

## For the love of community theatre

If you haven't already seen it, Laura Bleasdale makes a compelling case for securing seats for The Theatre Arts Guild's production of Timothy Findley's play 'The Stillborn Lover.'

Her career as an acting professional with film, commercial and TV credits to her name hasn't taken away her love and passion for community theatre performances.

"You mention theatre and often the first things that pop into people's heads are Broadway or Hollywood. Those are magical, but we also have this magic in our own backyard," she said.

"Community theatre allows us to be taken on a journey with amazing local talent.. Whether you have experience or not they welcome you and you get to do what you love, bring these great characters to life."

Her role in The Stillborn Lover is her first community theatre performance since 2007 when she starred in the production of Bus Stop with the Dartmouth Players Theatre.

"There's nothing like the rush of live theatre. For me acting has always been a great experience mostly for what you can provide to the audience," she said. "A chance to forget your troubles, laugh, cry, have them thinking differently about something than when they came into it. It's magical for the actor and the audience."

In addition to Bleasdale, the show's stellar cast includes accomplished professional actor Stuart Hiseler, Diane Carey, Angela Butler, Roy Ellis, Russell Storer and Brad Morrison.

Bleasdale said the play can best be described as beautifully written, eloquent, and complex, yet full of experiences everyone can relate to.

"The Stillborn Lover, like so much of Timothy Findley's work, explores themes of political power, sexuality, personal conflict, and emotional turmoil," the show's publicity notice states.

"The famous novelist has crafted a winner with this play about a Canadian ambassador to Russia who becomes embroiled in a mysterious murder. It explores the loss of friendship and paints a portrait of backstabbing and intrigue on the Ottawa scene in the early 1970s."

Bleasdale said she found her way to The Stillborn Lover auditions at the last minute and was thrilled when the director gave her the role she'd instantly fallen in love with.

"I wanted a good dramatic role to showcase a different side of my talents and ability. An email came in the day before from Bill (VanGorder, the show's producer)," she recalled. "I'd already worked with Gisela (O'Brien, the director) and love Timothy Findley so I went and did it, and fell in love with the character Diana."

The character, she explained, is sarcastic, funny, passionate and relatable.

"Her journey is the audience's journey because she's figuring out the complexities and issues out as they are," Bleasdale said.

"It's springtime and the weather is lovely so people are not as prone to pursuing indoor activities. But when the night falls and it's dark, it's time to go on the journey. There's humour, tears, ups and downs. It's well worth it."

The Stillborn Lover opened on April 24 and wraps up May 10. All shows are at The Pond Playhouse and tickets are available by calling Ticket Atlantic (451-1221), purchased at any Superstore with a Ticket Atlantic outlet or

at the Metro Centre box office.

Check out [www.tagtheatre.com](http://www.tagtheatre.com) for more information.