

# On Stage NY1

TOP STORY

## Critics, Actors Take To The Stage To Celebrate George Bernard Shaw



April 27, 2007

*It was critics' night out with the latest edition of Project Shaw, an ongoing series offering up readings of every play ever written by George Bernard Shaw. NY1's Clover Lalehzar filed the following report.*

George Bernard Shaw penned some 63 plays including "Mrs. Warren's Profession," "Arms and the Man," and "Pygmalion," which later became "My Fair Lady." Now, a three-year long retrospective of his work, aptly called, "Project Shaw" has taken up residency at The Players Club.

Fractured Atlas member David Staller is behind the ambitious project, staging all of Shaw's works, including his obscure political skits.

Shaw started his theatrical life as a critic and so it's quite fitting that most of the cast was comprised of New York theater critics.

In fact, NY1's own Roma Torre narrated the latest installment: "Androcles and the Lion," a light-hearted work based on Aesop's fable.

"I started out as an actress so I'm just going back to my first love," said Torre. "It's really fun. You get very nervous at the beginning and then you start hamming it up and that's when it's time to kick you off the stage."

This was a rare opportunity for actors and critics to stand side by side on stage. For some actors, however, it was opportunity to right some wrongs.

"It's hilarious, because first of all they're playing kind-hearted Christians who are about to be eaten by lions," said actor Bruce Vilanch. "I may have the rare opportunity to eat Michael Riedel, which certainly half the Broadway community envies me right now."

New York Post writer Michael Riedel, who is often seen as the one theatre columnist Broadway loves to hate, enjoyed being on the other side of the curtain.

"It's true what they say about a critic," he said. "You scratch a critic and you find an actor, in my case, a bad actor, but nevertheless an actor. I like doing this and I like David Staller's Shaw project because it does involve critics and I think this wall that critics and reporters have created between themselves and the theater is not always good for the theater. I think it's best when everyone mixes and mingles."

Even some of the theatre's more seasoned critics said they enjoy working on "Project Shaw."

"No one ever introduces anyone who writes about the theater or film, so it's nice to put names with faces finally so that's fun," said Rex Reed, a theatre critic for the New York Observer.

And who else has a better time poking fun than theatre and pop culture critic, Michael Musto of the Village Voice.

"Theater writers and critics are secret hams and all year long they have to sit back and watch other people perform," said Musto. "This is our chance to take the stage by storm. We're never getting off."

"Project Shaw" is in the second year of its three-year run. For more information on more of the performances, go to [www.projectshaw.com](http://www.projectshaw.com).

*-Clover Lalehzar*

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