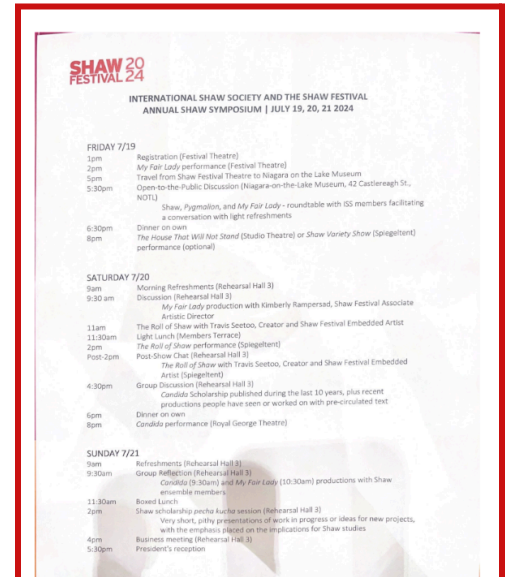


The International Shaw Symposium at the Shaw Festival: Four Days, Five Lovely Plays

MARY M. SORRELS | SUMMER 2024

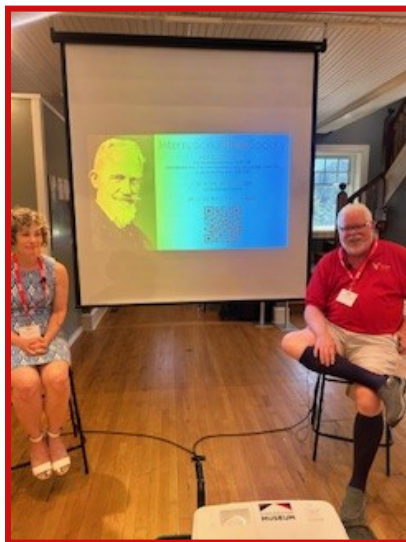
Through the generous support of the Clarence Schools TEPS grant program, I traveled to picturesque Niagara-on-the-Lake to attend a fully immersive symposium hosted by The International Shaw Society (ISS). As an Advanced Placement Literature and Composition and Syracuse University English 181: Class and Literary Texts instructor, the experience proved enlightening and inspiring. The lectures and discussions also provided inspiration for topics relevant to my Women's Studies and Creative Writing electives. I attended theatrical performances and lectures hosted by ISS, a group of active Shaw intellectuals with a mission wholly relevant to 21st century students:



SHAW 20 FESTIVAL 24	
INTERNATIONAL SHAW SOCIETY AND THE SHAW FESTIVAL ANNUAL SHAW SYMPOSIUM JULY 19, 20, 21 2024	
FRIDAY 7/19	
1pm	Registration (Festival Theatre)
2pm	My Fair Lady performance (Festival Theatre)
5pm	Travel from Shaw Festival Theatre to Niagara on the Lake Museum
5:30pm	Open to the Public Discussion (Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, 42 Castlereagh St., NOTL) Shaw, Pygmalion, and My Fair Lady - roundtable with ISS members facilitating a conversation with light refreshments
6:30pm	Dinner on own
8pm	The House That Will Not Stand (Studio Theatre) or Shaw Variety Show (Springfield) performance (optional)
SATURDAY 7/20	
9am	Morning Refreshments (Rehearsal Hall 3)
9:30 am	Discussion (Rehearsal Hall 3) My Fair Lady production with Kimberly Rampersad, Shaw Festival Associate Artistic Director
11am	The Role of Shaw with Travis Seetoo, Creator and Shaw Festival Embedded Artist
11:30am	Light Lunch (Members Terrace)
2pm	The Role of Shaw performance (Springfield)
Post-2pm	Post-Show Chat (Rehearsal Hall 3) The Role of Shaw with Travis Seetoo, Creator and Shaw Festival Embedded Artist (Springfield)
4:30pm	Group Discussion (Rehearsal Hall 3) Candidate Scholarship published during the last 10 years, plus recent productions people have seen or worked on with pre-circulated text
6pm	Dinner on own
8pm	Candidate performance (Royal George Theatre)
SUNDAY 7/21	
9am	Refreshments (Rehearsal Hall 3)
9:30am	Group Reflection (Rehearsal Hall 3) Corridors (9:30am) and My Fair Lady (10:30am) productions with Shaw ensemble members
11:30am	Based Lunch
2pm	Shaw scholarship pitch/lecture session (Rehearsal Hall 3) Very short, pitch presentations of work in progress or ideas for new projects, with the emphasis placed on the implications for Shaw studies
4pm	Business meeting (Rehearsal Hall 3)
5:30pm	President's reception

The International Shaw Society is committed to embodying the Shavian spirit of challenge that is the hallmark of a healthy free society, while resisting the divisiveness and intolerance that threaten the fabric of our shared human experience. The ISS . . . a thriving nexus of scholarship, debate, artistry, and community . . . nurture[s] and support[s] emerging ideas across a broad spectrum, while fostering a thoughtful international community, engaging with the widest possible participation, and shaping the direction of the discourse for future generations.

(“About Us.” *International Shaw Society*, 26 July 2024, <https://shawsociety.org/about-us/>.)



I attended five plays in four days and several workshops coordinated by ISS. Notably, the symposium included discussions with the casts, directors, and production staff of the theatrical productions. I return to Clarence with many notes to guide my work in curriculum planning, invaluable insights regarding the creative process, a long reading list of published articles and conversant titles, and with a strong sense of kairos and exigence in the teaching of literary texts with significant societal themes.

I am in the process of writing a comprehensive literary blog, utilizing my notes and photographs. I teach my students to write in the academic blog genre (beginning with an experiential

topic) and will use my materials within the “I do, We do, You do” model of process writing during first semester units of study.

Highlights of the productions I attended include the following:

THE HOUSE THAT COULD NOT STAND by Marcus Gardley

The drama explores the complexities and intersectionality of race, religion, gender in late 18th century New Orleans Creole and quadroon society with a powerful cast of six women. My notes examine the text as conversant with Kate Chopin’s *THE AWAKENING* (Women’s Studies) and *THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD* (AP Literature).

MY FAIR LADY (directed and produced with original notes from George Bernard Shaw)

The 3 1/2 hour production utilized every original scene and line written by Shaw. The follow-up Lecture at the Historical Museum examined the staging, history, adaptations, ambiguities, gender norms, class stratification. My notes reflect strong correlation to SUPA WRT 105: Situating Literacies & SUPA ENG 181 Class & Literary Texts.

Additionally, I completed a walking tour of a moving memorial named *Voices of Freedom*, a joint effort of many Canadian organizations:

Voices of Freedom gives expression to the silenced and forgotten stories of people of African descent, enslaved, freed, and free, whose sacrifices, labour, skills, and talents contributed to the development of Niagara-on-the-Lake. **Voices of Freedom** permanently inscribes these Black men and women on the historical and cultural landscape of the town.

(“History,” *Voices of Freedom*. 26 July 2024. <https://www.vofpark.org>)

