



**THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS  
DE TORONTO**

DIRECTION ARTISTIQUE GUY MIGNAULT

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## PRESS KIT

# LE DÎNER DE CONS (THE DINNER GAME)

APRIL 22 TO MAY 9, 2009

Written by Francis VEBER

WITH Stéphanie BROSCART · Paul ESSIEMBRE · Marianne LAMBERT · Jean-Michel LE GAL · René LEMIEUX ·  
Pierre SIMPSON

DIRECTED BY Guy MIGNAULT

SETS AND LIGHTING Dominic MANCA

COSTUMES Nina OKENS

STAGE MANAGEMENT Gabriel DUBÉ

**A production of Théâtre français de Toronto (TfT).**

## SYNOPSIS

This piece, a cult hit onstage and in film, has become synonymous with scathing comedy that denounces the excesses of today's society. Its premise begins with some characters tracking down a complete idiot and inviting him to dinner with the intention of mocking him the entire evening without him ever realizing it. But what happens when the game does not unfold as planned, when nothing seems to stop the invited idiot from making things worse? The result, much to our amusement, is one of the most hilarious and intelligent comedies of our age. Nothing is left to chance. Between continuous mistaken identity, ongoing word games, and table-turning situations, it is impossible for us to avoid both a serious case of the giggles and a critical look at society. We are sure to see humour displayed in all its forms as society's excess is gleefully denounced.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Friends,

Please let me welcome you.

Here we have a dinner that is by no means innocent. To end the season, I wanted to please you while at the same time indulging myself and the actors and designers a bit. For me, Francis Veber is a

SALLE DE SPECTACLE

NOS SPECTACLES ONT LIEU AU BERKELEY STREET THEATRE · 26, RUE BERKELEY (AU SUD DE LA RUE FRONT, UNE RUE À L'OUEST DE PARLIAMENT)  
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modern-day Molière. Like Molière, he uses the stage to denounce the faults and flaws in our fellow man, and has us laugh about it. It's up to us to decipher the moral in Veber's texts, all the while enjoying ourselves.

It is clear to me that in doing theatre, we are performing neither an act of altruism nor open-heart surgery (although at times, we put ourselves in a state that verges on an emotional coronary and we would seem to need "open sensitivity surgery"). In doing theatre, we decide to shed our own skin and put on the skin of characters we are inventing. We agree to transform ourselves, to disguise ourselves, and to try with our feelings, to make you laugh. Without pretension or artifice, you will see this very talented group of actors act out a modern fable that shows how some humans treat each other. Molière says in *The Misanthrope*:

*I will fly from an abyss where vice is triumphant;  
and seek out some small secluded nook on earth;  
where one may enjoy the freedom of being an honest man.*  
([bibliomania.com](http://bibliomania.com))

And Veber has Marlène say:

*I am going to go back to India. Personally, I can't live here anymore; the people are too nasty.*

Do you see what I'm saying? There are similarities. Finally, perhaps humans shouldn't improve themselves — what then would playwrights write about?

Enjoy the show!

Guy

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Guy MIGNAULT — Director

TfT's Artistic Director since 1997, Guy is a multi-talented artist. At the helm of TfT he is a performer whose comic talent is much appreciated by theatre and television lovers, not to mention being a director and playwright. Recently, he has been seen on the TFO series *Françœur* and *Météo +*. On stage at TfT, Guy has played the parts of Josaphat-le-violon under his own direction in Michel Tremblay's *Bonbons assortis*, Harpagon in the brilliant production *L'Avare*, directed by Jean-Stéphane Roy, and the hilarious Monsieur Jourdain in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. When not performing his numerous roles at TfT, Guy fulfills his dream of creating musical productions: *C'était un p'tit Bonheur*, which received a Dora for Best Musical Production in 1998; *La, la la, mine de rien*; *Autour de Kurt Weill*; and *Et si on chantait...* (2007). Finally, he is also the author of *Bonjour, Monsieur de La Fontaine*, a production for young audiences which toured Ontario for three consecutive years and was seen by 27,000 schoolchildren.



### **Stéphanie BROSCHE — Marlène Sasseur**

At TfT, Stéphanie has performed the part of Nice in *Portrait Chinois d'Une Imposteure* and three roles in *Jeux d'amour et de folies: Feu la mère de madame, Une paire de gifles, and Une lettre bien tapée* at TfT. She has acted in *Dying To Be Sick* at the National Arts Centre (Angélique, Le Malade imaginaire, Pleiades Theatre) and had a principal role in the CBC radio drama *Canada 2056*. Most recently, she played the part of Almada in the world premiere of *Toronto The Good* at Factory Theatre. She has long been a host and performer on children's broadcasts for TVOntario, TFO, and YTV.

Stéphanie is delighted to "retread" the boards with this wonderful French comedy!

### **Paul ESSIEMBRE — Pierre Brochant**

Paul Essiembre returns to Théâtre français de Toronto after having already acting in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Art*. At the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, he has played the roles of Ferdinand (*The Duchess of Malfi*), Don Carlos (*Don Juan* — also at Théâtre du Nouveau Monde), Walter Cunningham (*To Kill A Mockingbird*), Eurymachus/Thersites (*The Odyssey*), and Malcolm (*Macbeth*). With Studio 180, he has played the part of Dominique DeVillepin (*Stuff Happens*). At Factory Theatre, he has played Sean (*Zadie's Shoes*) and Pierre (*Oui*). At the Centaur Theatre, he was Picasso (*Picasso at the Lapin Agile*). At Canadian Stage, he appeared in the role of Mac (*Tillsonburg*). At the Saidye Bronfman Centre, he played Milo (*Sleuth*). With the Atlantic Theatre Festival, he acted the parts of Iago (*Othello*) and Kemper (*The Matchmaker*).

### **Marianne LAMBERT — Christine Brochant**

Marianne is very happy to be returning to the TfT stage after a long absence (and two children!). She holds a bachelor's degree in theatre from Concordia and a master's in acting from York University.

At TfT, she has performed in *Bonjour, Monsieur de La Fontaine*, a production for young audiences which toured francophone schools in Ontario. She has also played the part of Yo-Yo in *Un air de famille*. On television, she co-hosted the program *Mégallô*, then Mini TFO for the little ones.

### **Jean-Michel LE GAL — Juste Leblanc**

Jean-Michel trained at Vancouver's Studio 58 and at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival's Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre. In Vancouver, he has acted in *Elisa's Skin* (Pi Theatre), *Unity 1918* (Western Canada Theatre), *An Evening With Beckett* (Tandem Productions), and *Menteurs* (Théâtre La Seizième), for which he received a Jessie Richardson nomination. At Stratford, he has acted in *Henry VIII, Noises Off, The Tempest, As You Like It, The Lark, London Assurance, The Merchant of Venice, Comedy of Errors, An Ideal Husband*, and in Molière's *Don Juan*, a bilingual co-production with Théâtre du Nouveau Monde. Jean-Michel is a recipient of the John Hirsch Award, for the most promising young actor. He has also appeared on television and in several independent films.

### **René LEMIEUX — Sorbier and Lucien Cheval**

Originally from Saint-Éphrem in Beauce, near Québec City, René came to Toronto more than 25 years ago. Long-time TfT viewers will remember him in *Casino voleur* in 1980, his first French-language part in Toronto. Since then, René has played, among others, Argan in *Le Malade imaginaire*, Vladimir in *En attendant Godot*,



Harpagon in *L'Avare*, and Fabrizio in *La Locandiera*, all at TfT. He has also directed numerous productions at TfT and Theatre Glendon. René has played numerous roles on television and in film, participating in a great number of TFO series. The most recent, *Météo +*, is currently running on the network.

### **Pierre SIMPSON — François Pignon**

Pierre is delighted to have the chance to tackle the great challenge of playing Pignon! Originally from Welland, Pierre has a theatre degree from the University of Ottawa. He has had the good fortune to work with the majority of francophone and anglophone companies in the Ottawa region. He has trod the boards of TfT in *La Meute*, *Apocalypse à Kamloops*, *Exit(s)*, *Le Misanthrope*, *Et si on chantait* (the last three having been nominated for Dora Mavor Moore Awards), and co-directed and designed the sets for the Vox Théâtre children's production of *Oz*, (nominated for a Masque Award). Pierre was also noticed in *A Thought in Three Parts* and *Raising Luke* at the SummerWorks Festival, *The Border* on CBC, as well as on *Françœur II*, *Mission XY*, *Pointe-aux-Chimères*, and *Météo +* for TFO.

### **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, props man, 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. Last season, he stage managed TfT's production *Et si on chantait...*; earlier this season, he was stage manager for *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*.

### **Dominic MANCA — Sets and Lighting**

Originally from Edmonton, Dominic came to Toronto in 2006. He began working with TfT shortly after his arrival, at first as a stage manager for the productions *Bonbons assortis*, *Apocalypse à Kamloops*, *Le Misanthrope*, and *Des fraises en janvier*. Last year he designed the sets for the musical production *Et si on chantait...*

Always glad to work with this marvelous team, Dominic has returned to TfT this season, to design the sets and lighting for the comedy *Le Dîner de cons*. When not working at TfT, you can find him just two steps away from their office, in TFO's set and prop department. Enjoy the show!

### **Nina OKENS — Costumes**

Nina's most recent projects at TfT were last season's *Des fraises en janvier* and *Le Misanthrope* and *Bonbons assortis* the season before. She has designed the costumes for *The Merchant of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* for Shakespeare in the Rough; and *The Awakening*, *Orchideliériu*, and *Medici Slot Machine* for Pea Green/Theater Voce. Living in Toronto since 1996, Nina has been TfT's regular wardrobe mistress for several years. She has worked on the productions *Le Collier d'Hélène*; *Jeux d'amour et de folie*; *Le Visiteur*; *Un air de famille*; *La, la, la, mine de rien*; *Grimm Grimm*; *La Critique de l'École des Femmes*; and *Mariage forcé*, among others. Outside of TfT, Nina has also designed costumes for Theatre Sheridan.



**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 – May 9, 2009**

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***Le Dîner de Cons (The Dinner Game)***

**by Francis Veber**

**COULD VEBER BE THE MOLIÈRE OF OUR TIME?**

**Toronto, March 2, 2009** –The Théâtre français de Toronto (TfT) is pleased to close its season with Francis Veber's ***Le Dîner de Cons (The Dinner Game)***. An original TfT production, the play will be directed by Guy Mignault, TfT's artistic director. This hilarious comedy runs at the Berkeley Street Theatre from April 22 to May 9, 2009.

This piece, a cult hit onstage and in film, has become synonymous with scathing comedy that denounces the excesses of today's society. Its premise begins with some characters tracking down a complete idiot and inviting him to dinner with the intention of mocking him the entire evening without him ever realizing it. But what happens when the game does not unfold as planned, when nothing seems to stop the invited idiot from making things worse? The result, much to our amusement, is one of the most hilarious and intelligent comedies of our age. Nothing is left to chance. Between continuous mistaken identity, ongoing word games, and table-turning situations, it is impossible for us to avoid both a serious case of the giggles and a critical look at society. We are sure to see humour displayed in all its forms as society's excess is gleefully denounced.

Directed by **Guy Mignault**. Featuring **Stéphanie Broschart, Paul Essiembre, Marianne Lambert, Jean-Michel Le Gal, René Lemieux,** and **Pierre Simpson**.

An original production of the Théâtre français de Toronto.

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***LE DÎNER DE CONS (THE DINNER GAME)*** by Francis Veber

**April 22 – May 9, 2009**

**Théâtre français de Toronto** | Berkeley Street Theatre – 26 Berkeley Street Upstairs

**Evening performances:** Wednesday to Saturday at 8 p.m.

**Saturday matinee:** May 2 and 9 at 3:30 p.m.

**Sunday matinee:** April 26 and May 3 at 2:30 p.m.

**English-surtitled performances:** April 23 and 24 (Opening Night), May 1, 6 and 9 at 8 p.m. and May 9 at 3:30 p.m.

**Tickets:** \$29 to \$46 | Students, Seniors, and Groups: \$24 to \$32

**Box Office:** (416) 534-6604 or 1-800-819-4981 | [www.theatrefrancais.com](http://www.theatrefrancais.com)

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