

Start Your Search Here



Welcome to *Donald's DISH*

(<http://donalddish.ca/>)

REVIEWS/OPINIONS ([HTTP://DONALDDISH.CA/REVIEWS/](http://donalddish.ca/reviews/))

DISH AWARDS 5 WINNERS & ANNOUNCEMENT ([HTTP://DONALDDISH.CA/THE-AWARDS/](http://donalddish.ca/the-awards/))

Don Quichotte: Celebrating Love, Life and Language While Dreaming the Impossible Dream (<http://donalddish.ca/2014/03/20/don-quichotte-celebrating-love-life-and-language-while-dreaming-the-impossible-dream/>)

By Alan R. Heatherington (<http://donalddish.ca/author/alan/>) on March 20, 2014

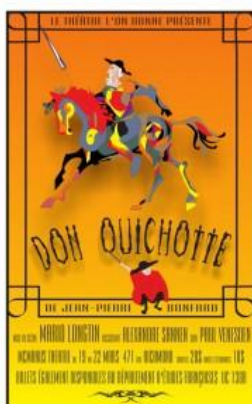
TWEET ([HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/SHARE?URL=HTTP://DONALDDISH.CA/2014/03/20/DON-QUICHOTTE-CELEBRATING-LOVE-LIFE-AND-LANGUAGE-WHILE-DREAMING-THE-IMPOSSIBLE-DREAM/&TEXT=DON](https://twitter.com/share?url=http://donalddish.ca/2014/03/20/don-quichotte-celebrating-love-life-and-language-while-dreaming-the-impossible-dream/&text=don-quichotte:celebratinglove,lifeandlanguagewhiledreamingtheimpossibledream)

QUICHOTTE: CELEBRATING LOVE, LIFE AND LANGUAGE WHILE DREAMING THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM)

SHARE ([HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SHARE.PHP?U=HTTP://DONALDDISH.CA/2014/03/20/DON-](http://www.facebook.com/share.php?u=http://donalddish.ca/2014/03/20/don-quichotte-celebrating-love-life-and-language-while-dreaming-the-impossible-dream/)

QUICHOTTE-CELEBRATING-LOVE-LIFE-AND-LANGUAGE-WHILE-DREAMING-THE-IMPOSSIBLE-DREAM/

REVIEW ([HTTP://DONALDDISH.CA/CATEGORY/REVIEW/](http://donalddish.ca/category/review/))



(<http://donalddish.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/don-quichotte-mcmanus.jpg>) **Don Quichotte de Jean-Pierre Ronfard**

Directed by Mario Longtin
In French with an ensemble cast
McManus Stage
March 19 to 22, 2014, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets \$20

It is a rare pleasure for Londoners to be given the opportunity to attend a theatrical performance where the language spoken is not English. Western University's French Department has enjoyed a long tradition of staging plays by Québécois and other

French-speaking dramatists. Usually, these have been contained on campus. I am glad that le Théâtre l'on donne (note the play-on-words!) chose to mount their production of Jean-Pierre Ronfard's **Don Quichotte** at the McManus stage. Their effort serves as an invitation to the public at large to expose themselves to a real French delight.

Having studied Don Quijote de la Mancha in depth in the original Spanish, I was thrilled to be reacquainted with the wealth of themes presented. Considered to be the first modern novel of our Western Civilization, the Quijote explores the human condition in all its facets: desire versus deed, fact versus fiction, ideal versus reality, beauty versus ugliness, noble cause

PAST REVIEWS

Select Month

BE THE FIRST TO GET OUR REVIEWS

Enter your email address to subscribe to Donald's DISH and receive notifications of news and reviews by email.

Email Address

Subscribe

versus depravity, sanity versus madness, renown versus mortality. I have not read Ronfard's dramatic interpretation of Cervantes' work, but I trust that this production remains faithful to his version. When an artist decides to reinvent someone else's work, he/she runs the risk of mangling the original structure or otherwise deforming its socio-cultural content. In this case, I would say that Ronfard has done a fine job of simplifying a very complex text, while remaining faithful to the original vision. At the same time, he has added elements of contemporary Québécois society to heighten the audience's connection with the plot.



(<http://donalddish.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/don-quichotte-mcmanus-2.jpg>)

The director, Mario Longtin (Photo above, with cast), chose to distribute the roles among his ten actors, so that a scene change requires that each character be played by a different member of the ensemble cast. This can be challenging at first, but the shared experience provides the audience with an underlying portrayal of human interaction as a unifying goal. All of the actors appear comfortable in their role-sharing responsibilities, which can include the transgression of gender identity. It appears that a couple of the cast members are undergraduate students, while others are graduate students and faculty members. Some are remarkable in their ability to portray a well-rounded character within a very limited time. Both set and costume design can best be described as minimalist; a few simple items of clothing serve to identify each character. A colander secured under the neck with a short piece of rope acts as Don Quichotte's cavalier helmet, Membrino. Unfortunately, the shifting of this item on the actors' heads can occasionally distract from the eloquence of their speech. (It was such a joy to listen to the flow of those words!)

The play begins with a group of servants and relatives who express concern over the apparent disappearance of Don Alonso Quijano. This impoverished hidalgo has become convinced that his true identity is that of Don Quichotte de la Triste Figure, a chivalrous hero whose raison d'être focuses on defending the honour of his damsel, Dulcinée du Toboso. After enlisting the aid of a simple villager, Sancho Panza, Don Quichotte prepares to leave in search of adventure, mounted on his imaginary steed, Rossinante. What ensues is a rollicking series of light-hearted mini-disasters when Don Quichotte's inability to distinguish between fantasy and reality brings misfortune to both himself and Sancho Panza. The conclusion of their journey evokes a predictable pathos.

Present on opening night, I noticed that the majority of the audience was comprised of youthful university students, possibly French majors, who had been enticed, cajoled, or otherwise encouraged to view this production. I hope that they came away from this amateur, but admirable, two-act play as I did, with a reaffirmation that the beauty of the spoken word, whether in French, Spanish, English or any other language, continues to exalt and celebrate the possibilities of our collective humanity.

★★★★ (http://donalddish.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Dish-stars-4.png) / 5

Share

Switch

Tweet 2

Share 0

<http://www.pinterest.com>

/pin/create

<http://donalddish.ca/2014/03/20/don-quichotte-celebrating-love-life-and-language-while-dreaming-the-impossible->
<http://donalddish.ca/2014/03/20/don-quichotte-celebrating-love-life-and-language-while-dreaming-the-impossible->



ABOUT ALAN R. HEATHERINGTON

VIEW ALL POSTS ([HTTP://DONALDSDISH.CA/AUTHOR/ALAN/](http://donalddish.ca/author/alan/))

Alan R. Heatherington is a social justice activist and an educator who engages in various artistic pursuits. He holds four degrees from UWO, including an MA in Spanish and a BFA Honors Studio Arts with French. He has written restaurant and theatre reviews as well as social commentary pieces for local publications. Whenever possible, Alan enjoys creating art and travelling to warm climates.



DONALD'S DISH ([HTTP://DONALDSDISH.CA/](http://donalddish.ca/))

Your source for theatre
and film reviews

USERS ON PAGE

Now online: 1

Today: 157

Overall: 67299

REVIEWS/OPINIONS ([HTTP://DONALDSDISH.CA/REVIEWS/](http://donalddish.ca/reviews/))

DISH AWARDS 5 WINNERS & ANNOUNCEMENT
([HTTP://DONALDSDISH.CA/THE-AWARDS/](http://donalddish.ca/the-awards/))

ABOUT DONALD'S DISH ([HTTP://DONALDSDISH.CA/ANNOUNCE/](http://donalddish.ca/announce/))

(<http://twitter.com/TheDonaldNorth>)
(<http://www.facebook.com/donalddish>)
(<http://feeds.feedburner.com/DonalDish>)

