

“A Man for All Seasons”, an appeal to the mind and the eye

by Rebecca Dingwell

Halifax’s [Theatre Arts Guild \(TAG\)](#) is preparing their second-to-last show of the season, *A Man for All Seasons*. Director Gisela O’Brien says she and her cast have been hard at work as they push through their last weeks of rehearsal.

O’Brien says the play is set during the reign of Henry VIII. The King himself is only in one scene as the play focuses on Sir Thomas More.

O’Brien said TAG usually puts on comedies and musicals, so it’s refreshing to do a serious piece that she holds close to her heart.

“I remember this play from my youth,” says O’Brien, adding that the film adaptation came out while she was in university.

“In those days, I think a lot of us were still much more church affiliated,” O’Brien says.

“The whole idea that somebody was going to stand for what they believe in and what they felt, and that they would do it even with their death was an intriguing thought.”

O’Brien feels TAG’s take on the play will be unique because they are utilizing a minimalist set and a more modern approach. But the period-specific costumes and the script’s language are sure to pull in the audience, O’Brien says.

Phil Reid portrays More in the play. He describes his character as a man who was once a good friend of the king.

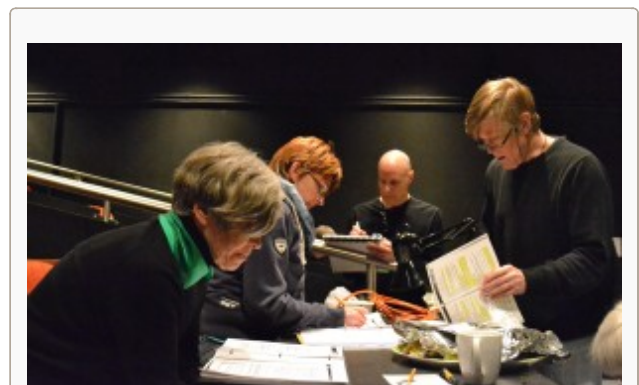
“That friendship was put under a real strain when More’s adherence to [Catholicism] was put under great strain when the King wished to divorce his wife, Queen Catharine,” Reid explained.

Reid said he has always had an interest in theatre, and has worked with O’Brien and many of the cast members before.

“To me, it’s just a magical art of creating something onstage to fire people’s imaginations.”



Phil Reid as Sir Thomas More (left), Roy Ellis as Thomas Cromwell (middle) and Rob McIntyre as Richard Rich rehearse the first scene from Act II. (Rebecca Dingwell photo)



The cast listens as director Gisela O’Brien makes some last-minute changes to the script. (Rebecca Dingwell photo)

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Rob McIntyre plays Richard Rich, a character who betrays More.

"This is a great company that we work with, and I was just looking forward to working with Gisela again," he said. "Any time you get a chance you work with Gisela, you accept."

"It is something for the eye as well as for the ear," O'Brien said of *A Man for All Seasons*.

"It's text and vision that we're asking people to pay attention to."

A Man for All Seasons opens on April 18 and runs until May 5. Tickets are available as early as March 22 at Atlantic Ticket outlets at Superstore locations across HRM, says O'Brien.

"I always tell people, 'Pick up your tickets when you pick up your groceries.'"