

No Doubt about it

It's a warm, sunny evening at the end of August and a small group is gathering at the Pond Playhouse on Parkhill Road in Halifax.

The summer isn't yet over, but they're preparing to kick off the Theatre Arts Guild's 2014-15 season with 'Doubt: A Parable.' The award-winning play, which was also turned into a movie, is set in 1964 at a Catholic school in the Bronx.

"It's about a young priest accused of some terrible things by a man at the school where they work. I feel it's about the characters and how they deal with this interesting situation," explained Emily Jewer, making her directorial debut with TAG.

"The script is left quite open as to who you believe.. These are people who are grappling with their faith and their own doubts and various things in their lives and how they react. It's really fascinating and very much a character-driven piece."

The four person cast includes Roy Ellis as Father Flynn, Vikki Humphrey as Sister James, Sharleen Kalayil as Mrs. Muller and Valerie Mackenzie as Sister Aloysius.

"This play is a challenging one and it causes the actors and the audience to look inward and challenge themselves," said MacKenzie. "It deals with human relationships and trust and doubt, themes that affect all of us and that interest me very much."

Jewer said one of the things she's most looking forward to is hosting a question and answer session after each performance this season to discuss with the audience not only the play, but the community theatre process.

"I'm really hoping it will promote discussion with the audience and that people will stick around to have that discussion with the cast and the crew," she said.

'Doubt: A Parable' runs from Sept. 18 to Oct. 4, but there's plenty more on tap for TAG this season.

"We have a great season this year. After 'Doubt,' we have our Christmas Panto which this year is a take on the western style stuff with 'Panto at the OK Corral,'" Jewer said. "The panto is always popular and runs from Nov. 27 to Dec. 13."

Shows taking place from February through to June/July include the comedic thriller/murder mystery 'Death by Design,' and 'Proof,' an action drama about the daughter of a brilliant mathematician confronted with claiming her own genius as distinct from that of her father and defending herself against allegations of madness.

TAG's closing show has yet to be announced, as volunteers couldn't secure the rights for their original choice.

The Theatre Arts Guild is Canada's oldest continually operating community theatre. The 2015-2016 season will mark its 85th year.

"It's pretty incredible. When it started off it didn't have a space. They performed in downtown Halifax," Jewer said. "It has grown into this great little theatre which has grown itself. We have a lobby and rehearsal hall upstairs and hope to eventually add a workshop in the back."

TAG is always looking for volunteers interested in all aspects of community theatre. To learn more about

opportunities, contact Jewer emjhf@gmail.com or check out TAG's website, www.tagtheatre.com.