

# Friendship and fun drew actress to community theatre productions | The Chronicle Herald

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Ellen Oldford plays Barb the narrator, a cynical voice-in-the-head for Lacy, played by Angela Butler, during rehearsals for Norm Foster's one-act play *My Narrator* at the Pond Playhouse in Halifax last week. Oldford says community theatre is a great, low-cost way to expand one's social circle and have some fun. (TED PRITCHARD / Staff)

Ellen Oldford got into theatre looking for friends, fun and a no-cost activity.

And, she says, her decade in community theatre has given her everything she was looking for and more.

"I got introduced to theatre in my mid-30s; I had left the workforce and gone back to school — at Memorial University of Newfoundland — and I was looking for something I could do that was fun, wouldn't cost anything and that would enlarge my circle of friends," says Oldford, who has appeared onstage with Dartmouth Players, Bedford Players and Halifax's Theatre Arts Guild since relocating to Halifax about four years ago.

She was hooked with her first role with the Off-Broadway Players in Corner Brook, N.L., in a 15-minute skit for a fundraising event.

"It was so rewarding to hear their laughter and know I was entertaining people," she recalls.

Oldford will hear laughter again when she stars in *My Narrator*, one of two one-act plays by Norm Foster that the Theatre Arts Guild is staging Feb. 14 to March 2 at the Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Rd., Halifax. The other is *The Death of Me*. TAG veteran Frank Mac-Lean directs both.

"It's quite fitting that opening night is Valentine's Day as they are stories about love and Norm

Foster's birthday is Valentine's Day," says Oldford, who works for Employment Nova Scotia in Halifax.

"The playwright has a way of mixing the unbelievable with the believable. He takes an unbelievable concept and in a creative and entertaining way fits it to a story most people can relate to."

In *The Death of Me*, the hero, John, played by Russell Storer, bargains with

the Angel of Death (Rayna Smith-Camp) after finding himself at the angel's desk when he isn't quite ready to go. The play also stars Rob McIntyre as The Doctor and Caroline Smith as Cassie.

My Narrator is the story of Lacy, an artist who has had bad luck in her career and has given up on men, says Oldford, who plays Barb, the narrator or voice in Lacy's head that Lacy (Angela Butler) consults whenever she tries to figure out what to do.

When Lacy meets Miles (Rob McIntyre) she is at first reluctant to go out with him, says Oldford. They go out, break up and reunite.

"Miles has a male narrator called Bob (Storer) and Barb falls in love with Bob. They decide they want to be together and manipulate Lacy and Miles so they can make a go of their relationship and the two narrators can be together."

Oldford, last seen at TAG in the dark comedy *God of Carnage*, likes playing Barb, whom she describes as a funny character.

"She's the skeptic. She seems to understand how women can be attracted by a loser, but then she gets swept off her feet by Bob and reluctantly lets him in.

She switches from skeptic to being in love and being swept up in the passion and attraction for someone and doesn't see it coming. It's fun to make that transition."

The plays are onstage at TAG Feb. 14 to 16, Feb. 20 to 23 and Feb. 27 to March 2 at 8 p.m., and Feb. 24 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$16, \$13 for members, students, children and seniors. They are available by calling 451-1221, at [ticketatlantic.com](http://ticketatlantic.com) and in person at participating Atlantic Superstores.

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## **About the Author**

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