep.org)



**Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog:** The landmark 2008 webcast in which Dr. Horrible tries to woo the fair maiden Penny, only to be foiled by the righteous Captain Hammer, takes to the stage. Produced by Chinese Pirate Productions, it opens July 17 at The Tenth Avenue Theatre, 930 Tenth Ave. Downtown. \$25. [chinesepirateproductions.com](http://chinesepirateproductions.com)

**Gam3rs:** Reality-challenged gaming geek Steve Smolinski has one hour to save the world. If only he didn't have to do it from his cubicle at work. Opens in previews July 17 at The Tenth Avenue Theatre, 930 Tenth Ave. Downtown. \$5. [chinesepirateproductions.com](http://chinesepirateproductions.com)



**Now playing**

**Peer Gynt:** The love of a good woman straightens out the incorrigible Peer Gynt for good. Produced by La Jolla playhouse in association with The Kansas City Repertory Theatre, it runs through July 24 at the Playhouse's Potiker Theatre, 2910 La Jolla Village Drive. \$35 and up. 619-550-1010, [lajollaplayhouse.org](http://lajollaplayhouse.org)

**A Roman Holiday:** Stacey's plan to make fiance Michael jealous goes awry when her friend Nigel dons a dress and introduces himself as a German chef. Through August 7 at Coronado Playhouse, 1835 Strand Blvd. \$20-\$25 without dinner, \$50 with. 619-435-4856, [coronadoplayhouse.com](http://coronadoplayhouse.com)

**\* mixtape:**

Generation X was torn between disillusionment and hope in this cavalcade of music from the 1980s. Produced by Lamb's Players Theatre, it runs through Sept. 4 at the Horton Grand Theatre, 444 Fourth Ave. Downtown. \$28-\$58. 619-437-0600, [lambplayers.org](http://lambplayers.org)



**\* Amadeus:** Composer Antonio Salieri throws up a series of roadblocks to sidetrack the career of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, his supposed archrival. Through Sept. 22 at The Old Globe Theatre's Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. 619-23-GLOBE, [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org)

**\* Much Ado about Nothing:** While Beatrice and Benedick hide their infatuation beneath witty barbs, young love blossoms as Hero and Claudio race to the altar, with the wicked Don John conspiring to break up the wedding. Through Sept. 24 at The Old Globe Theatre's Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. 619-23-GLOBE, [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org)

**\* The Tempest:**

With the help of his spirit friend Ariel, the magician Prospero conjures up a shipwreck that restores his daughter to her rightful place in the Milan hierarchy. Through Sept. 25 at The Old Globe Theatre's Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. 619-23-GLOBE, [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org)



**Shotgun Wedding Anniversary:** How else can a miserable 25-year marriage end but in murder? Presented by Mystery Cafe, it's ongoing at Imperial House restaurant in Bankers Hill. \$59.50, including dinner. [mysterycafe.net](http://mysterycafe.net)



Mesa. Free. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org.

## TUESDAY, JULY 19



### SLEEPING BEAUTY WAKES

A rocking score from members of GrooveLilly drives this musical into the magical space between dreaming and waking. La Jolla Playhouse, UCSD Campus, Mandell Weiss Forum, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla. Through Aug. 21. Ticket prices vary. (858) 550-1010. lajollaplayhouse.org.

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 20

### DINNER-DANCE

The Widow or Widowers Club (WOW) of San Diego hosts a dinner/dance at the El Cajon Elks Lodge on Washington Ave., El Cajon. 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. \$13. (619) 461-7652 wowsd.org.

### GREEN FLASH CONCERT SERIES

Fitz and the Tantrums. Birch Aquarium at Scripps, 2300 Expedition Way, La Jolla. \$30. (858) 534-3474. <http://aquarium.ucsd.edu>.

## THURSDAY, JULY 21

### SANTEE SUMMER CONCERTS

Bill Magee Blues Band and Len Rainey & The Midnight Players. Town Center Community Park East, 550 Park Center Dr., Santee. Free. (619) 258-4100 ext. 201. ci.santee.ca.us.

## FRIDAY, JULY 22

### THE FAB FOUR: THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE

Humphrey's Concerts by the Bay, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., San Diego. \$43. (619) 220-8497. humphreysconcerts.com.

## MONDAY JULY 25

### MOVIE MONDAYS: VICTOR/VICTORIA

Victoria is a poverty stricken performer trying to succeed in 1930s Paris. With the help of Toddy, a gay cabaret performer, she creates her famous alter ego Victor, a female impersonator. Bring beach chairs or other easily portable seating items as well as snacks. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Community Plaza, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. Free. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org.

## THURSDAY, JULY 28

### SANTEE SUMMER CONCERTS

Phat Cat Swingers. Town Center Community Park East, 550 Park Center Dr., Santee. Free. (619) 258-4100 ext. 201. ci.santee.ca.us.

## FRIDAY, JULY 29

### SPOTLIGHT AT THE MERC

A night of live entertainment where music is the focus. The Mercantile, 42051 Main St., Temecula. \$15. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.

### ENGAGING SHAW

When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on playwright George Bernard Shaw, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories. The Old Globe Theatre, Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Sept. 4. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

## SUNDAY, JULY 31

### DOGGIE STREET FESTIVAL

Dog adoption-focused festival. Leashes must be worn at all times. Bring a blanket or folding chairs, sit on the grass and enjoy the entertainment. Friendly pets and pet-free humans are welcome. Free. Liberty Station, Preble Field, 2600 Cushing Road, Point Loma. doggiestreetfestival.org.

## AUGUST

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 4

### SANTEE SUMMER CONCERTS

The Alley Cats. Town Center Community Park East, 550 Park Center Dr., Santee. Free. (619) 258-4100 ext. 201. ci.santee.ca.us.

### JAZZ AT THE MERC

Kevin Lettau with Russell Ferrante. The Mercantile, 42051 Main St., Temecula. \$15. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 5

### SUMMER POPS: BROADWAY'S TONY WINNERS

Embarcadero Marina Park, behind Convention Center, San Diego. Also Aug. 6. \$17-\$76. (619) 235-0804. sandiegosymphony.com.

### CHEECH & CHONG

Humphrey's Concerts by the Bay, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., San Diego. \$82. (619) 220-8497. humphreysconcerts.com.

## MONDAY, AUGUST 8

### SUBSIDIES, ALIENS AND ECOLOGISTS: CONNECTIVITY AT THE EDGE

Lecture by Drew Talley, University of San Diego biological oceanographer. While often treated as distinct and independent ecosystems, marine and terrestrial habitats are intimately connected through a number of pathways. Birch Aquarium at Scripps, 2300 Expedition Way, La Jolla. \$8. (858) 534-3474.

aquarium.ucsd.edu.

## EXHIBITIONS

### ALEXANDER CALDER AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Form, balance, joy. From monumental mobiles and stabiles to more delicate works, the exhibition presents approximately 30 sculptures by Calder and major works by seven young artists who embrace the forms and materials used by Calder. Orange County Museum of Art, 850 San Clemente Dr., Newport Beach. Through Sept. 4. \$10-\$12. (949) 759-1122. ocma.net.

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Classic and Contemporary Native American Art. Four native-Californian contemporary artists exhibit classic art from North America's indigenous artisans alongside paintings by Robert Freeman, Billy Soza Warsoldier, Catherine Nelson-Rodriguez and L. Frank. Mingei International Museum, Plaza Gallery, 1439 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Sept. 5. \$5-\$7. (619) 239-0003. mingei.org.

### THE VIRGIN'S DREAM

The absurdities of love and life come alive in the drawings and ceramics of renowned California artist Beatrice Wood. This exhibit features a diverse collection from the 1930s to the 1990s of drawings in watercolor, colored pencil and graphite, book illustrations,

sketchbooks, figurative sculptures, vessels, plates and a unique mobile that hung in the artist's home in Ojai, California. Oceanside Museum of Art, 704 Pier View Way, Oceanside. Through Sept. 10. \$5-\$8. (760) 435-3720. oma-online.org.



### SCRIMSHAW

The Art and Craft of the American Whaler. This exhibition celebrates this unique American folk art that captures the reality of life at sea. Nearly 100 objects of various types are displayed including tools made for mending clothes and ship sails, cribbage boards and dice for gaming. Bowers Museum, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana. Through Sept. 30. \$12. (714) 567-3679. bowers.org.

### SONG OF THE BASKET

To Indian women, fine baskets are their poems, paintings and sculptures--their songs. This exhibition shows baskets of the Cahuilla women that were woven with great skill



## SATURDAY, JULY 16 DEADLIEST CATCH

Captain Sig and the Hillstrand Brothers from the Discovery Channel's hit show "Deadliest Catch" share stories of the high seas. From the treacherous weather and crew conflicts, to the triumphs of the team, the trio brings the dangerous world of crab fishing to a live audience. Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa, The Show, 32-250 Bob Hope Road, Rancho Mirage. \$20-\$40. (800) 585-3737. hotwatercasino.com/theshow.





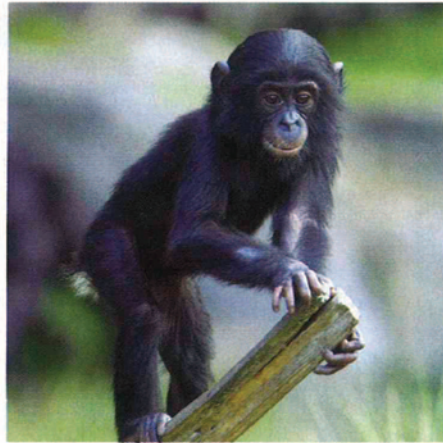
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## EXPLORING Balboa Park



Left to right: the graceful architecture of the House of Hospitality; a bonobo at play at the San Diego Zoo (located inside the park); the Old Globe Theatre.

Art, music and  
performance  
bloom year-round.

Spanning 1,200 acres of lush, beautifully landscaped terrain, Balboa Park is known as San Diego's "crown jewel," offering a variety of outdoor recreation options for kids and adults alike, not to mention a verdant respite from the bustle of the city's increasingly metropolitan pace. The park is also the seat of San Diego's thriving cultural scene.

Nestled between palm trees and botanical gardens, ornate Spanish Colonial buildings house many of the park's museums and art exhibits. Several of the buildings were constructed as part of two world fairs: the Panama-California Exposition in 1915-16, and the California-Pacific International Exposition in 1935-36.

It can take more than one day to see and enjoy each museum, garden and attraction. The **Visitors Center** (619.239.0512) in the House of Hospitality offers a Passport to Balboa Park, allowing admission to any of the park's museums for one week. (Keep in mind some museums are closed on Mondays.) Deluxe packages include passes to the neighboring **San Diego Zoo**. Or go high-tech and let the park's new iPhone app be your guide.

### ARTS & CULTURE

Performing arts abound in the park. The **Old Globe Theatre** routinely presents top talent in world-renowned productions; summer features include the annual Shakespeare Festival and a pair of pieces by noted Canadian pianist/playwright Hershey Felder, plus the West Coast premiere of *Engaging Shaw*, a new comedy about the real-life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and George Bernard Shaw (July 29-Sept. 4; see p. 56 for more theater listings).

Elsewhere in the park, the **Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theatre** presents whimsical puppet shows, while **Spreckels Organ Pavilion** houses the world's largest outdoor pipe organ, with some 4,500 pipes. Free concerts are offered Sundays at 2 pm.

The park is also home to groups celebrating culture. The **House of Pacific Relations International Cottages** promotes the heritage of countries around the world by hosting open houses and weekend festivals. Neighboring **WorldBeat Center** uses art, music, dance and education to celebrate African and indigenous cultures, while **Centro Cultural de la Raza** is a multidisciplinary center dedicated to the preservation of Chicano/Latino culture.

The park has a vast array of institutions celebrating the visual arts, past and present. Known for its presentation of eclectic traveling exhibitions, the **San Diego Museum of Art** also has a trove of Renaissance and Baroque works, plus a vast Asian collection; a survey



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## THEATER



### **“ENGAGING SHAW” Opens in previews Friday in San Diego**

The romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw is the subject of a comedy that is making its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe in Balboa Park. Playwright John Morogiello mines humor in examining the battle of wits that is the unlikely romance between a wealthy heiress (played by Old Globe newcomer Angela Pierce) and writer Shaw (local product/Old Globe vet Rod Brogan), a philanderer and unromantic man; previews: 8 p.m. Friday, 7 p.m. July 31, Aug. 2 and 3; regular run starts Aug. 4 and runs through Sept. 4; Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, the Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego; \$29-\$48; [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org) or 619-234-5623.





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## THEATER LISTINGS

### **Amadeus**

Miles Anderson gives a masterful performance in one of theater's most demanding roles. He plays Antonio Salieri, the green-eyed loather of young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Anderson charms the audience, even when accusing us of mediocrity. *Ama deus* means "beloved of God" (who is and who isn't). Salieri assumes God's role to block Mozart. Then regrets every move. Peter Shaffer manipulates history, but the play also has strengths, and director Adrian Noble orchestrates them like a conductor (Shaffer called the play a "black opera"). Deirdre Clancy's costumes and mountain-shaped wigs are visual music. Jay Whittaker makes Mozart freaky but tempers the cartooning with an undercurrent of dignity. Winslow Corbett, as Mozart's wife Constanze, and Donald Carrier, as Joseph II, head a fine ensemble [Note: *Amadeus* runs in repertory with *The Tempest* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.]

#### **Critic's Pick.**

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM NIGHTLY EXCEPT MONDAYS, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 22.

### **Engaging Shaw**

The Old Globe Theatre stages John Morogiello's comedy about the romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and George Bernard Shaw. Henry Wishcamper directed.

SHERYL AND HARVEY WHITE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS, 2PM AND 8PM SATURDAYS, 2PM AND 7PM SUNDAYS, 7PM TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 4.

### **Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein**

Leonard Bernstein contained multitudes. Hershey Felder tries to sum them up in a 95-minute tribute. The first two-thirds of the evening take Bernstein up to age 25. They move at a detailed, instructive, and highly entertaining pace. The last third, however, plays as if Felder had to cram Bernstein's final 47 years into 47 minutes. They reduce Bernstein's multitudes into a few "issues": Who am I? Guilt over his wife, Felicia. Worry that he had no defining piece of music. As he demonstrated in previous tributes to Gershwin and Beethoven, Felder's a maestro at the piano (though less so as a vocalist). It's fascinating to follow a strand of music as it connects with others across the "continuum." In many ways, the sounds flying from a black Steinway tell the story, and its complexities, far more eloquently than the words.

#### **Worth a try.**

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS, 2PM AND 8PM SATURDAYS, 2PM AND 7PM SUNDAYS, 7PM TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS, THROUGH AUGUST 28.

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# CALENDAR

Orange County/San Diego/Inland Empire  
**AUGUST 2011**



## WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10 **MARY POPPINS**

It's easy to get swept up in this irresistible story of a magical nanny. Sing-a-long with unforgettable songs from one of the most popular Disney films of all time, like "Chim Chim Cher-ee," "A Spoonful of Sugar," "Let's Go Fly a Kite" and, of course, "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious." The Broadway musical is energized with breathtaking dance numbers and spectacular stagecraft. San Diego Civic Theatre, Third and B St., 1100 Third Ave., downtown San Diego. Through Aug. 28. \$30-\$125. (619) 570-1100. [broadwaysd.com](http://broadwaysd.com).

## ENTERTAINMENT

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10

#### **PAGEANT OF THE MASTERS: ONLY MAKE BELIEVE**

In its uniquely theatrical celebration of tableaux vivants (living pictures), the Pageant of the Masters ventures into magical artistic realms. The performance explores worlds populated by ancient and modern superheroes and strange, mythical creatures. The Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters, Irvine Bowl, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Through Aug. 31. \$25-\$90. (800) 487-3378. (949) 497-6852. [foapom.com](http://foapom.com).

#### **SAWDUST ART FESTIVAL**

Experience the creative wonders of nearly 200 Laguna Beach artists in an enchanting outdoor canyon paradise adorned with waterfalls, eucalyptus trees and the best hand crafted art in California. 935 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Through Aug. 28. \$6-\$8. (949) 494-3030. [sawdustartfestival.org](http://sawdustartfestival.org).

#### **THE BEST OF BROADWAY: IT TAKES TWO**

Broadway veterans Stan and Kirsten Chandler recreate some of the most compelling

musical twosomes of our time. From Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy to Judy Garland and Gene Kelly - you'll hear them singing the music of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Rogers and Hart, Stephen Sondheim and Stephen Schwartz. Welk Resorts Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. Wed.-Thurs. through Aug. 31. \$50-\$65. (888) 802-7469. [welktheatre.com](http://welktheatre.com).

#### **SLEEPING BEAUTY WAKES**

A rocking score from members of GrooveLilly drives this musical into the magical space between dreaming and waking. La Jolla Playhouse, UCSD Campus, Mandell Weiss Forum, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla. Through Aug. 21. Ticket prices vary. (858) 550-1010. [lajollaplayhouse.org](http://lajollaplayhouse.org).

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 11

#### **ENGAGING SHAW**

When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on playwright George Bernard Shaw, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories. The Old Globe Theatre, Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Sept. 4. (619) 234-5623. [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

#### **LAS VEGAS LIVE**

A salute to Sin City Songs and Showgirls. FCLC Music Theatre, Skyroom Outdoor Dinner Theatre, 218 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. Thurs.-Sun. Aug. 21. \$49-\$59. (714) 879-1732. [fclc.com](http://fclc.com).

#### **SANTEE SUMMER CONCERTS**

Clay Colton Band. Town Center Community Park East, 550 Park Center Dr., Santee. Free. (619) 258-4100 ext. 201. [ci.santee.ca.us](http://ci.santee.ca.us).

### FRIDAY, AUGUST 12



#### **2011 SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL**

The Old Globe's annual Shakespeare Festival. The Old Globe features "Amadeus" (through Sept. 22). Other performances during the festival include: "Much Ado About Nothing" (through Sept. 24) and "The Tempest" (through Sept. 25). The three productions are performed in nightly rotation. The Old Globe, Lowell Davies Festival Theatre (outdoors), 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. \$29-\$85. (619) 234-5623. [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

#### **JUNGLE BOOK**

Rudyard Kipling's beloved characters spring from the page to the stage in this madcap musical romp through the jungles of India. Follow the man-cub Mowgli as he discovers life lessons with his fun friends Baloo and Bagheera. Lifehouse Theater, 1135 N. Church St., Redlands. \$15-\$19. Weekends through Aug. 14. (909) 335-3037 ext. 21. [lifehousetheater.com](http://lifehousetheater.com).

#### **I LEFT MY HEART**

This salute to the music of Tony Bennett has a score including "Because of You," "Stranger in Paradise," "The Best Is Yet To Come," "I Wanna Be Around," "The Good Life," "Rags To Riches," and of course, "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." The Laguna Playhouse, Moulton Theatre, 606 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Through Aug. 21. \$30-\$70. (949) 497-2787. [lagunaplayhouse.com](http://lagunaplayhouse.com).

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

#### **THE PLATT BROTHERS**

This live theatrical show is a fresh blend of outrageous entertainment featuring high-flying acrobatics, exciting dance, and hilarious re-telling of the brothers' childhood antics.

Accented by the brothers' pitch-perfect music and a cappella harmonies, their narratives are as amusing as they are heartwarming. Welk Resorts Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. Sat.-Sun. through Aug. 28. \$30. (888) 802-7469. [welktheatre.com](http://welktheatre.com).

#### **JAZZ ON THE GREEN**

Poncho Sanchez. The Festival of Arts, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. \$7. (800) 487-3378. (949) 497-6852. [lagunafestivalofarts.org](http://lagunafestivalofarts.org).

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 14

#### **ART IN MOTION: HIP HOP TO TANGO**

Dance troupes perform a variety of dance genres, including Irish folk, hip hop, hula, traditional dance from India and contemporary dance theater. The Festival of Arts, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Also Aug. 21, 28. \$7. (800) 487-3378. (949) 497-6852. [lagunafestivalofarts.org](http://lagunafestivalofarts.org).

### MONDAY, AUGUST 15

#### **B. B. KING**

Humphrey's Concerts by the Bay, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., San Diego. \$80. (619) 220-8497. [humphreysconcerts.com](http://humphreysconcerts.com).

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 16

#### **TWILIGHT IN THE PARK**

Summertime concert series. Programs range from military bands and Dixieland jazz to big band swing and Latin salsa. Balboa Park, Spreckels Organ Pavilion, San Diego. Tues.-Thurs. through Aug. 25. Free. (619) 239-0512. [balboapark.org](http://balboapark.org).

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17

#### **GREEN FLASH CONCERT SERIES**

Steve Poltz. Birch Aquarium at Scripps, 2300 Expedition Way, La Jolla. \$30. (858) 534-3474. <http://aquarium.ucsd.edu>.

#### **DINNER-DANCE**

The Widow or Widowers Club (WOW) of San Diego hosts a dinner/dance at the El Cajon Elks Lodge on Washington Ave., El Cajon. First and third Wednesdays. \$13. 619-461-7652 [wowsd.org](http://wowsd.org).

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 18

#### **SANTEE SUMMER CONCERTS**

The Cat-illacs. Town Center Community Park East, 550 Park Center Dr., Santee. Free. (619) 258-4100 ext. 201. [ci.santee.ca.us](http://ci.santee.ca.us).

#### **AN EVENING WITH STEVE MARTIN**

Banjo-playing Martin is joined by the Steep Canyon Rangers in an unforgettable evening filled with laughter and music from Martin's latest release, "Rare Bird Alert." Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Segerstrom Hall, 600 Town



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## Felder, Shaw and Shakespeare, oh my!

There are five shows to choose from at the Old Globe in the month of August. With the Old Globe premiere of "Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein," the actor/playwright/pianist tries to dislodge William Shakespeare through Aug. 28 in the Old Globe Theatre. Also playing is the West Coast premiere of John Morogiello's "Engaging Shaw" through Sept. 4 in the White Theatre. Rotating repertory of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" and "The Tempest," plus Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus," continues through Sept. 24 in the outdoor Lowell Davies Festival Theatre.

\$39-\$90, [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or (619) 23-GLOBE.



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### Critic's Choice

**"Amadeus":** Miles Anderson's bravura turn as the envy-possessed composer Salieri lends a minor-chord majesty to the Summer Shakespeare Festival production of Peter Shaffer's 1979 play. Jay Whittaker also turns in deliciously quirky work as Salieri's archrival Mozart. They and the rest of the 21-member cast clearly have absorbed the expert direction of Adrian Noble, who stages "Amadeus" with verve, wit and a musician's sense of momentum. (James Hebert) Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Sept. 22. (619) 234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

**"Engaging Shaw":** In the classic tradition of battling lovers, "Engaging Shaw" pits marriage-phobic windbag and genius George Bernard Shaw against the woman who would have him anyway. Actor Angela Pierce persuasively and fully embodies Charlotte Payne-Townsend, Shaw's eventual wife of 40 years, in an entertaining if talky production expertly directed by Henry Wishcamper. (Anne Marie Welsh) Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Sept. 4. (619) 234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

**"Five Course Love":** There's not a whole lot to Gregg Coffin's spoofy, goofy romantic comedy, set in a series of five eateries. But director Rick Simas and his three actors (Kristen Mengelkoch, Omri Schein, Kevin B. McGlynn) manage to make this soufflé sing, with comic chops and impressive energy. (James Hebert) North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach. Through Aug. 14. (858) 481-1055, [northcoastrep.org](http://northcoastrep.org). \$30-\$47.





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## PLAYBILL

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**“Much Ado About Nothing”:** Ron Daniels’ moody but moving production of the comedy shows a “February face,” to borrow from the play – a wintry chill that sets the laughs in bold relief. What emerges at the Globe is something richer than the typical showcase for the adorably warring Benedick and Beatrice (Jonno Roberts and Georgia Hatzis, both excellent), who can’t decide whether they’re mutually smitten or just want to smite each other. (James Hebert) Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Sept. 24. (619) 234-5623, theoldglobe.org.

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## THEATER LISTINGS

### Amadeus

Miles Anderson gives a masterful performance in one of theater's most demanding roles. He plays Antonio Salieri, the green-eyed loather of young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Anderson charms the audience, even when accusing us of mediocrity. *Ama deus* means "beloved of God" (who is and who isn't). Salieri assumes God's role to block Mozart. Then regrets every move. Peter Shaffer manipulates history, but the play also has strengths, and director Adrian Noble orchestrates them like a conductor (Shaffer called the play a "black opera"). Deirdre Clancy's costumes and mountain-shaped wigs are visual music. Jay Whittaker makes Mozart freaky but tempers the cartooning with an undercurrent of dignity. Winslow Corbett, as Mozart's wife Constanze, and Donald Carrier, as Joseph II, head a fine ensemble [Note: *Amadeus* runs in repertory with *The Tempest* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.]

#### Critic's Pick.

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM NIGHTLY EXCEPT MONDAYS, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 22.

### Engaging Shaw

The Old Globe Theatre stages John Morogielo's comedy about the romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and George Bernard Shaw. Henry Wishcamper directed.

SHERYL AND HARVEY WHITE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS, 2PM & 8PM SATURDAYS, 2PM & 7PM SUNDAYS, 7PM TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 4.

### Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein

Leonard Bernstein contained multitudes. Hershey Felder tries to sum them up in a 95-minute tribute. The first two-thirds of the evening take Bernstein up to age 25. They move at a detailed, instructive, and highly entertaining pace. The last third, however, plays as if Felder had to cram Bernstein's final 47 years into 47 minutes. They reduce Bernstein's multitudes into a few "issues": Who am I? Guilt over his wife, Felicia. Worry that he had no defining piece of music. As he demonstrated in previous tributes to Gershwin and Beethoven, Felder's a maestro at the piano (though less so as a vocalist). It's fascinating to follow a strand of music as it connects with others across the "continuum." In many ways, the sounds flying from a black Steinway tell the story, and its complexities, far more eloquently than the words. *Worth a try.*

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS, 2PM & 8PM SATURDAYS, 2PM & 7PM SUNDAYS, 7PM TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS, THROUGH AUGUST 28.

### Much Ado About Nothing

Dogberry says "comparisons are odorous." *Much Ado* suffers in comparison to the Old Globe's other festival offerings. Instead of the "merry war" promised in Act One, the production's mostly a humorless skirmish. Some of the acting's too stiff, some's over-the-top, and Georgia Hatzis's ice-cold Beatrice is a puzzle. Beatrice has a melancholic strain, true, but Hatzis plays her as if wit's gone out of fashion. Although Benedick says she speaks "poniards" (small daggers), Hatzis never conveys the joyful touché of the victor. Jonno Roberts does a fine turn — literally, when he leaps from naysayer to ardent lover — as Benedick. Donald Carrier (Don Pedro) and Charles Janasz (Antonio/Verges) provide able supporting work. And Deirdre Clancy's 19th-century costumes, as expected, make a valuable contribution [Note: *Much Ado* runs in repertory with *Amadeus* and *The Tempest*.]

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM NIGHTLY EXCEPT MONDAYS, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 24.

### The Tempest

Run to this one! Director Adrian Noble has staged a musical mystery tour with magical results. Shaun Davey's enchanting, original music grows from the story as if it's been there all along. Until his act of forgiveness, Miles Anderson's brilliant Prospero could make *The Tempest* a revenge tragedy. No weak links in a terrific ensemble, but the production has another star: a huge, aqua-colored sheet, at various times, is a mainsail in a storm, large waves, a shore-break trickle, and various walls. Like the music, the giant sheet's a dazzler. [Note *The Tempest* runs in repertory with *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Amadeus*.]

#### Critic's Pick.

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM NIGHTLY EXCEPT MONDAYS, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 25.





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## PLAYBILL

### Critic's Choice

#### **Summer Shakespeare Festival:**

**"Amadeus":** Miles Anderson's bravura turn as the envy-possessed composer Salieri lends a minor-chord majesty to the Summer Shakespeare Festival production of Peter Shaffer's 1979 play. Jay Whittaker also turns in deliciously quirky work as Salieri's archrival Mozart. They and the rest of the 21-member cast clearly have absorbed the expert direction of Adrian Noble, who stages "Amadeus" with verve, wit and a musician's sense of momentum. (James Hebert) **Old Globe Theatre**, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Sept. 22. (619) 234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

**"Engaging Shaw":** In the classic tradition of battling lovers, "Engaging Shaw" pits marriage-phobic windbag and genius George Bernard Shaw against the woman who would have him anyway. Actor Angela Pierce persuasively and fully embodies Charlotte Payne-Townshend, Shaw's eventual wife of 40 years, in an entertaining if talky production expertly directed by Henry Wishcamper. (Anne Marie Welsh) Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre, 1362 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Sept. 4. (619) 234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org). \$29-\$59.

#### **Hershey Felder in "Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein":**

The latest musical biography from Felder, an accomplished pianist and playwright, shows the dissonance in the life of Bernstein, the iconic composer-conductor who is portrayed as deeply ambivalent over his fame for "West Side Story." Felder's take on his subject is fascinating and wide-ranging (if a tad overambitious), with plenty of musical and narrative texture. (James Hebert) **Old Globe Theatre**, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Aug. 31. (619) 234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

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**Summer Shakespeare Festival:**

**"Much Ado About Nothing":** Ron Daniels' moody but moving production of the comedy shows a "February face," to borrow from the play – a wintry chill that sets the laughs in bold relief. What emerges at the Globe is something richer than the typical showcase for the adorably warring Benedick and Beatrice (Jonno Roberts and Georgia Hatzis, both excellent), who can't decide whether they're mutually smitten or just want to smite each other. (James Hebert) Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Sept. 24. (619) 234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

**Summer Shakespeare Festival:**

**"The Tempest":** Adrian Noble's vivid festival staging is infused with music (there seems a key change for every "sea change"), and is boosted by the wistful performance rhythms of Miles Anderson as Prospero, leading a versatile cast. The visuals are spare but graceful, and while there are squalls of tension, the tone is mostly light as spindrift, sounding a satisfying melody for the senses. (James Hebert) Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Sept. 25. (619) 234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).



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## The Old Globe



(from left) Rod Brogan, Angela Pierce, Michael Warner, Natalie Gold, director Henry Wishcamper and playwright John Morogiello. The West Coast Premiere of Morogiello's *Engaging Shaw* will run through Aug. 4, 2011 at The Old Globe. Photo by Sandy Huffaker.

**"Engaging Shaw"** by John Morogiello, and directed by Henry Wishcamper, runs through Sept. 4, 2011 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre at the Old Globe.

When heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on famed author George Bernard Shaw, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor is more complicated than in any of his stories.

The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. For information, call (619) 23-GLOBE [234-5623] or visit [www.BalboaPark.org](http://www.BalboaPark.org).

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## **saturday, aug. 13**



Rod Brogan stars as George Bernard Shaw and Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the West Coast premiere of John Morogiello's *Engaging Shaw*.

### **The challenge of romance**

The Old Globe presents *Engaging Shaw*. This unexpected new comedy follows the battle of wits and the real life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw. When wealthy heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend sets her sights on the famed author of *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and *Major Barbara*, the challenge of romancing this confirmed bachelor, philanderer and unromantic man is more complicated than in any of his stories.

Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre,  
1362 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park,  
2 p.m. and 8 p.m., tickets from \$39,  
619-234-5623, [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

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## What's happening at Balboa Park this weekend

Written by  
[Maren Dougherty](#)

10:57 a.m., Aug 24, 2011

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My picks for what to do and where to go in Balboa Park this weekend. See the [Balboa Park calendar](#) or download one of our mobile apps for the full schedule of events and exhibitions.

### Thursday, August 25

From 5-9pm, [The San Diego Museum of Art](#) continues its Summer Salon Series themed "What does a city need?" This week's salon features a panel discussion about farm-to-table agriculture, a concert by The Tree Ring, poetry readings, and a mask-making craft table. Combined with a glass of wine and snacks from Guiseppe's, it's a fantastic, inspiring Thursday night activity – with or without a date.

### Friday, August 26

Go to the San Diego Air & Space Museum to [meet Al Worden](#), command module pilot for the Apollo 15 mission to the moon in 1971. Worden will give a talk relating his fascinating moon-travel experiences, and sign copies of his new book "Falling To Earth: An Apollo 15 Astronaut's Journey to the Moon." Book signings are at 1 & 3pm with a talk at 2pm. Entrance is free with general museum admission.

### Saturday, August 27

The Reuben H. Fleet Science Center continues its "[Forensic Detectives](#)" Family Science Saturdays. From 1-3pm, families can



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Recommend

go to the Fleet's Discovery Lab to participate in special activities for \$2 (with museum admission). Activities are geared toward kids ages 5-12.

No little ones in tow? Grab tickets for the matinee or 8pm performance of "Engaging Shaw" at [The Old Globe](#). The comedy follows the real-life romance between socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend and playwright George Bernard Shaw.



### Sunday, August 28

Enjoy a relaxing Sunday afternoon among flowers and plants. Check out the [bonsai show](#) at Casa del Prado's Room 101 then go over to the Japanese Friendship Garden to see the progress of the garden's expansion. Then walk over to the Lawn Program at the House of Pacific Relations International Cottages to taste food from Panama and watch entertainment from the House of Panama's folkloric group "Sonares de mi Tierra."

*Photo (from left) Rod Brogan as George Bernard Shaw, Michael Warner as Sidney Webb, Natalie Gold as Beatrice Webb and Angela Pierce as Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the West Coast Premiere of John Morogielo's Engaging Shaw, directed by Henry Wishcamper, July 29 - Sept. 4, 2011 at The Old Globe. Photo by Ed Krieger.*

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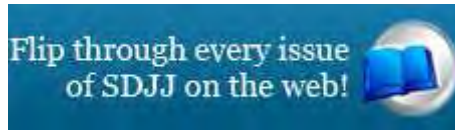
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## What's Goin' On – Switching Gears for a Fall Lineup

by Eileen Sondak | [September 2011](#) | [Post your comment »](#)

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By Eileen Sondak

As summer vacations fade into memory, summer-only entertainment winds down, too. Summer Pops plays its final notes Labor Day weekend, and the Old Globe's Shakespeare Festival runs its course Sept. 25. Happily, fall offerings start showing up on local stages this month, including the San Diego Symphony, which bows in with its winter season Sept. 30.

The Old Globe's annual Shakespeare Festival continues to welcome audiences of the alfresco theater scene

most of this month, with a three-show repertory that includes two Shakespeare classics and Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus." "Much Ado About Nothing," a comedy of mismatched lovers, and "The Tempest," the Bard's masterpiece of redemption and forgiveness will rotate with "Amadeus," a powerful drama about Mozart, to round out the Globe's spectacular summer smorgasbord. All three productions are outstanding and not to be missed.

Although sparks are still flying between George Bernard Shaw and socialite Charlotte Payne-Townshend in the bristling new comedy, "Engaging Shaw" (at the Globe's White Theatre through Sept. 4), the Globe is getting ready to unveil two more shows this month. Richard O'Brien's "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" launches the Globe's new season on the Main Stage Sept. 15. This enduring musical phenomenon will continue through Nov. 6.

"Somewhere," a dance-infused world premiere, tells the story of a family of dreamers whose home is headed for demolition. That piece is coming to the Globe's White Theatre Sept. 24-Oct. 30. The outdoor Festival Stage will feature "Odyssey," a new work to celebrate the Globe's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This large-scale show will be performed Sept. 30-Oct. 2.

San Diego Pops concludes its summer season on a high note Sept. 2-4 with its popular 1812 Tchaikovsky Spectacular. The San Diego Symphony swings into action Sept. 30, with a program titled "Thibaudet Plays Ravel Concertos." The concert, conducted by Jahja Ling, will be repeated Oct. 2. The most exciting event that weekend will take place Oct. 1, when Maestro Ling conducts the Symphony's annual gala, starring Kathleen Battle and Jean-Yves Thibaudet. This stellar evening will include pre- and post-concert activities, as well as the performance.

North Coast Repertory Theatre will open its 30<sup>th</sup> season with "Lend Me a Tenor," directed by Matthew Wiener, Sept. 7. The multi-award-winning show, a farce with plot twists and double entendres galore, will continue through Oct. 2 at NCR's Solana Beach home, to start things off with hilarity.

Broadway-San Diego will unleash "Blue Man Group" Sept. 20-25. These wildly outrageous entertainers are best known for highly theatrical shows that combine comedy, music and technology to produce totally unique entertainment.

Cygnets Theatre is offering a reimagined version of "Little Shop of Horrors," directed by Sean Murray. The show is like the old black-and-white horror flick on which it's based, and it should develop a strong following before it closes shop Sept. 11.

The La Jolla Playhouse's Potiker Theatre features a production of "Milk Like Sugar" through Sept. 25. The play is about a 16-year-old girl in a pregnancy pact with two high school friends. Savage humor and gritty poetry are hallmarks of this provocative new piece.

The Lamb's Horton Grand Theatre is still jumping with "MixTape," the 1980s musical. That long-running show was extended again through Sept. 4. Then on Sept. 9, "Til We Have Faces" moves in until Sept. 18. The Lamb's Coronado home is showcasing "Trying," a true story about the former head of the Nuremberg Trials and his feisty young assistant. The engrossing show will stay put through Sept. 25, and it sounds like a must-see.

Moonlight's summer season closes after "The Marvelous Wonderettes" completes its run at the Vista-based Amphitheatre. The show is slated to run Sept. 14-Oct. 3.

J\*Company will present "Disney's Milan" Sept. 16. The fairytale will entertain audiences of all ages at the JCC in La Jolla through Oct. 2.