

# The Carousel

Produced by Stellar Quines

## Creative Team

Written by Jennifer Tremblay  
Translated by Shelley Tepperman  
Starring Maureen Beattie  
Director Muriel Romanes  
Set and Costume Design John Byrne  
Lighting Design Jeanine Byrne  
Sound Design/Composer Philip Pinsky  
Set Artist Roland Fraser  
Additional Artwork Celie Byrne

*The Carousel* is part of a trilogy by Jennifer Tremblay that includes *The List* and *Deliverance*. Stellar Quines performed *The List* at the Fringe in 2012 and 2013. The show won a *Herald Angel*, a *Scotsman Fringe First* and a CATS (Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland) Award for Best Production. It was also a sell out success at both Fringe Festivals and toured to venues across Scotland.

*The Carousel* continues the journey of a woman on a path of discovery about her past, her family and herself. This second play covers many decades and looks back at her ancestors and her life as a child and then a look to her future while in Paris...but can she reconcile herself with her discoveries... will the carousel ever stop turning?

The English-language premiere of *The Carousel* was presented by Nightwood Theatre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. *The Carousel* is produced by arrangement with The Talent House Inc., 204A St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5R 2N5, 416.960.9686, michael@talenthouse.ca  
Simard Agence Artistique, 3536 rue Ste-Émilie, Montréal, Québec, Canada, H4C 1Z2, info@agencesimard.com

**Thanks to:** Royal Lyceum Theatre Workshops, the Rev Jim Benton Evans, St Peter's Episcopal Church, Peebles, Elsa Mercandante Wilson and Eastgate Theatre, Peebles (especially Richard Hogg).

## Stellar Quines

Established in 1993, Stellar Quines is an award winning Scottish theatre company that celebrates the energy, experience and perspective of women. This year we are celebrating our 21st anniversary and are proud to have provided a platform for women's stories and created live theatre driven by women and where female practitioners are at the forefront of creative roles throughout this time. Stellar Quines has established a reputation for high quality, diverse work, which reflects an eclectic range of theatrical styles and is underpinned by a commitment to pushing boundaries and challenging stereotypes.

Artistic Director Muriel Romanes      Producer Rebecca Davis  
Administrator Gillian Shaw      Marketing & Audience Development Shirley Monteith      Press Liz Smith

## Jennifer Tremblay

Jennifer Tremblay was born in 1973 in Forestville on the North Shore of the St-Lawrence River. In 1990, she published *Histoires de Foudre*, a collection of poems. In 1995, she graduated in Creative Literature from the University of Québec in Montréal and went on to publish short stories and articles for various magazines. She began her masters in literary research and devoted herself entirely to the works of Dany Laferrière.

A long conversation with the author convinced her to leave her studies and focus on her own writing projects. She wrote close to 100 episodes of the children's television show *Les Chatouilles* (Radio-Canada) and a few episodes of *Bouledogue Bazard*. In 2004, she founded Les Éditions de la Bagnole. She published her first novel *Tout ce qui brille* and several children's books such as *Un secret pour Matisse (A Secret for Matisse)*, *Deux biscuits pour Sacha (Two Cookies for Sacha)*, *Sacha et son sushi (Sacha and his Sushi)*, *Miro et les canetons du lac Vert (Miro and the Green Lake Ducklings)*, *Madame Zia and Matisse et les vaches lunaires, (Matisse and the Moon Cows)*.

In 2008, she was awarded the Governor General's prize, the most important literary prize in Canada, for her play *La Liste (The List)* published by Les Éditions de la Bagnole.

## Shelley Tepperman

Shelley Tepperman is a translator and dramaturg with a long history in Canadian theatre specialising in script development, project development and translation for the stage. Her thirty translations – two of which were nominated for the Governor General's award – have been produced by CBC radio and on stages throughout North America. One of her specialties is intercultural dramaturgy and helping cultural works travel to new contexts. Ms. Tepperman translates from several languages and much of her work in

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Producer Lesley Anne Rose  
Production Manager Craig Davis  
Company Stage Manager Heather Wilson  
Technical Assistant Sam Cunningham

theatre has involved helping audiences discover other cultural landscapes. From 1994 – 1998 Shelley worked for CBC Radio Arts and Entertainment developing, adapting, directing and producing radio dramas for national broadcast. Ms. Tepperman also works in documentary film and television as a writer, story editor and director in several languages.

## Maureen Beattie

Maureen trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and graduated with the James Bridie Gold Metal. Her career started with four years at the Dundee Rep and Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh. Since then Maureen has gone on to play many roles in theatres around the UK including the National, the Globe, the Lyric Hammersmith and the Crucible as well as touring internationally. Maureen spent the 2003/2004 season with the Royal Shakespeare Company. She has recently starred in *Dear Scotland, 27* and *The Enquirer* for the National Theatre of Scotland.

Maureen's television and film work includes *Casualty*, *Lewis*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Taggart*, *Bramwell*, *The Bill*, *Hard to Get*, *The Worst Week of My Life*, *Doctors*, *Moving On* and *Decoy Bride*.

Maureen won the Herald Angel Award for Best Actress in 2000, the Manchester Evening News Award for Best Actress in a Visiting Production in 2002 and the Pye Radio Best Actress Award in 1983. She has also been nominated for Best Female Performance 2011-12 by the Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland (CATS) for her performance in *27*.

Maureen's previous work for Stellar Quines includes starring in the award-winning *The List*, Muriel Spark's *Girls of Slender Means* at the Edinburgh Festival 2009. She also directed the company's production of *Perfect Pie* by Judith Thomson

## Notes on *The Carousel* from the writer Jennifer Tremblay

The thread that runs through all the scenes/rides in *The Carousel* consists of several fibres. The woman, the narrator, is BRAVE and she demonstrates her courage in her retelling of the past. She is a FEMINIST; she doesn't make claims, but takes what she thinks she is owed. She is looking for JOY, and is trying not to repeat the lives of her mother and grandmother. There is MOVEMENT in the way she has rid herself of the past. In travelling, as men have always done, she brings the waiting to an end and escapes 'the sedentary-ness which exists amongst women'.

You will notice that in every scene, men are both a source of danger; and a source of knowledge – offering a window onto the world.

The women – they are constrained, as they seek to hold back, to imprison. But they are protective and reassuring.

The narrator is always torn between her taste for adventure inherited from the men in her life, and her taste for safety and being maternal. This split is fundamental for me, that's what I mainly wanted to express in the choice of scenes and their order.

I wanted to write a piece whose fundamental theme would be joy. I found sadness along the way. Harshness as well. I especially came to see that joy, in order to exist, must be deeply rooted in the fertile soil of trust. Children, just like adults, can only feel profound joy – a state totally free of anxiety and fear – when they are surrounded by safety and security, and when they feel that they can trust.

This woman, the narrator, tries to rid herself of sadness by instilling in her children a sense of confidence and trust with regard to the world, life and death. This is why joy—metaphorically, those rides on the carousel, becomes possible. So that she herself can climb aboard and take part in that joy and truly feel it, the narrator needs to have faith in the future. Whence the final question: "Will the men I love always come back?"

*The Carousel*, like *The List*, evokes the theme of responsibility. *The Carousel* also expresses, in another way, the weight that women carry on their shoulders from childhood until the end of their days. This weight is huge. With responsibilities inevitably comes guilt. By placing her grandmother, Marie, against the wall, by forcing her to respond to her questions, the narrator shows a hardness unique to women amongst each other.



### From St Malo to Canada

I cross the sea all the way to Saint-Malo.  
Birthplace of my ancestor.  
I seek a trace of him on the ramparts.  
There must be some sign of him somewhere.  
My grandfather told me this...  
My granddaughter:  
Your ancestor crossed the ocean.  
Sailed up the Saguenay.  
His sons were born to a poor girl from France  
His sons settled across the region.  
All his sons.  
And his sons' sons.  
And I came all the way here.  
To this rocky bay to farm this hostile land

As a child the narrator falls victim to her fascination with men and with love. Now, the women who surround her; and she herself don't escape the consequences; each in her own way suffers the abuse of men. Yet strangely, at the same time, the most important things the narrator inherits are passed down by her father and grandfather: The drive to leave, the thirst for travel, to see other places... everything that is movement, discovery, freedom comes from men in this piece. The title, by the way, is eminently masculine.

The narrator's quest is to understand why her mother was sent to boarding school for 10 years, that revelation sheds light on the sorrow borne by three generations of women. I used the same approach I used in *The List* – to be faithful to what occurs in life; the tragic lives cheek by jowl with the everyday. This is at once terrifying and inevitable. Entire families seem on the surface to be at peace while living with tragedies, heartbreak, losses, and abuse that should drive people mad. Our survival depends on our ability to pretend. Despite everything the carousel must keep on turning.

The characters in *The Carousel* are extensions of the landscape that surrounds them. Just as this landscape is part of them. These characters don't exist without this landscape just as this landscape can't exist without them. They are, characters and landscape, so inextricably entwined, that I can't imagine the same tragedy occurring in another context. The isolation, the dry, stony, primitive surroundings, chisel solitary beings, savage characters driven by base instincts. Resources (human, emotional, cultural) are rare. It seems impossible to take refuge with someone comforting, just as it seems impossible to take refuge in a comforting place.

And what is the creaking of that gate? It's the sound that evokes dread. Yes, really, this gate that keeps shutting symbolises dread. A SUFFOCATION linked to fear. Anxiety, fear, dread— here I'm thinking of the definition given by Réjean Ducharme in *L'hiver de force* – it's living as though the worst had already happened. Living it in advance because one is so certain that the worst will happen.

The worst often does happen. But it never looks the way we initially imagined it, even in our worst nightmares.

### Family Tree

