

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HEAD BATTLES HEART IN NEW PRODUCTION OF BERNARD SHAW'S *HEARTBREAK HOUSE***

*- Provocative Shaw favourite debuts in the round at the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre -*

**Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON (June 18, 2026)** – One of the most important plays of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Bernard Shaw's **Heartbreak House** returns to the Shaw Festival for the 2026 season. Directed by Shaw Festival artistic director, **Tim Carroll**, this three-act production bursts with Shavian wit, whip-smart dialogue and prescient questions about human nature and society. This new production launches at the **Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre** on June 20.

Ellie Dunn (**Allison Edwards-Crewe**) is engaged to be married to ruthless businessman 'Boss' Mangan (**Graeme Somerville**), but her heart is already engaged elsewhere. When she arrives at the home of her friend Hesione (**Julia Course**), Ellie finds several surprises in store for her, and she soon learns the country estate is called Heartbreak House for good reason. With war looming on the horizon, questions of love and heartache linger while Hesione's eccentric father Captain Shotover (**Tom Rooney**) declares that society's ship is bound blindly for the rocks.

The production also features the stellar ensemble of **Neil Barclay, Fiona Byrne, Jason Cadieux, Kristi Frank, Sochi Fried, Martin Happer, Sanjay Talwar** and **Michael Therriault**.

The off-kilter world of **Heartbreak House** is visually anchored by **Ximena Pinilla's** set and costume design, lighting design by **Louise Guinand** and music direction, original music and sound design by **Claudio Vena** with movement direction by **Alexis Milligan**. The stage management team includes stage manager **Amy Jewell** and assistant stage manager **Michael Duggan**.

On stage at the **Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre** (10 Queen's Parade) from June 20 to October 3 (available for review beginning July 9), **Heartbreak House** is recommended for audience members 12+. Running time is approximately 2 hours 50 minutes including one 15-minute intermission and one 5-minute break.

**Heartbreak House** is generously sponsored by the **Gabriel Pascal Memorial Fund** and the **Dorothy Strelsin Foundation**.

The Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre is sponsored by **Paradigm Capital Inc.**

### **Cast:**

Neil Barclay	Mazzini
Fiona Byrne	Nurse Guinness
Jason Cadieux	Randall
Julia Course	Hesione
Allison Edwards-Crewe	Ellie Dunn
Kristi Frank	Maid
Sochi Fried	Ariadne
Martin Happer	Hector
Tom Rooney	Captain Shotover
Graeme Somerville	Boss Mangan
Sanjay Talwar	Burglar
Michael Therriault	Butler

### **Creative & Production:**

Tim Carroll	Director
Alexis Milligan	Movement Director
Ximena Pinilla	Set and Costume Designer
Louise Guinand	Lighting Designer
Claudio Vena	Music Director, Original Music and Sound Designer
Amy Jewell	Stage Manager
Michael Duggan	Assistant Stage Manager
Lisa Russell	Production Stage Manager
Leigh McClymont	Associate Production Stage Manager
Jeffrey Simlett	Voice and Dialect Coach

### **Beyond the Stage Events and Activities**

To complement its world-class performances, this season the Shaw Festival will offer more than 5,000 Beyond the Stage events, classes and activities for people of all ages. Programming includes [Positive Aging events](#), [Arts Education for children and youth](#), [Backstage Tours and Artist Conversations](#), [Coffee Concerts](#), [Speakeasies](#), [What's In Your Songbook](#), [Gospel Choir](#), [Perfect Pairing Concerts](#), [Pop-Up Patios](#) and so much more. Visit [shawfest.com/beyondthestage](http://shawfest.com/beyondthestage) for more information. Generously supported by **The Martin Family** as The Shaw's Education Partner. Beyond the Stage workshops graciously supported by the **DeRoy Testamentary Foundation**.

The Shaw Festival's 2026 season runs through to December 23 and is supported by the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

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The Shaw Festival wishes to acknowledge and honour the land upon which its patrons and company members gather as the historic and traditional territory of First Nations peoples. Recognition and thanks are extended to the Neutral Nation, the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee for their stewardship of these lands over millennia.

### **About the Shaw Festival**

One of the largest charitable theatre companies in North America, the Shaw Festival's mission is to enrich and connect people's lives through theatre. Based in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake, The Shaw's 2026 productions include [Funny Girl](#), [One for the Pot](#), [Amadeus](#), [Sleuth](#), [Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense](#), [A New Work in Progress](#), [The Wind in the Willows](#), [Heartbreak House](#) and [Ohio State Murders](#). The Shaw Festival's Holiday Season includes [A Year with Frog and Toad](#) and [Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella](#).

Through its [All.Together.Now](#) campaign, The Shaw is creating new spaces and programs where people can build real human connections and rediscover their creativity. For more information, visit [shawfest.com](http://shawfest.com).

*We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing. ~ Bernard Shaw*

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