

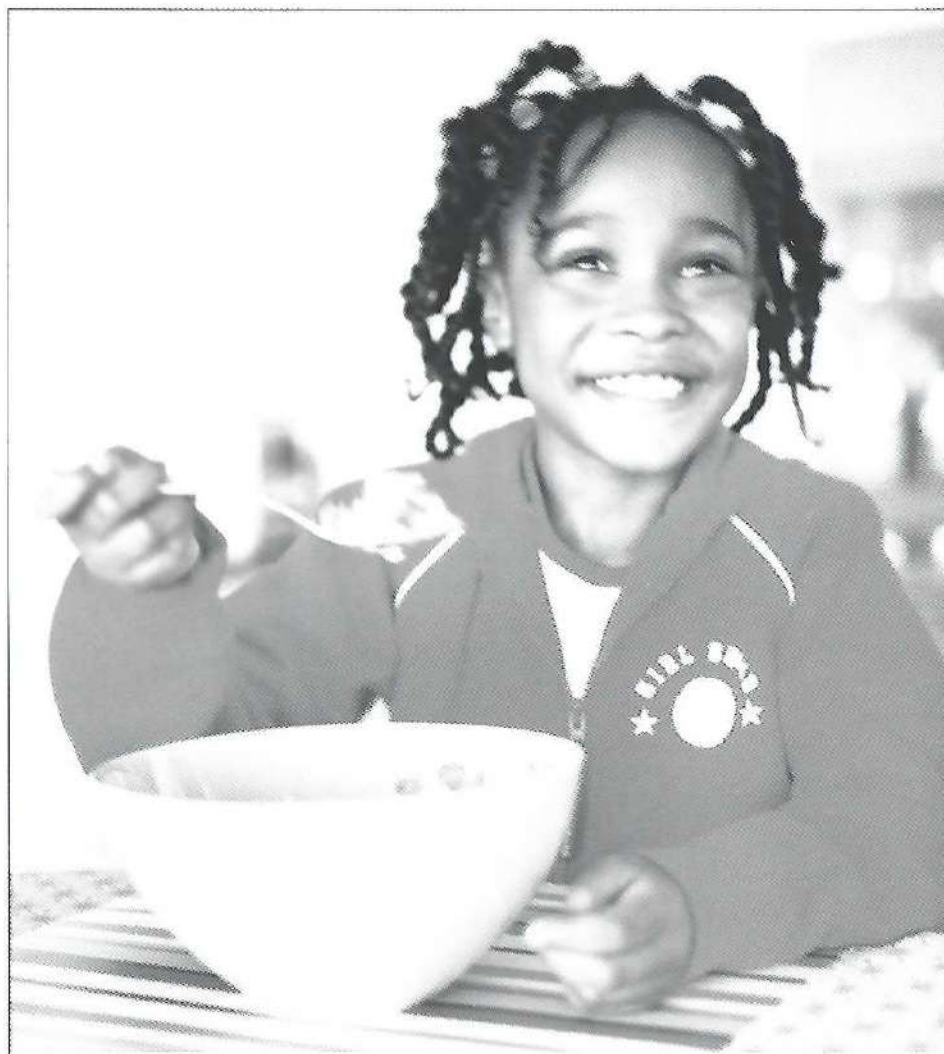


The Semi-Circle presents

The Memory of Water

On September 16, 27, 28, 29 and 30, 2005
at Das Helmut Fölnbacher Theater, Basel

Semi
circle



Kid's stuff? Remember when breakfast was fun, not a fight? Remember mum's cooking, and how much better food supposedly used to be? Well, breakfast should still be fun. And if mum's still cooking, it will be with better food than ever. Basel-based Syngenta helps farmers around the world bring in harvests our grandparents only dreamed of. And as theater is never just kids' stuff, we're also quick to help talents grow there. For more on water, memories and answers that won't kid you: www.syngenta.com

syngenta

Welcome

The Semi-Circle is a group of drama enthusiasts who have been bringing the best of English language theatre to Basel for just on thirty years. During that time we have managed to bring over 70 productions to venues in and around Basel. We stage plays of many different genres - from musicals to classical plays - and by a wealth of different playwrights, from Ayckbourn to Coward, Miller to Pinter, Shaw to Wilde.

Although our primary objective is to entertain with high quality English language theatre, we are also a club whose members enjoy getting together for occasional social activities. Members come from many different countries and walks of life – contrary to popular belief perfect English is not a pre-requisite. Active members can be found not just on stage, but also working hard back or front of stage (or both).



If you enjoy tonight's play and want us to send you a flyer in advance of our future productions we shall be happy to do so. Please fill in the card you find in this programme, and put it in the box on your way out, or visit our website: www.semi-circle.ch. See also page 15 for information on how to join The Semi-Circle.

We thank you for coming tonight and we hope that you enjoy "The Memory of Water"!



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About the play



presents:

The Memory of Water

by **Shelagh Stephenson**

Directed by **Michael Clarke**

Winner of the 2000 Laurence Olivier Theatre Award for Best Comedy

“Combines a flair for the dynamics of theatre - a mistress of Comic Anguish” – Guardian

An emotional roller-coaster – moving seamlessly from hilariously funny to deeply moving. Three sisters return home during a snowstorm for the funeral of **Vi**, their recently deceased mother. The sisters agree on almost nothing - including what it was like growing up together. The only similarity between them is the influence of their mother going through them “like wine through water”.

As the sisters sort through Vi’s long forgotten clothes and accessories, each recalls her own childhood memories of their mother – and discovers that memories and experiences can be reshaped and “corrected” to match one’s own hopes and disappointments.

Each daughter is dissatisfied with life, blaming her situation on everyone - except herself.

Mary is the classic over-achiever - a successful neurologist currently researching the complexities of memory. But she is in crisis. She has vivid dreams of her dead mother and she is obsessed with the treatment of one of her young amnesia patients. For the past five years she has been having an affair with **Mike**, a married TV celebrity doctor.

Teresa lived closest to her mother and has fallen into the role of “martyr”. She resents her sisters for abandoning her when their mother was in the throes of Alzheimer’s disease.

Teresa and her husband **Frank** run a health supplement business although Frank, if he is honest with himself, would rather be running a pub.

Catherine, the youngest daughter, has always felt unwanted. Self-absorbed, lonely and desperate for affection, she is constantly seeking love and acceptance. She relies on drugs and therapy to struggle her way through life.

Gradually the sisters come to realise that despite their very different personalities, each retains elements of their mother - just as in homeopathy water is said to retain some biochemical memory of whatever has been dissolved in it.

There will be a 20 minute interval with bar service after Act 1.

Cast in order of appearance

Vi	Angela Robinson
Mary	Zuzana Cox
Teresa	Carol Rees
Catherine	Susanne Thommen
Mike	Steve Sims
Frank	Michael Clarke



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Shelagh Stephenson • Playwright



Playwright Shelagh Stephenson was born in Northumberland and studied drama at Manchester University. Her writing career started in radio for which she has written original plays, series episodes and adaptations, including *Five Kinds of Silence*. Her first play for the stage, *The Memory of Water*, was produced at the Hampstead Theatre in 1996, directed by Terry Johnson.

In 1997 *An Experiment with an Airpump* won the Peggy Ramsay Award and was produced at the Royal Exchange, Manchester. In October 1998 the play transferred to the Hampstead Theatre, starring Barbara Flynn. *The Memory of Water* played at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York and simultaneously toured the south of England, subsequently coming to the West End. In 2000 it won an Olivier Award for Best New Comedy and has been produced worldwide. Shelagh's stage adaptation of her radio play *Five Kinds of Silence* played at the Hammersmith Lyric May-July 2000. *Ancient Lights* for the Hampstead Theatre opened in December 2000. Her recent play *Mappa Mundi* was produced in the Cottesloe, National Theatre in Autumn 2002, directed by Bill Alexander and starring Alun Armstrong and Lia Williams. Television commissions in 2001 include *The Affairs of Men* and an adaptation of a Frances Fyfield novel *Shadow Play. Before You Go*, her feature adaptation of *The Memory of Water*, was filmed in 2001, directed by Lewis Gilbert and starring Julie Walters. Her second original film script, *The Anatomical Venus*, was commissioned by Pacificus Films. Her recent play, *Enlightenment*, played at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin in spring 2005. A collection of her plays, *Plays One*, was published in 2002.

Director and cast portraits



Michael Clarke • Director & *Frank*

Past stage appearances have included: a womanizing interior decorator; a school caretaker; a professor who plays unusual seduction games with his wife; an “accidental” lover and a psychopathic duck-feeder; plus various pantomime roles. I hadn’t exactly planned to go on stage this time around, but playing a worn-out, rather grumpy middle-aged man has obviously been an immense challenge for me but one which I hope I have risen to. This is also my sixth – and probably most challenging – directing experience.

Zuzana Cox • *Mary*

I last appeared on stage as the empress Won-Ki in the panto “Aladdin”. The part of Mary is certainly quite different! Apart from anything else it has made me very aware of my relationships with my two daughters, and appreciative of my good relationship with my own mother. On stage my ambition remains to play the part of a real “baddie”!



Angela Robinson • *Vi*

It’s nice to be back on stage! Recent credits include, in reverse order: costumed “A Slice of Saturday Night”; directed “Aladdin”; costumed “Arms and the Man”; directed “Oliver!”, “Robinson Crusoe”, “The Hollow Crown”, “Rumours”, “Ali Baba”. My last real part on stage was the baddie in “The Sleeping Beauty” in 2001 – I don’t count having to go on twice as an understudy since then. In real life, I am hooked on flea markets, genealogy and making jam.



Carol Rees • *Teresa*

I started my performing life at a young age by coming on during the interval and throwing sweets to the audience. With this illustrious beginning who could resist the temptation of yet again subjecting an audience to a helping of their performance talents? I see absolutely *no* parallels between myself and the character of Teresa which is why I was attracted to the challenge! With two daughters as budding actresses I have previously helped out backstage, but it’s fun to be the other side of the curtain this time.

Susanne Thommen • *Catherine*

I performed in many productions with my local Thespian group in Halifax, West Yorkshire as well as the “Actors’ Workshop” during my teens and early 20s. After a long break away from Theatre (London life; too many late nights working and parties, no time for hobbies), I luckily found out about The Semi-Circle at the end of last year. I had a part in “Homecoming” playing an airhead (!) and now I am fortunate to be playing the part of Catherine in “The Memory of Water”. Dope-smoking, shoe-loving, melodramatic attention-seeker. Type-casting allegations strenuously denied....

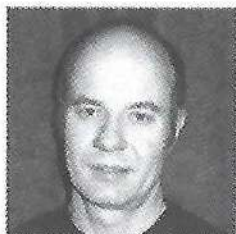


Steve Sims • *Mike*

My most recent stage appearance as Widow Twanky in Aladdin was excellent preparation for playing the part of philandering TV doctor Mike. Except, of course, in this production I don’t have to wear a dress, sing, or talk in a funny voice! However, since memory is a major theme within the play, it is to be hoped that my ever-diminishing powers in this area might receive some kind of boost from my participation. Now, who was I meant to send this to...?



Production management and creative team



**Production
Manager:**
Tony O'Sullivan

He is the one who rings people and gets them to do everything.



**Assistant
Director:**
Krista Jaquet

Apart from assisting the director, Krista has been very busy and productive as you can see from the other credits.



**Stage
Manager:**
Diana Zuger

There is a lot of team work in this production: Diana has also been assistant director.



**Costume and
Stage Design:**
Angela Robinson

Another multi-talented creative force: Angela has lots of clothes, she knows how to make clothes, and she knows what suits whom!



**Production
Support /
Prompter:**
Christine Comerçi

One of the most valuable and appreciated jobs in our production: Being there when needed - in many roles and in many ways.



**Production
Support /
Prompter:**
Eric Collino

Eric's production support skills also include cinematography: videoing rehearsals and performances.

Holistic Harmony



Joan Simmonds

A.P.D.H.A., M.I.F.P.A., Dip. I.T.E.C.,
M.I.C.H.T, Reiki Master,
M.T.H.S. Master & Practitioner

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Parking available

Production team

Production Manager	Tony O'Sullivan
Publicity	Michael Clarke
Graphic Design	Krista Jaquet
Photography	Darren Coleman (www.colda.com) Ute Kessel
Programme and Publishing Printing	Krista Jaquet, Joy Scherer Wohn- und Bürozentrum für Körperbehinderte (www.wbz.ch)
Ticketing and Dispatching	Suzan Wilson
Costume and Stage Design	Angela Robinson
Lighting Design	Krista Jaquet
Lighting	Dominik Schluep
Sound	Dominik Schluep
Stage Manager	Diana Zuger
Make-Up	Helen Baldomero Samira Bachir
Hair Stylist	Liliane Carando
Box Office	Penny Rettig

Acknowledgements:

• The breast pump was kindly lent to us by Frau Fluri of the La Leche League - an organisation which encourages, helps and supports mothers who breast feed. (www.stillberatung.ch) Fr. Fluri runs a breast feeding group, which will meet this year on 19th September, 31st October and 28th November. She is happy for you to contact her. (061 701 4555)

• We thank Dina Horowitz for lending us the dressing mirror.

• We also thank Chris Fuhrer-Fries and Upstage, Bern for the loan of costumes.

The Semi-Circle would also like to thank everyone not mentioned by name whose generous help has made this production possible.

Das Helmut Förbacher Theater

After the Helmut Förbacher Theater Company was formed in 1980, it produced dozens of plays in many venues in and around Basel, before becoming more established and building this beautiful theatre at these premises at the Badische Bahnhof in 1998. As the name suggests, the theater is very much a family business, a culmination of the hard work and ambition of Helmut Förbacher. Born in Basel and trained in Vienna, Mr. Förbacher became very well known as an actor and director in film and television. He led the "Theater Vis à vis" in 1974, was later responsible for the "studio for music and theater" and the "operastudio" for the Musik-Akademie in Basel, before starting his own group in 1980. We thank Mr. Förbacher and his theater company for their hospitality in letting us use this wonderful theater.

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What is “memory of water”?

What exactly is “the memory of water”? Is it just an interesting and slightly cryptic play title or does it have a deeper meaning?



The phrase “the memory of water” originates in homeopathic medicine, which was developed in the early 19th century by a German physician, Samuel Hahnemann. It is based on the idea that “like can be cured with like”. In contrast to vaccination where the patient is treated with a small dose of the disease they are already suffering from, in homeopathy the treatment is a tiny amount of a substance that provokes similar symptoms to the disease.



The tiny doses are prepared by a process of dilutions. The substance is first dissolved to create a tincture, which then undergoes a series of dilutions until in many preparations none of the original substance is present in the solution. Logically this should have no effect, but millions of people the world over swear by its effectiveness. The idea is that water has a “memory” which retains the properties of the substance once dissolved in it.



Although medical science regards its effectiveness as an example of the placebo effect, homeopathy is accepted by many of the general public as a treatment, also here in Switzerland, where for the last six years, together with other “alternative” medical treatments, it was covered by the obligatory part of the medical insurance. The recent decision of the federal council not to extend this six year trial period caused considerable controversy!

Join us • www.semi-circle.ch

As you sit there waiting for the lights to go down, the music to play and the story to unfold, you may wonder how all this is arranged and organised, who are the people involved and why?

Well, it is just a bit puzzling. After all, our spare time is precious to us so why spend it involved in amateur dramatics? Some explanation is to be found in the biographies of the cast and directors. Of course, other than those you see on stage, there are many more less visible team members who help plan, organise, support and execute the action that is seen on stage, from sound and lighting to props and paying the royalties; more such retiring creatures are to be found serving behind the bar, pushing buttons at the lighting and sound desks and sneaking behind the curtain. Our members come from many different countries and backgrounds. If you are curious enough to try-out, either on stage or in a less conspicuous place please fill in the card in this programme, ring Tony (the production manager - +41 - (0)61 692 3901), or e-mail us via the website www.semi-circle.ch.

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