

TAG revue celebrates 85th anniversary

Judy Reade decided that if she ever wanted to see her husband, Austin, she'd have to follow him to the Theatre Arts Guild.

In the 25 years since Judy began doing costumes and props for the Halifax amateur theatre, she and Austin, who does lighting and is the theatre's technical director, have worked on about 150 shows.

That's about one-third of the more than 450 productions that have graced the Pond Playhouse stage since Theatre Arts Guild, or TAG, as it is affectionately known, was founded in 1931.

Feb. 4-6 at 8 p.m., TAG presents *The Good — And the Bad*, a revue for the group's 85th anniversary celebrating the female characters portrayed there over the years.

The show features scenes from *Pygmalion*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Rebecca*, *The Marriage-Go-Round*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *Steel Magnolias* and music from *Show Boat*, *Chicago*, *The Full Monty* and *South Pacific*, as well as an appearance from the *Thirtysomething* Dancers, who also took part in the revue that celebrated the theatre's 80th anniversary.

It stars Chantelle Dooley, Tim McClare, Jonathan Tyson, Phil Reid, Rick Eng, Caroline Khoury Smith, Elaine Casey, Michele Moore, Karla Bruce, Brad Morrison, Jennifer Robbins, Rayna Smith-Camp, Helen Goodwin, Kelly Doney-Morrison, Britney Canzi, Nicole Moore, Rob McIntyre, Lorne Abramson, Paul Deveau, J.C. Douglas and Tony Marshall, all of whom have performed with TAG.

The lone newcomer is Sheila Davis, a student of Janice Jackson, who will sing a solo from *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which Jackson will direct for TAG in June, says Judy Reade.

"We had celebrations for the 60th, 70th and 80th anniversary," Reade said.

"I wrote a show for the 80th anniversary about musicals, as one of the founding groups was an operetta group (the Halifax Musical and Dramatic Club) and featured Hugh Mills of Mills Brothers. So I decided for the 85th, I would look at women characters.

"We've had Joan Orenstein, Joan Gregson and Vanessa Walton-Bone here. A lot of the actors went on to professional careers.

"We're looking at plays that gave prominence to women's trials and tribulations, how they faced them and how they overcame them. And the musical numbers make a comment about women."

Reade, who is TAG's archivist, recalls *The Full Monty* in 2014, "the most scandalous show we've ever done," and 2009's *Marie Antoinette*, with its "wonderful 18th-century costumes and innovative staging," as the most memorable productions she's been involved with.

Tickets for the revue are \$15 and are on sale at ticketatlantic.com, 902-451-1221. Half the proceeds go to the Lyn Gratwick/Theatre Arts Guild Scholarship in Costume Studies at the Fountain School of Performing Arts.