

Ruth Le Lacheur back on TAG stage

Local woman acted as a teen and returned after raising children, nurturing business

By ELISSA BARNARD Staff Reporter

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Performing in the Theatre Arts Guild's production of Thirteen Hands, Carol Shields' play about women and bridge, are Ruth Le Lacheur, Helen Goodwin, Kate Wilkinson and Elaine Casey. Director is Louise Renault. (Christian Laforce / Staff)

The first time Ruth Le Lacheur stepped into The Pond Playhouse after 31 years she was amazed.

"It still smells the same. I know it's an odd thing to say. That's how I felt when I walked in, it just takes you back."

Le Lacheur, who lives in Bedford but grew up in Halifax, acted with the Theatre Arts Guild when she was 13. Two children and a business later, she's back to star with Elaine Casey, Helen Goodwin and Kate Wilkinson in Thirteen Hands, a play by Carol Shields about bridge and women's lives.

"I remember my mother setting up for bridge and it was quite a time. I think for a lot of women it was a support group and they got a chance to really think."

Le Lacheur plays multiple roles in a play that follows different women at the card table from 1930 to 1990. The women discover family histories, the tricks of getting old and a companionship that gets passed on from generation to generation.

Shields, says Le Lacheur, is "basically trying to uplift the blue rinse ladies, to try to say their lives were valuable. They weren't just housewives; they were looking after one another and helping one another. And it's about how life changes and how people move on."

Le Lacheur has fond memories of acting as a teenager.

"The big one I remember was Pinocchio and it was TAG's Christmas pantomime and they put it on at the Cohn and I actually came out of an exploding log."

Apart from being Pinocchio, she was Piglet in Winnie the Pooh, did summer theatre at TAG and was in The Highland Heart of Nova Scotia, where Kent Stetson saw her and asked her to perform in and sing the opening song for the CBC's half-hour TV show Fog Magic. She was 14.

"That was pretty exciting because I got paid to do that and that was exciting for a young girl."

However, after graduating from Queen Elizabeth High School, she followed in the family footsteps and went into sales, running her own promotional product advertising business for 19 years. Three

years ago she left her business, got a job at Communications Nova Scotia and, now that her kids are teenagers, has more time to be creative.

She admits it's still tough to balance working full-time, running a household and acting in the evenings. Husband, musician Derrick Le Lacheur, is a huge help.

"My husband is amazing. He's been doing a lot of cooking and a lot of laundry. He's a patient man when I'm cranky because I'm tired. He said, 'You should go for it.' "

As opening night looms, Le Lacheur is getting as excited as she was as a teenager.

"I'm really looking forward to it because I think there'll be a lot of laughs. It's challenging but the ladies are fantastic and I find TAG is very professional. I definitely would like to do more."

Louise Renault directs the play, at The Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Rd., Feb. 11 to 27, 8 p.m., with 2 p.m. matinees on Feb. 21 and 27. Tickets are \$16 and \$13 for members, seniors and students. They are available by phone (451-1221), at participating Atlantic Superstore outlets, the Ticket Atlantic Metro Centre box office, at the door or online at www.ticketatlantic.com.

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