

# MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

by Robert Cushman

presented by zone41 theatre in CowardFest | Royal MTC's 2015 Master Playwright Festival

**BEN CARLSON** as Noel Coward

Ben was recently described by Chris Jones of **The Chicago Tribune** as

*one of North America's best and most restless classical performers.*

He was last seen at **Manitoba Theatre Centre** as Mr. Lockhart in *The Seafarer*, co-directed by Krista Jackson, director of *Private Lives*. He was also seen at MTC in *The Homecoming* and *Closer*. Other Winnipeg work includes the Gentleman Caller in *The Glass Menagerie* at **Prairie Theatre Exchange**.



He currently works at **The Stratford Festival**, and has given many acclaimed performances there, including *Hamlet*, *Benedick*, *Brutus*, *Leontes* in *The Winter's Tale*, *Jack* in *The Importance Of Being Earnest*, *Alceste* in *The Misanthrope*, *Touchstone* in *As You Like It*, *Feste* in *Twelfth Night*, *Burleigh* in *Mary Stuart*, *Octavius* in *Antony And Cleopatra*, the *Chaplain* in *Mother Courage And Her Children* and many others.

He has done over twenty-five productions at **The Shaw Festival**, including *John Tanner* in an uncut and wildly successful *Man And Superman*; some favourites there include *Cusins* in *Major Barbara*, *Andrei* in *Three Sisters*, *Eustace* in *The Return Of The Prodigal*, *Georg* in *She Loves Me*, *Chris* in *All My Sons* and *Constantine* in *The Seagull*.

He has performed in theatres across Canada and the United States, including a particularly rewarding association with **Chicago Shakespeare Theater**, where he has played *Hamlet* (Joseph Jefferson Award, Chicago Theatre), *Macbeth*, *Frank* in *The School For Lies* and, most recently, *Pericles*. A few other favourites have been *London Road* at **Canadian Stage Co.**; *Cloud 9* for **Mirvish Productions**; *Our Town* with **Soulpepper Theatre**; *Berowne* in *Love's Labour's Lost* at the **National Arts Centre**; *Biff* in *Death Of A Salesman* at **Neptune Theatre**; *Marchbanks* in *Candida* for **Theatre Calgary** and *Torvald* in *The Doll's House* with **Theatre DVxT** (Dora Award, Toronto theatre).

He has also done quite a lot of **Noel Coward**, including *Nicky* in *The Vortex*, *Simon* in *Hay Fever*, *Joe* in *Cavalcade*, *John* in *Easy Virtue* and, recently, *Charles* in *Blithe Spirit*, directed by Brian Bedford. Next week he returns to Stratford to start rehearsals for *Petruchio* in *The Taming Of The Shrew* with his wife *Deborah Hay* as *Kate* and *Captain von Trapp* in *The Sound Of Music*, music direction by *Laura Burton*.

**LAURA BURTON** on piano  
Composer, Musical Director and Pianist



Working across the continent as a composer/ musical director, Laura's highlights include: **A.C.T., Walnut St. Theatre, The Citadel, NAC** and **The Stratford Festival**, coming up to her 36th season as musical director for *The Sound of Music*.

Selected: *Elephant Man* **Canadian Stage**/Robin Phillips, *Hamlet* **Stratford Festival**/Joseph Zeigler, *Mother Courage and her Children* **Stratford Festival**/Martha Henry, \**Rich and Famous* **A.C.T.** (San Francisco)/ John Rando, *Don Carlos* **Soulpepper Co.**/Robin Phillips, *The Heiress* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, **Walnut St. Theatre** (Philadelphia)/ *Malcolm Black*, *Brent Carver Concerts*, **Royal Alexandra Theatre, Soulpepper Co., Niagara Music Festival.**

**AWARDS:** 2014 Tyrone Award and five Guthrie Awards from the Stratford Festival, two Sterling Awards for musical direction at Edmonton's Citadel Theatre. \*San Francisco Bay Area Awards (nominated for music direction).

**ROBERT CUSHMAN** playwright



Robert Cushman was born in London, and educated at Cambridge University. He went from there to the BBC where he worked in radio drama, TV arts programs, and for the World Service. He then directed in the London and regional theatre, and was theatre critic of **The Observer** from 1973 to 1984.

He moved to Canada in 1987, and has been theatre critic of the **National Post** since its inception in 1999. He has written extensively for other British and Canadian newspapers and magazines, and for the **New York Times**.

He has continued to work in the theatre as an author, director and even performer; the musical *Look to the Rainbow*, which he devised and directed, was produced in the **West End** in 1985. He was director of corporate communications for **Livent Inc.** in 1998-99.

He has also been a prolific broadcaster, especially on musical theatre and American popular song; popular series include *Book, Music and Lyrics* (BBC) and *Songbook* (CBC). His book *Fifty Seasons at Stratford, a history of the Stratford Festival*, was published in 2002; and he is a record eight-time winner of the Nathan Cohen Award for Excellence in Theatre Criticism. He is married with three children and lives in Toronto.