

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 31 to November 5, 2011

MEDIA CONTACT: Josée Duranleau | 416.652.7672 | josee@duranleau.com

**Théâtre Français de Toronto presents Yasmina Reza's "savagely funny" play
*God of Carnage***

"On November 4, at five o'clock in the afternoon in Aspirant-Dunant Square, following a verbal altercation, Ferdinand Reille, aged 11, armed with a stick, struck our son Bruno Houllié in the face." - *God of Carnage*, Yasmina Reza

Toronto, August 31, 2011 - Théâtre français de Toronto is proud to present the triple Tony-award winning Broadway comedy, *Le Dieu du carnage* (GOD OF CARNAGE) by Yasmina Reza. Directed by Diana Leblanc, TfT's French language production will be presented at the Berkeley Street Theatre from October 19 to November 5.

In *GOD OF CARNAGE* two married couples meet to sort out a playground fight between their sons. At first, niceties are observed but as the evening progresses and the rum flows, the gloves come off and the night becomes a side-splitting free-for-all.

The most talked about and critically acclaimed comedy of the 2009 Broadway season, *GOD OF CARNAGE* is the "savagely funny" play by Yasmina Reza, the award-winning playwright of such hits as *ART* and *Life x3*. Hailed by critics as, "Hilarious. Ninety minutes of sustained mayhem" (*The New Yorker*), and "Enormously fun to watch" (*Entertainment Weekly*), *GOD OF CARNAGE* is a comedy of manners... without the manners!

Directed by **Diana Leblanc**. Featuring **Colombe Demers, Olivier L'Écuyer, Christian Laurin** and **Tara Nicodemo**.

Set design & Lighting design: **Glen Charles Landry**; Stage Management: **Gabriel Dubé**; Surtitles: **Gunta Dreifeld**.

TfT is the only Toronto theatre company to have acquired the rights to this play. There will be nine English subtitled performances for English speaking and Francophile theatre goers to enjoy!

The film version is coming out in December 2011. Beat Hollywood and see it here first!

***Le Dieu de carnage (God of Carnage)* by Yasmina Reza**

October 19 to November 5

Théâtre français de Toronto | Berkeley Street Theatre Upstairs – 26 Berkeley Street, Toronto.

OPENING: Friday, October 21

Previews: October 19 and 20 at 8PM

Evening Performances: Wed. to Sat. at 8PM – **Sat. Mat.:** Oct. 29 & Nov. 5 at 3:30 PM – **Sun. Mat.:** Oct. 23 and 30 at 2:30 PM | **English Subtitled Performances:** Oct 19, 21, 26, 28, Nov 2, 4, 5 at 8 PM; Oct. 29 & Nov. 5 at 3:30 PM

Tickets: Adults: \$33 to \$57 | Seniors (65 +): \$28 to \$57. Pay-What-You-Can Wed. evenings.

Box Office: (416) 534-6604 or 1-800-819-4981 and www.theatrefrancais.com



**THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS
DE TORONTO**
DIRECTION ARTISTIQUE
GUY MIGNAULT

PRESS KIT

God of Carnage, by Yasmina Reza

October 19 to November 5, 2011 – Berkeley Street Theatre, Upstairs

Direction: Diana Leblanc

**With Colombe Demers, Christian Laurin, Olivier
L'Écuyer and Tara Nicodemo**

CONCEPTION TEAM

Diana Leblanc: direction

Glen Charles Landry: set and lighting design

Gabriel Dubé: stage management

Surtitles by Gunta Dreifelds.



A production by Théâtre français de Toronto. A Toronto Premiere.

Illustration : Philippe Béha

SYNOPSIS

The Houlliés – he a toilet systems wholesaler and she an activist writer documenting injustices – are the happy parents of eleven-year-old Bruno, who is “brutally” attacked by Ferdinand. Also eleven, he is the son of the Reilles, the father a lawyer at the controversial lab Verenz-Pharma and the mother an investment portfolio advisor. The couples meet to establish a joint statement on the incident involving their children, and their feigned politeness quickly descends into chaos. Don't miss this 2009 Tony award winning play that has taken Broadway and Montréal by storm.



YASMINA REZA – PLAYWRIGHT



Yasmina Reza, a French playwright and novelist, is best known for her play *Art*, which has been performed in more than 35 languages.

Ms. Reza began her career as an actress. She is the daughter of Jewish parents; her mother was Hungarian, her father Iranian. She won a Molière award for her first play, *Conversations After a Burial*, in 1987.

She went on to translate Kafka's *Metamorphosis* for Roman Polanski and to write another play, *Winter Crossing*, which premiered in 1990, but it wasn't until 1994 with the premiere of *Art* in Paris that Ms. Reza received widespread recognition for her work. The 90-minute satire, in which three male friends feud over an all-white painting, earned the playwright international acclaim, as well as a Laurence Olivier Award and a Tony in 1998.

Of her plays, Ben Brantley wrote in the *Times*: "But if the world that Ms. Reza describes is filled with snarled ambiguities, her plays are as orderly as an obsessive-compulsive's sock drawer. Originally written (and produced) in French, they are usually slender sitcoms,

elegantly streaked with troubling shadows and shaped with Cartesian symmetry. They are plays that suggest reassuringly that human depths can, after all, be measured by a slide rule."

Her more recent plays include *Life X 3* (2000) and *A Spanish Play* (2004). She is the author of several novels, including *Desolation*, *Adam Haberberg*, and *Hammerklavier*. Her book *L'Aube le Soir ou la Nuit* (*Dawn Evening or Night*) dealt with Nicolas Sarkozy's pursuit of the French presidency.

God of Carnage won the Olivier Award in London as Best New Comedy in 2009 and three Tony Awards in Broadway in 2009. Yasmina Reza wrote the script for Roman Polanski adaptation of the play into a movie. *Carnage* will open in theatres on December 16, 2011.

Source: This biography comes in part from an article from The New York Times, March 23, 2009.

THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

"I don't believe that human beings are peaceful. I think that they haven't evolved since the Stone Age and the social veneer that shields us from brutality is disturbingly thin, waiting to be pricked. Put four people in an elevator which breaks down, and they go crazy. Panic ensues and everyone gets trampled. Watch children in a sandbox, they have no other choice but to slug it out over a toy.

I write nervy theatre, because we are governed by nerves. I have always created well-bred characters who promise to behave. But since they are also terribly impulsive, they veer off their desired course. They will skid, but always against their will, even in the middle of skidding. This is precisely the point of the fight against the self that interests me."

YASMINA REZA

Source: Le Nouvel Observateur, February 14, 2008.

DIANA LEBLANC – DIRECTOR



Artistic Director of TfT from 1991 to 1996, she directed, among others, the following plays: *Eddie*, *Les Fantastiques*, *La Répétition*, *La Double Inconstance*, *Soirée Jacques Brel*, *Les Femmes savantes*, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*, *Fragment de mensonges inutiles*, *À toi, pour toujours*, *ta Marie-Lou* and *Les Femmes savantes*. At Théâtre français de Toronto, she has acted in *La Maison suspendue*, *Damnée Manon*, *Sacrée Sandra*, *Le Pays dans la gorge*, *Le Chien*, and *La Voix humaine*. Bilingual, she has acted at and directed for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, National Arts Centre (NAC), Tarragon Theatre, Citadel Theatre, Neptune Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, and Segal Theatre. For the Canadian Opera Company, she has directed *Dialogues des Carmélites* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. Founding member of Soupepper Theatre Company à Toronto, she recently directed *The Price* by Arthur Miller. Ms. Leblanc was one of the first graduates of the National Theatre School in 1962 where she studied in both languages. She is a recipient of the Prix Alliance Française.

THE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

At first glance, Yasmina Reza gives us ordinary people in ordinary circumstances. She then proceeds to a vivisection of their motives, their morals, the state of their souls. Along with the characters in the play, the audience is witness to this carnage. At the end, nothing is the same and we have laughed a lot.

Personally, I see no cynicism in her method. Rather she fixes us in her scathing gaze and poses existential questions. Her regard is lucid and, I would say, affectionate.

An actress first, she writes unforgettable, extravagant and, yes, touching characters. With Glen Charles, our designer, the challenge for the actors: Colombe, Tara, Christian and Olivier, is to bring the beating hearts and lively minds of these characters to life in all their cruelty and splendour.

*à vous,
Diana Leblanc*



COLOMBE DEMERS – VÉRONIQUE

Since graduating from the Conservatoire d'art dramatique in Montréal, Colombe has participated in numerous productions in Toronto and throughout Canada, including *La Double inconstance*, *Soirée Tchekhov*, *Les Femmes savantes*, *George Dandin* (TFT); *King Lear*, *Amadeus*, *The Little Foxes* (Stratford); *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *You Can't Take it With You* (Shaw); *Romeo and Juliet* (Canadian Stage); *The Game of Love and Chance* (Pleiades); *Counter Service* (Tarragon); *A Flea In Her Ear* (Soulpepper); *Chekhov Longs* (Theatre Smith-Gilmore); *Hedda Gabler* (Saidye-Bronfman); *The Shape of Things* (MTC/Citadel); *Macbeth* (Festival of Classics); *Insomnia* (Necessary Angel). With her company This is a Bird she wrote, directed, and acted in the production *The Long Valley*, based on the John Steinbeck short story collection (a Soulpepper co-production). It was nominated for three Dora Awards, one Stirling Award, and one Merritt Award. Selected films include *Pointe-aux-Chimères*, *Appassionata*, *The Age of Dorian*, *Deadly Appearances*, and the upcoming *The Saint Judes* (NFB). This winter she goes back on tour to Vancouver and Halifax with *The Russian Play* by Hannah Moscovitch.



CHRISTIAN LAURIN – ALAIN

Christian is thrilled to return to Théâtre français de Toronto to perform in *God of Carnage*. Originally from Montréal, Christian studied acting at the Neighborhood Playhouse (NYC). In 1992, Christian moved to Toronto to collaborate with Mump & Smoot for a Canada /US tour. Christian also worked with Theatre Smith-Gilmour on three productions: *Le Malade imaginaire*, *Dante's Inferno* at the Factory Theatre, and *In the Wings of Eden*. At the TFT he played in *Fragments de Mensonges Inutiles*, *Les Précieuses ridicules* and *Le Médecin volant*. His other theatre credits include : *The Hollow*, (Canadian Stage), *Fallen Angels* (Theatre Aquarius) and *Carmen* (COC) Christian has also appeared in numerous films and television productions, such as *The Sopranos* (HBO), *The Pacifier* (Disney), *Hades Factor* (CBS), *The Pathfinder* (Halkmark Entertainment), *Meteo+* (TFO) and *Victor*, produced by the CBC. Christian will also be seen in January 2012 in TFO's brand new TV series *Les Bleus de Ramville*.



OLIVIER L'ÉCUYER – MICHEL

Olivier was in TfT's production of Yasmina Reza's *Art* twelve years ago. He is now delighted to take part in *God of Carnage*, his fifteenth production at TfT. TfT audiences have seen Olivier in *Tartuffe*, *Le Faucon*, *Un Air de famille*, *La Critique de l'École des femmes*, *Le Mariage forcé* by Molière, *Portrait chinois d'une imposteure*, and in the cast of *L'Avare*

alongside Guy Mignault; this production received a Masque award in 2006. Two years ago, Olivier returned to the TfT for Michel Tremblay's well-received *Fragments de mensonges inutiles*. Olivier was in the cast of *Soirée Tchèque* and participated in the show's triumphant Québec tour. He has been a hilarious *Gars de Québec*, followed by the English version, *The Government Guy*, at Tarragon Theatre. Olivier has appeared in various films and series shot in both Québec and Ontario, including the new series *Les Bleus de Ramville*, which will debut on TFO in 2012. He was part of the cast of the TFO series *Francoeur* and he played businessman Sean Fraser in the tenth season of the popular series *L'Auberge du chien noir* at Radio-Canada.



TARA NICODEMO – ANNETTE

Tara Nicodemo is a graduate of the Stella Adler Conservatory in New York. Some of her favourite stage experiences include *The Shape of Things*, *Hellfire Pass*, and *Paradise By The River* (Centaur Theatre); *Dangerous Liaisons* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Segal Centre); *Cringeworthy* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *Beyond Mozambique* (Factory Theatre); *Hamlet, Tout Comme Elle/Just Like Her* (Necessary Angel) and *Hard Love* (Teatron Theatre). She has also appeared in several television series and feature films, such as *Mambo Italiano*, *Across the River to Motor City*, *Web of Lies*, *A Wake*, *Edwin Boyd*, *The Border*, *Against The Wall*, and

All Souls. A two-time Dora Mavor Moore Award nominee, Tara will be seen onstage this spring in *Same Time Next Year* at the Segal Centre in Montréal.



GLEN CHARLES LANDRY – SET AND LIGHTING DESIGN

Glen Charles Landry has worked in theatre and television for over ten years. Glen Charles counts more than sixty productions that have been performed just about anywhere in the world. Recently, he made his directing debut with *Croquis Urbains*, a one-man show inspired by his published collection of poetry. For four straight years, he has been production designer for the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, broadcast on Global and APTN. Last summer, Glen Charles was production designer for the opening and closing ceremonies of the World Athletic Games, broadcast on Radio-Canada and CBC. Most recently, he was production designer for the new Shawn Desman video, *Electric/Night Like This*. He was also set designer for the reality series *The Big Idea 2*, which will be broadcast on APTN this spring. He has designed the set for the February 2011 production of *À toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou* at TFT, where he recently returned to the stage in *The School for Wives*, in the role of Enrique.



GABRIEL DUBÉ – STAGE MANAGEMENT

A native of Saint-Boniface, Manitoba, Gabriel got his first taste of theatre at Collège Saint-Boniface, followed by the Cercle Molière as an actor, stage manager, propsman, and assistant director. He was a radio producer at Radio-Canada's CKSB Saint-Boniface from 1972-1978, then at CJBC from 1978-2006. For TFT's 35th anniversary, he recorded a compact disc commemorating the production *La, la, la, mine de rien*. At the beginning of the 1980s, he was a member of TFT's board of directors. Today he works in the entertainment and communications fields as a director, consultant, and event coordinator. Gabriel stage managed TFT's production *Et si on chantait* and *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* in 2008; *Le Dîner de cons* in 2009; *Fragments de mensonges inutiles* and *Les Fridolinades* in 2010; *À toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou* and *The School for Wives* in 2011.