



A strange trip through
time and space

Description

The Halloween Tree on stage evokes Ray Bradbury at his best

By **Byron Toben**

I have been a Ray Bradbury fan for like, forever. His blend of childlike wonder, magic and Science Fiction in a sad but sweet context has legions of fans for such as *The Illustrated Man*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, *The Martian Chronicles* and of course *Fahrenheit 451*.

So thank you Amanda Kellock, for adapting and directing his *The Halloween Tree* (previously an Emmy-winning animated TV show and novel) to the live stage.

Didn't hurt to have new Geordie Productions artistic director Mike Payette select this as his first mainstage production.



No wonder that this landmark landed seven of our most popular local actors to reveal their inner child. Six portray children:

- Trevor Barrette plays Pipkin, the leader of a group of young friends who go on their annual trick or treating rounds, but delayed this year because of a possible ailment;
- Jimmy Blais is Tom, outlined as a skeleton;
- Davide Chiazzese is Ralph, wrapped as a mummy;
- Lucinda Davis is Sally, costumed as a witch;
- Jaa Smith-Johnson is Fred, bundled as a caveman;



As the

one adult, Carapace Clavicle Moundshroud, Eloi Archambaudoin is commanding as the deep voiced owner of a



mysterious house in a ravine who requests *tricks only-no treats* and takes the young gang on a strange trip through time and space to discover the origins of Halloween from ancient times to modern.

This trek, decidedly more far afield than Scrooge's escorted visits to Christmases past present and future, ranged from the pre-historic discovery of fire to Egyptian pyramids, to Celtic celebrations of Samhain, to medieval cathedrals, to Mexican cemeteries of the dead before ending, as some now deceased English playwright quipped, "All's Well That Ends Well".

Elsa Bolam, the founder of Geordie 36 years ago, accompanied by her actor-director daughter Alison Darcy, was beaming in the audience. Also enjoying the evening was jazz singer/tango dancer Mary Ann Lacey with her 7-year-old son wannabe actor, Sasha.

A special shout out to the small lakeside city of Waukegan, Illinois, close to the Wisconsin border, where Ray Bradbury was born, as well as comic great Jack Benny and actor Jerry Orbach. Bradbury immortalized it as Green City in his writings.

The Halloween Tree continues at the D.B. Clarke Theatre on **Saturday, October 29** at 1 pm and 4 pm and **Sunday, October 30** at 2 pm.

Tickets and information at 514 845-9810 or geordie.ca

Images: Andrée Lanthier

Byron Toben is the immediate past-president of the Montreal Press Club

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