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November 6 - December 2, 2007

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## the Syringa tree

BY PAMELA GIEN  
STARRING CAROLINE CAVE  
DIRECTED BY LARRY MOSS

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November 6 - December 2, 2007

MONTREAL PREMIERE

**Centaur Theatre Company**

BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH MATT SALINGER

presents

# the Syringa tree

By PAMELA GIEN

Directed by LARRY MOSS

Starring CAROLINE CAVE

set design

lighting design

sound design

assistant director

stage manager

Kenneth Foy

Steven B. Mannshardt

Tony Suraci

Harry Judge

Rick Rinder

First produced at A Contemporary Theatre, Seattle  
Gordon Edelstein, Artistic Director

Original New York & London stage Production presented by Matt Salinger

*The Syringa Tree* by Pamela Gien is presented by arrangement with  
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., in New York.

Use of the melody and lyrics of "Ballad of the Southern Suburbs"  
a.k.a. "Ag Pleez Deddy" (Copyright 1962, Jeremy Taylor) courtesy of  
Jeremy Taylor and Gallo (Africa) Ltd.

**THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION**

The action of the play takes place in Johannesburg, South Africa,  
beginning in 1963. It is the early days of apartheid and Elizabeth  
is six years old.



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Hello! My name is Roy Surette and I am the newly appointed Artistic and Executive Director here at the Centaur Theatre. I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you and share with you how honoured I am to be chosen to lead this great company. Although I am a Western Canadian, born and bred, and much of my twenty-eight years working in professional theatre



have taken place in British Columbia, I have also had opportunities to direct and work in theatres across Canada and abroad. I cannot tell you how happy I am to make this city my new home. I am looking forward to getting to know the city, the vibrant performing arts community and to engage with you, our loyal audience. I have always had a love for Montréal with all its diversity, élan and vibrancy and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute and create theatre in this dynamic environment. Over the years I have visited the Centaur and experienced some fantastic theatre here and it is my goal to make sure that the Centaur presents excellent, relevant contemporary theatre.

I arrived in Montréal in time to experience the huge power of Vittorio Rossi's *The Carpenter* and I got to delight in the imaginative Sabooqe showing of *Speakeasy*, part of our Brave New Work Initiative.

We are now proud to present this magnificent production of Pamela Gien's beautiful play, *The Syringa Tree*, which is the first South African play presented on The Centaur stage in many years. I know the wonderful Caroline Cave will dazzle you and we are so pleased to have Larry Moss's award winning original staging here. Pamela provides some illuminating background notes that speak to the power of creating theatre and of how it helps make sense of our ever-changing complex world. It also can give power to one's dreams, passions and convictions.

If you are not a subscriber I urge to consider becoming one and joining us for the rest of the season. Our subscribers receive many benefits and help gives us a strong foundation for creating the excellent theatre you expect to see at The Centaur. Please join us. I look forward to meeting you in the coming year.

Cheers,  
Roy Surette

# A Story Filled With Joy And Wishes

I never imagined I'd write *The Syringa Tree*... and I never imagined I'd write about South Africa, the paradise lost into which I was born. I offer this play as a journey into a place, and into my own heart, that secret sorrowful place I called home until I began to write.

The first unexpected words that went onto the page opened a well of joy, grief and remembrance so powerful that I now cannot imagine the energy it took to suppress this world within so fiercely, and for so long, to keep it at bay in my thoughts, and to run to the furthest corners of the earth to remove myself from it. Of course it followed me wherever I went. I carried it within me, finding my responses confused and angry. I never wanted to discuss it. I had no answers. I was never a politically active person. I didn't understand how to change or fix it. And in the unexpected creation of this piece, I have come to allow myself to feel the depth of love I had for that earth, and the people I knew and loved there. *The Syringa Tree* has brought me home, despite myself. It has called me to be the best of myself as a person, and as an artist.

I marvel at the events that have brought me to this place. I was born in Emmarentia, a suburb of Johannesburg, in the early days of the official implementation of apartheid. The Nationalist government, architects of this policy, had come into power about ten years earlier. The early days of my childhood were spent under British Colonial Rule, and although South Africa gained its independence when I was about five, ties to Britain and the Commonwealth were as strong and enduring to English speaking South Africans as the ties of the Afrikaans speaking people were to their own culture and language. Mingled through this complex, divided social fabric were Blacks of many different tribal origins comprising the overwhelming majority, and among others, Indians, Asians, Portuguese, Lebanese and a large Jewish community, many settled from Russian Jews escaping Tsarist rule. And those designated by the government as Coloureds, of mixed race, who fell between the cracks of society and became known as 'God's forgotten'.

The changeover from British rule was signaled to me as a child mainly in the fact that I was now no longer measured in feet and inches but in mysterious things called centimeters, and the sixpence and 'tickies' I so prized in my grubby pocket were replaced with new, shiny bigger money called rands and cents. But the people around me remained the same, even though the Queen had moved on! I was cared for by nannies who loved me with gentleness I can still feel against my skin, while designated by law to be separate from their own children. Black children would never be granted a 'pass' to be in a white area, particularly at night, and would live in the desolate townships and homelands, cared for by the aging parents of those working in the cities. I never felt their resentment, and yet I look back now at what must have been an unfathomable longing for their own children. I made no judgement on it then. I was a child. I lived in it. It was my home. Thirty years later, in a class taught by my director, Larry Moss, I unsuspectingly did as he asked when he said 'Turn to the person next to you and tell them a story.' Without warning, the image of

(playwright's cont'd)

an attack on my grandparents' farm, Clova, came roaring into my mind. I had not thought about it for decades. We never discussed it. Clova was lost to us and I was never taken back to what had been the simple but idyllic place of my childhood holidays. I quickly tried to think of something else to tell, when Larry said to the class, 'Don't censor whatever it is that came into your minds. Tell that story. It will choose you.' I tried to make sense of the murky images, and began to mouth the words. The second part of the exercise was to stage the story we had just told. I think I was the first trembling person to bring the work back, and I stood there as though I had an earthquake in my body. I felt terribly vulnerable dealing with my own life. At the end of it, Larry said 'You have to write this.' And so I began the rather astounding task of writing about my life. I had no idea at first what I was writing. I wrote with fear, grief, and shame. But I wrote also with love, joy and a well of remembrance. At first I wrote autobiographically. And then I began to love the freedom of combining those events with the poetry of language and imagery. It developed as a more fictional story deeply invested with aspects of my life. The coming together of it is the mystery. I wrote it, never imagining the journey I was embarking on. Several weeks later, when it was done, we began rehearsal. I thought at the first reading we would invite twenty six other actors to join us, or at least a few to double! And Larry said 'No, you're going to do it yourself'. At my shocked protests, he told me to be quiet and say the lines, and thus began our work. And then Matt Salinger came, with an early invited audience, also expecting to see a company of actors! He has worked voluntarily and tirelessly since that day. Both he and Larry stand at my side. They have graced my life with their courage, and their generosity.

Carried in this story are my deepest feelings about a hauntingly beautiful place caught in unforgivable sorrow. Nobody won. And it's a story filled with joy and wishes. Some already have come true.

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Words matter



## Pamela Gien – Playwright

As playwright and performer of *The Syringa Tree*, Pamela Gien won the OBIE Award for Best Play 2001, the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, the Outer Circle Critics Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, a Drama League Honor, and a nomination for the John Gassner Playwriting Award. The play had its world premiere at ACT in Seattle, followed by a two-year run in New York. Pamela has since performed it in London at the Royal National Theatre, in Toronto at the World's Festival, in Los Angeles, the Vancouver Playhouse, the Weston Playhouse in Vermont, and in Boston at the American Repertory Theatre, where she was the recipient of Boston's Elliot Norton Award for Best Solo Performance. She recently returned from South Africa where she performed the play to sold-out houses and critical acclaim at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, receiving a nomination for the prestigious Fleur du Cap Award. She looks forward to returning to South Africa for the filming of *The Syringa Tree*. The original New York stage production starring Pamela has been filmed for television by Trio Arts Channel. She is thrilled to have seen this original production performed by several other artists, in the US, Canada and abroad. The new novel of *The Syringa Tree*, published by Random House to excellent reviews, is now out in paperback, and nominated for the Dublin IMPAC Awards for Literary Merit. Pamela has also written a new screenplay called *The Lily Field*. She is proud to have been chosen by Entertainment Weekly for their *It List* of 100 Most Creative Artists.

As a cum laude graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand, Pamela began her acting career in South Africa, where she won the Dalro Best Actress Award for her portrayal of Helen Keller in *Monday after the Miracle*. She starred in many other productions, and was nominated for various television performances. She then became a principal member of the American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, where she played Sonya opposite Christopher Walken in the premiere of David Mamet's adaptation of *Uncle Vanya*, Estrella in *Life's A Dream*, Annabella in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Gabriella in *Sweettable at the Richelieu*, Marianna in *The Miser*, and Angela in *The King Stag* among many others. She played Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* for the Public Theatre's New York Shakespeare Festival, Alicia in *Piano* by Anna Deavere Smith, and Hannah Jelkes in *The Night of the Iguana* at the LATC, for which she won a Drama-Logue Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre. She has performed in the New Works Festival at the Mark Taper Forum, the Humana Festival at Actors Theatre of Louisville and at South Coast Repertory. Her TV and film credits include guest-starring roles in *Tales from the Crypt*, *Reasonable Doubts*, *Hunter*, *Secret Lives*, *Into Thin Air* and *The Last Supper*. Pamela deeply thanks Larry Moss and Matt Salinger for their courage, skill and love in bringing *The Syringa Tree* to fruition. She is immensely grateful to Caroline Cave, and to the Centaur Theatre. Both the play and new novel of *The Syringa Tree* are dedicated to her parents, and to the children of South Africa.

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### Larry Moss – Director

Moss studied his craft with Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner and Warren Robertson. He began his career at New York's famed cabaret Upstairs at the Downstairs and went on to appear on Broadway in numerous productions. After teaching in New York at Julliard and Circle in the Square, he moved to Los Angeles and founded The Larry Moss Studio. It was here that he directed and developed Pamela Gien's *The Syringa Tree*, which had its world premiere at ACT in Seattle. *The Syringa Tree* opened in New York in September 2000 and won the Obie Award for Best Play of 2001, the Drama Desk Award and The Outer Critics' Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, a Drama League honour and a nomination for the John Gassner Playwriting Award. *The Syringa Tree* has played to sold out houses and critical acclaim around the world, including London (the National Theatre), Toronto (CanStage), where it won the *Dora Award* for *Best Actress* and *Best Play of 2005* and most recently, Larry and Pamela, and their producer Matt Salinger, took *The Syringa Tree* on a profound journey of the heart, home, to South Africa to the Baxter Theater.

He developed and directed Bo Eason's one-man show, *Runt of the Litter*, which opened in New York at Manhattan Class Company in January 2002 and was voted one of the top ten plays of the year by New York Daily News and was bought by Castle Rock to be made into a major motion picture. In 1998, Moss directed the award-winning short film *Dos Corazones*. His book on acting, *The Intent to Live*, was released by Bantam Dell in 2004. Moss directed Michael Raynor's *Who is Floyd Stearn?* Richard Kalinoski's *Beast on the Moon* and Jack Holmes' *RFK*. He will direct *Sugar* by April Daisy White Off-Broadway and Clint Holmes' new Broadway musical *Just Another Man*.

Moss coached Helen Hunt in *As Good As It Gets* (Academy Award); Hilary Swank in *Boys Don't Cry* and *Million Dollar Baby* (Academy Awards); Michael Clarke Duncan in *The Green Mile* (Academy Award nomination), Hank Azaria in *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Emmy Award), Jim Carrey in *The Majestic*, Tobey Maguire in *Seabiscuit*, and Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Aviator* (Golden Globe Award and Academy Award nomination), *The Departed* (Golden Globe Award nomination) and *Blood Diamond* (Golden Globe Award and Academy Award nomination). Moss is a founding director of the Edgemar Center for the Arts – a two-theatre multi-cultural complex encompassed in Frank Gehry's architectural landmark building, which opened in Santa Monica in September 2003.

## SEAGRAM ART GALLERY at CENTAUR THEATRE

**Jean-Marie Bergeron** was born in Montréal in 1947. He began painting in 1987.

He has been part many solo and collective exhibits starting in 1989 at the M.A.A. Club de sports in 2001. Other places his paintings have been seen were at Galerie Art Jeunesse, Complexe du Canal Lachine, Galerie Terruchito, Galerie Concept Art, Studio Orange and Atelier Théâtre de Longueuil to name a few. Now exposing at Galerie Clarence Gagnon in Montréal and Baie St-Paul.





### **Caroline Cave**

Caroline is honoured to perform at Centaur, in beautiful Montreal. Performing *The Syringa Tree* at the CanStage and Vancouver Playhouse, she garnered the 2006 Jessie Award and the 2004 Dora Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actress in a Lead Role. Other theatre credits include *John and Beatrice* (Tarragon Theatre), for which she was nominated for a 2007 Dora Award; *Past Perfect* (Tarragon Theatre); the Canadian premiere of *Trying* (NAC/CanStage); Lady M in *MacBeth* (Theatre Calgary); *Three Sisters*, *The Royal Family*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *The Detective Story*, *The Millionaire*, *Fanny's First Play*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (Shaw Festival); *The Proposal*, *Dark Voyage* (Shaw/CBC Bell Canada Reading Series); *Holiday*, *Gaslight* (Theatre Calgary); *Anne* (Betty Nomination), *Cosi*, *Sylvia* (ATP); *My Grandma's Eyes* (Quest Theatre); *Stale Mate* (Theatre Network); *Village of Idiots*, *As You Like It*, and *Jennie's Story* (Studio Theatre, Edmonton). Film and television credits include *The Gathering* (Lifetime); the lead role of Claire in the feature film *Six Figures* (Toronto International Film Festival, 2007); *Stargate: Atlantis* (Sci-Fi Channel); *The L Word* (Showtime); feature films *The War Bride* and *Almost American*; *The Associates* (CTV); *Regenesis* (Movie Network); *Kevin Hill* (UPN), and the lead role of Carol in the feature film *This Beautiful City* (TIFF 2007). Upcoming theatre includes Millamant in *The Way of the World*, directed by Peter Hinton for Soulpepper and The NAC. Caroline studied at the Royal National Theatre, The Banff Centre, The Arts Umbrella, and is a proud graduate of the BFA Conservatory Acting Programme at University of Alberta. Her deepest gratitude to Matt Salinger for his compassion, dedication and insight; Pamela Gien for her friendship, her artistry, and this extraordinary play; Larry Moss for his honesty and loyalty, and for continued inspiration. Special thanks to Rick Rinder – the Best Stage Manager on the Planet. Caroline thanks Jane Gooderham and Kelly McEvenue, who have worked with her as movement and voice coaches, respectively, since 2004, and to Harry Judge, for joining her on Lizzie's Swing, and pushing her higher.



### **Matt Salinger – Producer**

After a decade as a successful actor, Matt formed New Moon Productions in 1994 and has produced or executive produced twelve feature films, all outside the studio system, working with many first time directors, writer-directors, and such talented and eclectic actors as Angelina Jolie, Stephen Rea, Mary Louise Parker, Ricky Jay, Diane Keaton, Alfred Molina, Dr. Haing S. Ngor, Danny Aiello, Martin Sheen, Paul Sorvino, Lisa Kudrow, Forest Whitaker, Jon Bon Jovi, Jamey Sheridan, Bob Balaban, and Lloyd and Beau Bridges. He happened upon Pamela Gien's *The Syringa Tree* in Larry Moss' acting studio when it was first shown to the public, and has been with the show for ten years, helping develop it, bringing it to ACT in Seattle, then to New York (where it won every award it was eligible for), to the RNT in London, on a National Tour that he also general managed, and to Toronto, where the production he co-produced with CanStage – with Caroline Cave and Yanna McIntosh alternating in the role – won the Dora award for Best Play, and Caroline won for Best Actress. He produced it at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town with Pamela back in the role, and at the Playhouse Theatre Company in Vancouver, where

Caroline again won best actress honours. He produced the television version of the play that aired on Trio, and is looking forward to working on the film version now that Pamela has recently finished the screenplay. He also produced the off-Broadway critical hit *Beast on the Moon*, also directed by Larry.

Matt is working with one of the creators of *Hoop Dreams* and *Talking Jazz* writer Ben Sidran on a documentary style film set today amidst the culture of passing jazz greats; he recently co-produced *Love Comes Lately*, a film based on three short stories by Nobel prize winner Isaac Bashevis Singer- written and directed by Jan Schutte- that just premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. Matt is on the board of North Country School/Camp Treetops, an extraordinary junior boarding school and camp in the Adirondack Mountains of New York.

#### **Kenneth Foy – Set Designer**

Mr. Foy has designed the Broadway productions of *Candida*, *Macbeth*, *Oh, Kay!*, *Annie*, *An Evening with Jerry Herman*, *Gypsy* (Tony Award) and *Dame Edna: The Royal Tour*. He designed the Houston Grand Opera's acclaimed multi-media production of *Carmen*, as well as *A Little Night Music*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Pagliacci*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning documentary *Moment of Impact*, and *Porgy and Bess*, which most recently played Milan's venerable La Scala. He designed the Goodspeed productions of *Can-Can*, *Oh, Kay!*, *Pal Joey*, *Galileo*, *Red, Hot and Blue* and the Berkshire Theatre Festival production of *Say Yes!* He has provided sets for the American Opera Center's *Xerxes* and productions at Julliard, Manhattan Theatre Club, Wolf Trap, Long Wharf, Hartford Stage Company, Old Globe Theatre and Chicago's Lyric Opera. Mr. Foy also designed a production of *Annie* in London's West End.



#### **Steven B. Mannshardt – Lighting Designer**

Mr. Mannshardt designed the lighting for *The Syringa Tree* at TheatreWorks in Mountain View, California, as well as the touring productions at the Pasadena Playhouse, The Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, ACT Theatre in Seattle, The Vancouver Playhouse, The Du Maurier Theatre in Toronto, The Canon Theater in Beverly Hills, The Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo, The Weston Playhouse in Weston, VT and the Dublin Theatre Festival in Ireland. As production manager and resident lighting designer at TheatreWorks for the past 13 years, he has designed over 50 productions for the company and has won a dozen local awards for his design work. In the past 20 years, Mr. Mannshardt has worked for numerous theatre, dance and opera companies throughout California. He has also taught lighting design at Santa Rosa Junior College for the past 14 years and has appeared as a guest lecturer at many colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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**Tony Suraci – Sound Designer**

Tony has worked in post-production on films such as *Lost Highway* for David Lynch and *Austin Powers* for Mike Myers. He has won awards for his sound designs on dramatic TV shows. As musician, he has a new CD out, called "Tony Suraci, Lost Time," and has recently been touring in China. He has been writing music with Billy Gibbons, and together they have several songs in an upcoming Paris Hilton film called *Bottom's Up*. Tony is also a writer on the upcoming scripted reality show entitled *It's Gibbons!* Tony has found it a great honour doing the sound for *The Syringa Tree*.



**Harry Judge – Assistant Director for Centaur Production**

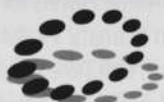
Harry feels privileged to be a part of the Centaur production of *The Syringa Tree*. Theatre credits include three recent seasons with The Shaw Festival, including the Dauphin in *Saint Joan*, *The Kiltartan Comedies*, *The Heiress*, *Design for Living*, Philip in *You Never Can Tell* and Henry in *Something on the Side*; *Mary's Wedding*, Globe Theatre (Regina); *Hamlet*, Citadel Theatre; *The Shape of Things*, Molière (playRites '02), Alberta Theatre Projects; Malcolm in *Macbeth*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Romeo and Juliet*, Theatre Calgary; *Much Ado About Nothing* and *King Lear*, Free Will Players (Edmonton); *Three Sisters*, *Cosi* and *Molière*, Studio Theatre (Edmonton); and *The Bald Soprano*, *Julius Caesar*, *Major Barbara*, *The Rimers of Eldritch* and *Live Like Pigs*, University of Alberta. Other credits include Assistant Director for *Hay Fever* at Theatre Calgary and Text Coach for *The Winter's Tale* and *Romeo and Juliet* at the University of Alberta. Harry was also Assistant Fight Director for *Romeo and Juliet* for Calgary Opera and Fight Director for *Mystery at Greenfingers* for Vertigo Theatre. Upcoming: Will Shakespeare in the World Premiere of *Shakespeare's Dog* (Manitoba Theatre Centre / National Arts Centre). Harry is a graduate of the BFA Acting Program of the University of Alberta.



**Rick Rinder – Stage Manager**

Rick lives in Maple Ridge, BC with Nadine, a blind date who captured his heart a couple of years ago. Before that happened, Rick lived a vagabond lifestyle; living nowhere and stage managing shows here, there, and everywhere. He was last in Montreal, at the Centaur, with *Life After George* in 2003. Over his 30 year career, some of Rick's favourite productions include *Billy Bishop Goes to War* (Canadian Stage Company), *Vigil* (Vancouver Playhouse), *Shirley Valentine* (Manitoba Theatre Centre), the very recent *The Wars* (Theatre Calgary) and the Centaur's brilliant production of Michel Tremblay's *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again* which Rick helped tour across the country and to Washington DC in 2000. Another all-time favourite is the fabulous piece of storytelling you are seeing tonight, *The Syringa Tree*. Rick has done this play with the fantastic Caroline Cave, twice, at the Vancouver Playhouse and he is in Matt Salinger's debt for bringing him to Montreal to do it again.

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To create, develop and present a season of thought-provoking plays that reflect our artistic vision and inspire and engage the Montreal community is a joy and a privilege for all of us who are associated with this great theatre company.

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**Featured Players (\$250 - \$499)**

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**Viviane Dohle** Head Technician C1  
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**CENTAUR**  
THEATRE COMPANY



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*Centaur Theatre Company is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement. Centaur Theatre Company performs under the auspices of the Centaur Foundation for the Performing Arts.*

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