

The Mavor Moore Theatre Society

In Association With

Western Gold Theatre

present a staged reading of

THE YEAR OF MAGICAL THINKING

By Joan Didion



Starring Pia Shandel

Directed by Elizabeth Ball

September 10 & 11 at 7:30 PM • September 12 at 2:00 PM (Matinee)

PAL THEATRE

581 Cardero Street, Vancouver

The Company

Starring: Pia Shandel

Director: Elizabeth Ball

Stage Manager: Tianna Francis

Technical Director: Glenn MacDonald

Design Consultant: Douglas Welch

Sound Designer: Andrej Stanojlovic

About the Play

Adapted by Joan Didion from her own National Book Award–winning memoir, *The Year of Magical Thinking* is prized for the raw honesty and dark wit it brings to an experience nearly everyone eventually faces. Performed as a single-actor stage piece, the work is a stark and unflinching account of grief that has been widely produced since its Broadway premiere. Following the sudden death of her husband, writer John Gregory Dunne, and the simultaneous critical illness and death of their daughter, Didion spent a year grappling with loss, memory, and the strange, irrational bargains the mind makes in the face of catastrophe.

Pia Shandel

Pia Shandel brings decades of stage, television, and radio experience to the demanding solo role. A graduate of UBC's theatre program under Dr. John Brockington, she came of age alongside Vancouver's theatre scene itself, working as a young actor with the Vancouver Playhouse and the Arts Club Theatre in their earliest seasons, as well as with Gallimaufry, Lunchbox Theatre, and John Juliani's boundary-pushing experimental company. She appeared in more than 50 stage, radio, and television productions over a 25-year acting career, and represented Canada as a visiting actress at Italy's Sorrento Film Festival. She went on to a prominent career in B.C. broadcasting and journalism, notably as host of CKVU's Vancouver Show and as a CFUN 1410 AM talk show host. *The Year of Magical Thinking* marks a full-circle return to the stage for Shandel, reuniting her with director Elizabeth Ball, a friend and collaborator since the two first worked together at UBC at age sixteen.

Elizabeth Ball

Elizabeth Ball is the Founding Director of the Mavor Moore Theatre Society. She was the founder and, for twenty-seven years, Managing Artistic Director of Carousel Theatre Company, and later served three terms on Vancouver City Council. Her career has carried her well beyond Vancouver: in New York, she worked as Assistant Producer and Director with the Nederlander Organization on Broadway, and in London and Sweden she was involved in productions of Trafford Tanzi and in the development of Tim Rice and ABBA's musical *Chess*. In Louisville, Kentucky, she worked with the Actors Theatre of Louisville and served as Festival Co-ordinator for the renowned Humana Festival of New American Plays, and she later directed an international UNESCO tour of *Ice Wolf* to Paris and London. Her decades of work in Vancouver and international theatre have been recognized with the Vancouver Theatre Alliance's Jessie Richardson Award for Lifetime Career Achievement, the UBCP/ACTRA Sam Payne Award, and induction into the B.C. Entertainment Hall of Fame, where she also served as President.

Tianna Francis

Tianna Francis is thrilled to be back at the PAL Studio Theatre, where she was recently Stage Manager for Western Gold Theatre's production of *Salt-Water Moon*. A recent graduate of Douglas College's Stagecraft and Event Technology Program, she was Assistant Stage Manager for *To Please the Audience* and Stage Manager for *Jane Austen, Action Figure* while at Douglas College, and has since worked in production management on *The Da Vinci Code* (Theatre in the Country) and *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* (BlueiRadio).

About the Mavor Moore Theatre Society

The Mavor Moore Theatre Society was established in Vancouver in memory of the celebrated Canadian theatre artist and administrator Mavor Moore, one of the founding figures of professional theatre in Canada.

The Society is dedicated to creating, producing, presenting, and promoting live theatre of the calibre and spirit that defined Moore's own remarkable career. It is led by Founding Director Elizabeth Ball.

About Western Gold Theatre

Western Gold Theatre is one of only two professional theatre companies in Canada devoted solely to centring the voices and stories of senior artists and Elders (55+) across cultures and communities. Founded in Vancouver in 1994 by Joy Coghill, the company presents both theatre classics and newly commissioned Canadian works that speak to the experience of aging, while mentoring emerging professional artists who share the stage with its veteran performers.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank Tanja Dixon-Warren, Glenn MacDonald, and the staff and volunteers of Western Gold Theatre for their generous assistance in making this production possible.

Thank you for joining us tonight.