

Late actor Barry Morse was well known at Shaw

Co-starred on TV's 'The Fugitive'

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British-Canadian actor-director Barry Morse, best known as the police detective in hot pursuit of David Janssen's Dr. Richard Kimble in the TV series "The Fugitive" and who died Saturday in England, was well-known in the Niagara theatre community.

Morse, who was 89 when he died, served as the Shaw Festival's artistic director in 1966.

In his book entitled "Not Bloody Likely The Shaw Festival: 1962-1973," Brian Doherty called working with Barry Morse at Shaw "like going over Niagara Falls in a barrel."

"He was a man in constant motion," Doherty wrote.

During his time with Shaw, Morse extended the season longer than it had been - to nine weeks - and chose three plays to be performed, including "Man and Superman," Bernard Shaw's longest and most complex work.

In Doherty's book, Morse recalls the controversy still surrounding Shaw Festival at that time. Aside from assembling the actors, Morse was involved with two other projects known by Shaw supporters as warming up the town and beating the drum.

"The citizenry of Niagara-on-the-Lake is not unqualified or unanimous in its enthusiasm for the Shaw Festival," he wrote.

"There are obviously those (there may still be) who hope that we may quietly go away or, better still, that a righteous Providence may visit fire and brimstone upon us and all our sinful pleasurable works.

"We encounter bloody-mindedness as well as saintly kindness, but quite perceptively the town warms up."

For the last number of years, Morse had been living in London, but had travelled to Canada and the United States to work, where his list of credits was impressive.

The versatile actor, who had played everyone from Macbeth to Hollywood gangsters, had worked until a few years ago but was still active in the (George Bernard) Shaw Society of England, which he was president of, and chaired society meetings as recently as last week. In 1963, Morse was hired by producer Quinn Martin to play Lieut. Philip Gerard on "The Fugitive" - a series that ran four seasons and 120 episodes.