

CONTACT

The Official Newsletter of the Theatre Arts Guild

Canada's Oldest Continually Operating Community Theatre

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The Pond Playhouse
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NEXT AT TAG

Double Indemnity June 1st to 24th 2017

Double Indemnity began life as a serialized story in Liberty magazine in 1936. The 1930's devastating economic depression was hanging on and in America hard-boiled, gritty crime stories were very popular. Cain based his story on a real murder that happened in New York in 1927. That convicted killer was executed in Sing Sing prison by electric chair and a photograph of the event was named the most famous news photo of the 1920s.

Later in 1944 Raymond Chandler and Billy Wilder wrote a screen adaptation of Cain's Double Indemnity and it became a classic and famous example of the film noir movement that was so popular at the time. Another Cain novel, The Postman Always Rings Twice, was also adapted for the screen with similar success.

The stories and movies from this period share a common trait. They are not about "who dun it" because invariably the who is going to be murdered and by whom are revealed early in the story. In Double Indemnity we get to revel in the can they do it, why are they doing it and will they get caught? Mix in some deceit, treachery, lots of manipulation, a dash of sex, maybe some love and perhaps a psychopathic serial killer and the scene is set.

Insurance salesman Walter Huff innocently calls at the house of Herbert Nirlinger to renew a car insurance policy. Mr. Nirlinger is not home but his wife (second wife) Phyllis is there and it doesn't take long for the embers to glow, a few sparks to fly and the subject of life insurance to take centre stage.

Tickets on Sale NOW!!

- Nick Jupp, Director

TAG Ticket Prices

\$15 Members/Seniors/Students
\$18 Non-Members

Note: TAG prices include all Ticket Atlantic service fees

Buy Your Tickets

- At the 23 participating Atlantic Superstore outlets
- By Phone (902) 451 1221
- At the door (subject to availability)
- Online at www.ticketatlantic.com
- Ticket Atlantic Box Office

May/June 2017 Contact

Mailing Address: Theatre Arts Guild 287 Lacewood Dr. Unit 103 Suite 412 Halifax NS B3M 3Y7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Corruption, lies, family issues, political issues, personal struggles, death, life, war, hope, love. These were some of the themes found in the three plays presented during TAG's Playwright's Festival, which successfully completed a two night performance run on April 22nd. Thank you to all those who came to see the shows and to support the playwrights, James Boyer, Kathryn Reeves, and Tony Marshall. These individuals put a lot of time, thought, and life experience into their plays and it showed in the presentations. They are wished every success with their future works. Special thanks to the Producer, Angela Butler,

to Deborah Pollock who emceed the festival, to the directors, and to the actors, all of whom helped to bring these stories to our stage. We cannot forget those dedicated individuals who worked in the booth, backstage, and Front of House, and all who helped to make the Festival happen. It was such a great experience and I cannot wait to do this again!

Please remember to join us on May 8th as we announce the plays chosen for 2017/2018. I am confident that you will be very excited when you learn what is planned for the 87th season.

The team for the season finale, *Double Indemnity*, have been in rehearsals for many weeks. I recently sat in on one of their rehearsals and this cast is working very hard on a great production. You will want to be sure you have tickets for this show.

Our Theatre is so fortunate to have such wonderful volunteers. However, we love to see new people getting involved and welcome one and all. If you, or anyone you know, may be interested in joining our volunteers, please contact TAG for further information.

- Rayna Smith-Camp, President

REMINDER OF PARKING RULES AT TAG

Limited parking is available at the Pond Playhouse for our TAG audience. In addition, cars may park (carefully) along the SOUTH side of Parkhill Road (the opposite side of the street from the Pond Playhouse). Cars are not allowed to park on the north side (close to the Pond Playhouse) of the street. Parking is also available on Forward Ave (off Williams Lake) and there is a parking lot at the Frog Pond Trail off Purcell's Cove Rd.

TAG @ the Library - Love for Our (Literary) Children

Saturday, June 3rd, 2:00 p.m. (50 minutes)

Halifax Central Library (5440 Spring Garden Road)

Program Room 301, 3rd Floor

Free Admission

A family-friendly programme of poems and short scenes focussing on three children's classics – Peter Pan, Christopher Robin and Alice in Wonderland. As well as our animated storytelling, we will be looking at the authors of these well-loved books (J.M. Barrie, A.A. Milne and Lewis Carroll) and the real children who provided inspiration to their writers. There's even a snippet of Shakespeare, but you will have to attend to find out what the connection is there!





2017/2018 SEASON

Order in the House By Nick Jupp **September 28-30, 2017**

Director: Jocelyn LeBlanc

For 3 nights only: A staged reading of Order in the House by Nick Jupp. Centering on a fictitious Nova Scotia Minister of Finance and his wife: Successful, wealthy and highly respected, they are close to perfect in every way except, shall we say, even the best of people have the occasional skeleton in the cupboard. How it gets dealt with leads us to a terrifying and unexpected conclusion.

TAG Annual Variety Show **October 21, 2017**

Alice in Wonderland By Andrew O'Leary **November 23- December 10, 2017 - Annual Family Pantomime**

Director: Angela Butler and Kelly Doney Morrison; Music Director: Ralph Urquhart
A twisted take on a traditional story.

Having Hope at Home By David Craig **February 15-March 3, 2018**

Directed by Michele Moore

A Canadian comedy. On a winter night in a drafty farmhouse a baby is about to arrive. But modern medicine meets midwifery head on in a torrent of family feuding. As tensions rise between three dysfunctional generations, so does the laughter. It takes a baby to heal the rift in this funny, heartwarming story of forgiveness and hope.

The Diary of Anne Frank by Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett, newly adapted by Wendy Kesselman **April 19-May 5, 2018**

Directed by Bill VanGorder

A new adaptation of the classic script based on the book Anne Frank – The Diary of a Young Girl. A story that must continue to be told – it resonates as much in the early 21st century as it did in the middle of the 20th.

Death & the Maiden By Ariel Dorfman **June 7- 23, 2017**

Directed by Nick Jupp

Winner of the 1992 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play. Set in an unnamed South American country post coup, this mystery thriller tells the story of a political activist who is convinced that her guest is a man who once tortured her for the government, and who exacts her revenge.

FROM STAGE TO SCREEN

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary - the 66th in a continuing series

By now, readers of this column will have picked up hints regarding my admiration for the English actor Benedict Cumberbatch! One of the aspects of his career which impresses me most is the variety of roles which he tackles – the ‘high-functioning sociopath’ Sherlock Holmes in the BBC television series; Dr. Stephen Strange in the film version of the Marvel comic book hero; a grey wolf (codename ‘Classified’) in the animated comedy Penguins of Madagascar and, of course, a record-breaking sold-out run as Hamlet in London in 2015.

Thanks to various technological advances, there are many more avenues for actors to pursue today than in years past. At the beginning of the 20th century, a young girl in Toronto with acting ambitions, Gladys Smith, had only one avenue available to her – the stage. Gladys, together with her two younger siblings, took child roles in stock companies and then repeated the experience in the U.S., taking the train from town to town under the watchful eye of Mrs. Smith. Her persistence finally paid off when she landed a part in a Broadway production. But technology was moving apace and the development in photography from still to moving pictures was about to give rise to a new set of opportunities, with a dusty California town (good for outdoor locations!) poised to become the centre of a whole new industry. Gladys moved to Hollywood and prospered. Her name, however, proved a sticking point and so the Canadian Gladys Smith became the American Sweetheart, Mary Pickford.

I can cite an example much closer to home on the move from stage to other forms of

entertainment thanks to technological developments. Hugh Mills, one of the proponents of the merger of The Little Theatre Movement and the Halifax Musical and Dramatic Club (into Theatre Arts Guild) found a new career in radio when this medium was established in Halifax. It was a logical step that radio should take its artists from those who were already entertainers and Mr. Mills enjoyed a whole new calling as “Uncle Mel” at radio station CHNS.

By the late 1920s, the motion picture industry had become a major component of the entertainment business and hence a major employer – a situation which was to continue for the next twenty years. The names of the studios (and the men who headed them) were household words – Paramount, Warner Brothers, RKO, Columbia. Unlike the experience of Gladys Smith, there was now no need of an apprenticeship in the theatre. Actors signed contracts with studios which bound them to several films a year, leaving them little time to work in another medium. Fred MacMurray, the Walter in the film version of *Double Indemnity* had performed as a singer and band member, but had limited stage experience. Barbara Stanwyck (Phyllis in the film) had likewise a short career ‘treading the boards,’ after beginning work as a dancer and chorus girl in nightclubs. Robert Mitchum, a staple of American film noir, had no professional acting credentials, neither did that femme fatale, Jane Russell. Humphrey Bogart did however, and the doyenne of Hollywood, Katherine Hepburn, maintained contact with the live theatre (particularly Shakespeare plays) throughout her life.

MacMurray and Stanwyck were part of a wonderful cohort of stars (think Cary Grant, Clark Gable, James Stewart, Bette Davis), at a wonderful time in Hollywood. We hope you will join us as we recreate a part of that time and that atmosphere with *Double Indemnity*.

- Judy Reade

Community Notes

Dartmouth Players presents:

Jake’s Women

Visit www.dartmouthplayers.ns.ca or call 465-PLAY for more info

Bedford Players presents:

Steel Magnolias

Visit www.bedfordplayers.ns.ca or call 832-3300 for more info

Coming Soon

Double Indemnity

June 1st to 24th 2017

Adaptation for the stage of James M. Cain’s 1943 crime novella and true to the style of the 1944 American film noir.