



THE BOOK OF SPELLS. A LOVE STORY

Created and Told by Jan Andrews and Jennifer Cayley

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PICS AND SOUNDS

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THE BOOK OF SPELLS. A LOVE STORY

WHERE LIFE AND LITERATURE COLLUDE AND COLLIDE

Created and Told by Jan Andrews and Jennifer Cayley

7:30 p.m. June 9, 2013

Marlborough Theatre,

4 Princes Street, Brighton, East Sussex

May 1, 2013 For Immediate Release

2wp (2 women productions) is delighted to announce that **The Book of Spells. A Love Story** will be playing at the Marlborough Theatre, Brighton on June 9, 2013.

This unique storytelling performance explores what happens when two women, well into their middle years, cast caution to the wind and begin sharing a life together. Will it be “happily ever after?” It will not! Their whole history of other times and places is waiting to devour them; each one comes with more baggage than they need.

Nevertheless this is indeed a love story – raw and honest -- woven around two stories of magic realism by British writer Sara Maitland. One is a tale of the witch in Hansel and Gretel, still living after all these years within the forest; the other tells of a young mother taught to fly by two old women who gave her caring as a child.

“It’s a great delight to be bringing **The Book of Spells** to Brighton,” says Jennifer Cayley. “While this seems to be a piece that resonates with anyone who has struggled to live in a long term relationship, it has been particularly appreciated both by older lesbians who don’t see themselves represented on stage very often and by younger lesbians who are glad to know they have elders who have struggled to make it work but still delight in being in love.”

The Book of Spells began its life at the Fringe of the National Storytelling Network in the US; has been featured at Melbourne’s Midsumma, one of the world’s largest celebrations of Queer culture; has toured in Wales, Southern Ontario and Western Canada. On this trip, Jan and Jennifer will be traveling from the UK to take their place as featured tellers at Festival Internazionale di Storytelling Raccontamiunastoria in Rome.

Both seasoned tellers, the two have traveled to festivals and concerts across Canada, in the United Kingdom, Australia and the U.S. Both have told from such great epics as The Iliad and The Odyssey. Both love the dark mysteries of the folk tales. Dedicated presenters, they have also worked to ensure that performance opportunities for other storytellers grow. Jan is also the writer of books for young people. Her work has been shortlisted for a number of major awards, including the Governor General’s Literary Award.

Venue: Marlborough Theatre, 4 Princes Street, Brighton, East Sussex

Tickets: £8.50/£6.50 concessions

Advance Tickets: **Tickets in advance: <http://bookofspells.bpt.me> or phone 0800 411 8881**

Further information about 2 women productions <http://www.2wp.ca>

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Jan Andrews

Widely-recognized as a storyteller who touches her audiences with the depth and power of her work, Jan has traveled extensively, telling stories at festivals and in concerts across Canada, in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. A committed member of the Canadian storytelling community, she was the first president of Storytellers of Canada-Conteurs du Canada and founded the organization's StorySave project. She also served as Artistic Director of two long-running Ottawa storytelling series (one at the Fourth Stage of the National Arts Centre). Collaborations with Jennifer have included founding an arts education organization and producing and performing in complete tellings of *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey* and *The Mahabharata*.

In 2010 she and Jennifer co-founded **2 women productions**, a small creation and producing company dedicated to supporting fine adult performance telling.

Jan tells everything from folktales to literary stories, from epic to personal tales. She is also the author of classic books for young people. Always a groundbreaker, she was the first Storyteller/Writer in Residence at the Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture at the University of Manitoba.

A wealth of other information about her is to be found at: www.janandrews.ca

Jennifer Cayley

Jennifer has been telling stories professionally for nearly two decades. Career highlights include: performing at Melbourne's Midsumma, one of the world's largest celebrations of Queer culture, being featured at the Talk Story Festival in Hawaii; appearing at the Fringe during the Annual Conference of the National Storytelling Network in St. Louis; touring *The Book of Spells: A Love Story* to Wales and Ontario; making regular appearances at the Ottawa StoryTellers National Arts Centre series; collaborating with Jan in producing epic pieces; Creating and managing **2 women productions (2wp)**, Canada's only company dedicated to the production and creation of fine adult storytelling.

Jennifer believes passionately that stories are important to all of us as we struggle to understand the shape and meaning of our lives. Her aim is always to make the profoundly simple contact between teller, story and listener richly alive. She is dedicated to bringing traditional stories to young people and works in schools settings through MASC (www.masconline.ca) and the Ontario Arts Council's Artists in Education Program. She uses her experience as an award winning arts administrator to support the development of storytelling as a professional arts practice.

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Book of Spells Tour/2009: Audience Comments

"We were literally spellbound, and I could tell by the audience's rapt attention that the teller's art had also worked its powerful magic over the whole place. I felt quite privileged to have heard your skillful, generous and courageous performances."

"Thank you for being brave enough to love each other, suffer through the process, sustain each other, thank you for being courageous enough to share this."

"I was so invested in your personal stories, that your Book of Spells stories became for me about trying to unravel the links between your lives and then subsequently my own."

"Your journey was so engrossing that time flew. It was a beautiful orchestration and the sequencing from one to another was so skillfully done. I enjoyed it tremendously."

"Thank-you for your performance. It was one of the most moving storytelling pieces I ever expect to see."

"Wonderful presentation on life, love and history."

"It was perfect. Your sense of the power of story to frame and sustain; the description of your relationship--the deep passion, the voids we want that passion to fill, the hope of love and the failure and despair, the 'getting on' with gentle anticipation."

"Wow what a grand performance you gave last night. I enjoyed every minute of it. I loved the images in those literary stories. Loved the weaving and interweaving of the voices."

"Excellent work...thank you for sharing your story with us...the details may change from couple to couple, but many of the challenges are the same, aren't they?"

"I found the entire evening incredibly engaging, and found myself interacting with the work on multiple levels. I have been thinking a lot about "performativity" and what makes an evening of liveness sing for me - and I think it has do to with seeing the vulnerable teller simultaneous to seeing the story that they are weaving. I had forgotten about the power of simplicity in telling. Thank you for reminding me."

"I found the stories from Sara Maitland both wonderful and with lovely reverberations. Then your interweaving and framing of the stories with your own experiences so honestly told, made them even more powerful allowing space for my own connections with your stories and your journey."

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JAN ANDREWS & JENNIFER CAYLEY TELL AMAZING STORIES

Ottawa storytellers Jan Andrews & Jennifer Cayley were telling amazing tales of their own lives & love, brought together by a passion for literature, at The Arts Project last week & said how storytelling hardly ever gets reviewed. So I said, "Well, I can try."

Early in their two-voices & several storied evening *A Book of Spells*, Jan Andrews & Jennifer Cayley recalled their astonishment, in early days, to think they might be lesbians. Both were married, one unhappily, one in a perfect marriage.

Their penchant for discussing books - Doris Lessing, Timothy Findley, Jane Rule & more are mentioned - over dinners out, had led to passionate discussions loud enough to still other diners' conversations . . . & eventually to love & a period of what sounds like bone-chilling hate & love again. Understated abandon. Intelligent love. Always the best romance tales.

That is their story & it is interwoven with the centrepiece of *A Book of Spells*, two stories by British writer Sara Maitland. The first, *Angelmaker*, is told from the point of view of the witch in *Hansel & Gretel*. She is revealed as a powerful, solitary figure in the forest whose confectioned cottage is an abortion clinic/fertility clinic among other things. The witch encounters Gretel again & again as the little girl of the fairy tale grows into a woman in the modern world. This was told by Jan Andrews, whose voice & inflections convey beautifully arrived at sense & calm insight.

Jennifer Cayley told the second Maitland story, *In Praise of Unknown Women & Our Mothers Who Begat Us*. Her voice & storytelling style conveys more wide-eyed wonder, passion turning from anger to love rather than irony on the way . . . which was appropriate to the story. It tells of a young girl who encounters two everyday life witches & learns about her own magic & flies over the other London to prove it.

The Arts Project is undergoing extensive renos (it still has a fine Sunfest-tied art exhibition in the main space ongoing). The result is that the place is damn cold of a night.

The two storytellers and The Arts Project folks contrived to overcome this. As the storytellers wryly observed, their own story can't really have a surprise ending. There the two of them are, deciding to take their show on the road & see what crowds storytellers can pull. That's a hill still to climb, there were may be 20-25 of us @ TAP on Saturday.

Magically & realistically, their own reconciliation seems to have begun over an empty bookcase . . . & they now have their own non-confectioned dwelling in the forests of Eastern Ontario to keep it real.

So that's my attempt at a review. I suggested coming back for The London Fringe - which didn't seem to light a bonfire or switch on a bulb - & they were off to Kitchener, where they had hoped to be part of other gay & lesbian events, that didn't seem to be happening. But it might down the road. The storytellers deserve another hearing on a warmer night with a bigger crowd if they touring this way again.

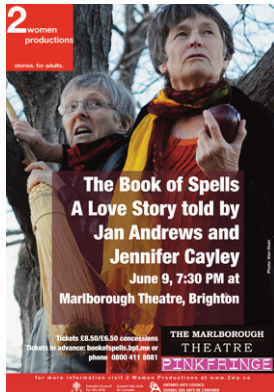
"Stories of Magic Realism by Sara Maitland" it says on the poster. The realism is, for me, in the good bones of the old stories retold by somebody who loves them & the magic is in the beauty of the human voice, when it's telling a story it loves about somebody it loves.

James Reaney: London Free Press, London Free Press Blog: Feb. 9/2009

2 women productions

2 women productions (2wp), founded in 2009, is dedicated to advancing and nurturing the art of storytelling for adult audiences, particularly in performance settings. The company mounts an annual season, touring three shows each season. 2 women productions also welcomes invitations for house concerts, performances and workshops in venues across Canada and beyond. Commitment is to storytelling at its very best. Material may be contemporary, personal, literary or traditional; it may be thought provoking, funny, deeply moving, raw. Whatever the genre or mood, exquisite crafting stands supreme. Impacts leave audiences eager for more.

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