

# GRAND MAGIC

## GRAND MAGIC

By **Eduardo De Filippo**

Directed by **Antoni Cimolino**

In a new version by **John Murrell** and **Donato Santeramo**  
World Première Translation

## GRADE RECOMMENDATION

7+

## CONTENT ADVISORY

Please see the show page for a detailed audience advisory.

## SYNOPSIS

In his lifetime (1900-1984), playwright, actor, and theatre and film director Eduardo De Filippo was so beloved by the Italian public that he is still known across the country as “Eduardo.” A performer and playwright from a young age, De Filippo bought a Naples theatre in 1948 and transformed it into a venue for some of the greatest Italian plays of the 20th century (several written and directed by De Filippo himself). He was made *senatore a vita* (senator for life) by the Italian Prime Minister and his plays and films are enjoyed by audiences around the world.

*Grand Magic* is a perfect introduction to De Filippo’s *oeuvre*. With its dizzying cast of characters, wacky subplots, pratfalls, and flights of fancy, the play captures De Filippo’s unique tragicomic vision. The hilarious and deeply moving play is presented in a new version by John Murrell and Donato Santeramo, enjoying its world première at the Stratford Festival’s Tom Patterson Theatre.

*Grand Magic* opens in a seaside Naples town not long after the Second World War. There the well-heeled vacationers of the Hotel Metropol pass the time snickering at the illusions of the



Geraint Wyn Davies. Photo by Ted Belton.

past-his-prime magician Otto Marvuglia and gossiping about the antics of Calogero Di Spelta, the jealous husband of the beautiful Marta. Calogero’s jealousy, however, is not unfounded. So desperate is Marta to run off with her lover that she bribes Otto to make her disappear inside a magic box during his show. Otto’s illusion works, but when the police join the search for the missing Marta, the magician is forced to pull off his greatest trick: convincing Calogero that his wife is hiding somewhere inside the magic box.

The play’s theatrically absurdist style, which seamlessly blends sentimentality, farce and erudite philosophizing, gives North American audiences unfamiliar with modern Italian theatre a crash course in learning to laugh while asking life’s most perplexing questions. How do we separate illusion from reality? Are the two categories as different as we tell ourselves? And when it comes to the illusions we choose to believe in, aren’t we all practiced magicians? *Grand Magic* reveals the illusions and stories we choose to live by without judging us for these very human magic tricks.

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Global Competencies:
  - Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Metacognition, Self-Awareness
- Grade 7-8
  - The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts)
  - Language
- Grade 9-12
  - The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts)
  - English
- Grade 11-12
  - Social Sciences and Humanities

## THEMES

- Belief and Disbelief
- Deceptive Appearances
- Expectation
- Faith and Trust
- Gossip
- Hope
- Illusion and Reality
- Infidelity
- Jealousy
- Performance
- Relationships
- Storytelling

## DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do you think people sometimes choose to believe something even though they know it can't be true? Why?
- Telling a "white lie" means that one hides the complete truth to spare someone's feelings. Have you ever told a "white lie" before? How did you feel in that situation?
- What does hope mean to you? How and where do you find hope when things are hard or feel overwhelming?
- The "Illusory Truth Effect" is when people come to believe false information is true when they hear it repeated over and over again. How does this relate to the play as well as to current issues of misinformation?

## STUDY GUIDES

2023 Shorts and Study Guides and those from previous seasons are available free of charge online at <https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/Learn/Teachers/ResourcesPD>



Geraint Wyn Davies. Photo by Ted Belton.

## BOOKING INFORMATION: TICKETS, WORKSHOPS & CHATS

### STUDENT MATINÉES

You may book any available date, but selected student matinée performances for this show are at 2 p.m. on the following dates:

- Monday, May 8th
- Wednesday, May 17th
- Friday, May 19th
- Wednesday, May 31st
- Wednesday, June 7th
- Friday, May 16th
- Friday, May 23rd
- Thursday, June 29th
- Friday, September 8th
- Friday, September 15th
- Tuesday, September 19th
- Tuesday, September 26th

### WORKSHOPS & CHATS

Pre or Post-Show Workshops and Post-Show Chats (virtual, onsite or at your school/centre) can be booked by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



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Tools for Teachers includes Prologues, Study Guides and Stratford Shorts.

## PROUD SEASON PARTNERS



Corporate support for the 2023 season at the Tom Patterson Theatre is generously provided by BMO Financial Group.

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