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God of Carnage

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Nova Scotia's Theatre Arts Guild kicks-off its 2012/2013 season with *God of Carnage*, Yasmina Reza clever and witty story about two couples trying to resolve a problem in a civilized fashion. The play runs until October 6 at the Pond Playhouse in Halifax, and is directed by Michele Moore.

How long have you been involved with theatre and in what capacity?

I found the Pond Playhouse about 18 years ago when I saw a couple of their productions. I fell in love with the intimacy and ambience of the small theatre and admired their "professionalism". I plucked up courage to audition for a production about 17 years ago. I have acted in approximately 18 productions since then, as well as being involved as a producer and recently as director. I also served on the Board of Directors at Theatre Arts Guild as secretary and then as publicity person.

Why the decision to produce *God of Carnage*?

A play by Yasmina Reza, an international award winning French playwright, has never been staged by Theatre Arts Guild, so when I was offered the chance to direct "*God of Carnage*" as our season opener I jumped at the chance. I find her writing extremely clever, biting witty and full of metaphor and nuance.

What are the challenges involved with putting on this particular production?

The stage at the Pond Playhouse is floor level. We had to make sure our audience could see all actors when seated, so our set designer raised and raked the stage, giving the actors a sloped floor to get used to. We also had to simulate projectile vomiting. After some complicated ideas,

we went with simple and it works like a charm.

What are the rewards?

I can only imagine how a playwright must feel when their words come to life on stage. As a director I enjoy the reward of watching actors bring their characters to life, finding the many layers the playwright gives them to work with, and drawing the audience into the story. Everyone at Theatre Arts Guild is a volunteer and I am always humbled by those who walk through our door and offer their talent and their time. It is our “playground” away from the work-a-day world, and our family.

What can audiences expect to experience during the run?

I hope the audiences first come to celebrate this brilliant playwright who has woven a story about two sets of affluent parents getting together to discuss the “incident” involving their two 11 year old sons. Reza writes for grown-ups, and condenses her work to 85 minutes of uninterrupted dialogue and continuous action. Diplomacy soon gets stripped away as raw feelings are exposed. Reza is a master at reminding us that no-one is perfect.

What's on tap in the coming months for the Theatre Arts Guild?

Theatre Arts Guild's 2012/2013 season is full of variety, which we find pleases actors and audiences alike: Following “God of Carnage” (Sep 20-Oct 6) we offer our annual and very popular pantomime “Camelot, the Panto” (Nov 29-Dec 15); comedy by Norm Foster with “The Death of Me” and “My Narrator”, two one acts (Feb 14-Mar 2); then our period piece “A Man for All Seasons” (Apr 18-May 4); and we close with a musical “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” (Jun 20-Jul 6).

What are your thoughts on the state of theatre in Halifax and Atlantic Canada?

I have always loved live theatre – it was my entertainment as a child growing up. I find it a powerful medium. Halifax is blessed with strong community theatre and professional theatre (Neptune and Studio Neptune) as well as small companies like 2B and One-Light staging edgy, thought-provoking plays. As a province theatre is alive and well in the Maritimes. It would be wonderful to have an Atlantic Theatre Festival sponsor to help community theatres get to see what other theatre groups are doing. From the community theatre perspective we appreciate media help in promoting our productions. Everything we make from ticket sales goes right back into the theatre to replace, lights, pay utility bills, etc. etc.

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