

CONTACT

June, 2006

www.tagtheatre.com
info@tagtheatre.com

The Official Newsletter of



Canada's oldest continually operating
community theatre. 75 years and growing!

President's Message

—Esther VanGorder, President



Hanging on our living room wall is a painting specially commissioned by several of our very good friends eight years ago as a wedding gift. It's a painting of the Pond Playhouse as it appeared in 1998—gray, nondescript, and perhaps even a bit ramshackle looking. Not long after, the parking lot was paved and the building painted dark green, but if you studied the painting carefully, it was still quite obviously the Pond. Now, anyone seeing it for the first

time might find it a bit difficult to identify. If you haven't driven by the theatre in a while, you're in for a huge surprise when you do. The addition we've been fundraising for and talking about for so long is finally a reality. The two-story structure will be weather tight within the next few weeks. The roof is being shingled as I write this, the windows are waiting to be installed, and the main doors and siding are on order. It's been very exciting to watch the project progressing and growing with each visit to the theatre over the past six weeks.

But there's still a tremendous amount to be done to make the second-floor rehearsal hall and the main lobby (with lovely new washrooms) ready for public access. The capital fund has been severely depleted to get the construction project this far along. We need approximately \$100,000 to complete it. Fundraising Chairman Joe O'Brien and his team are working hard to raise the funds. When the addition is finally finished, it will enhance your experience at TAG immeasurably. The expanded lobby space will eliminate that claustrophobic feeling we experience when an entire audience is trying to squeeze into the current space and line up for the washrooms. The new rehearsal hall will allow more activities to go on simultaneously instead of scheduling around the use of the stage (for everything) and spending money to use alternate rehearsal space. I ask each and every one of our members to consider making a contribution (or further contributions) to help with the completion of the project. Every donation—small or large—helps and is appreciated.

Rest assured, the board and all of our production teams are keeping eagle eyes on all other costs and production budgets to make sure that the largest amount possible is contributed to the capital fund once the show costs are paid.

Meanwhile, the regular business of TAG continues. April's Variety Show was a tremendous success. The talent of our members seems to know no bounds. There were a lot of surprises (I didn't know Carl Anderson was a stand-up comic!). Rich Knowles as MC kept the evening moving smartly along with the help of the house band. Cheryl Theriault capably organized the second annual silent auction, which raised over \$900.00 on its own.

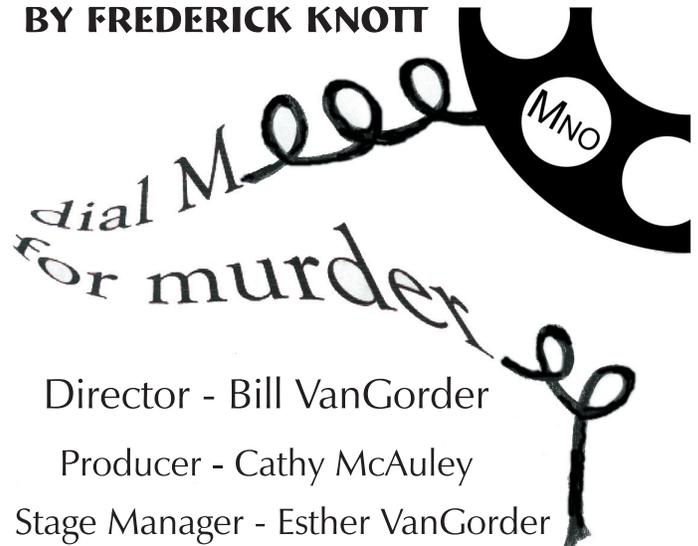
Our last production, *Red Hot and Cole*, played to full houses for
(continued on next page)

Our Next Production...

DIAL "M" FOR MURDER

A MYSTERY

BY FREDERICK KNOTT



Director - Bill VanGorder

Producer - Cathy McAuley

Stage Manager - Esther VanGorder

Starring:
Valerie MacKenzie
John Bulluck
Colin MacGillivray
Rob McIntyre
Scott Murphy

July 6th to July 22nd, 2006

Thursday, Friday, & Saturday
Evenings at 8:00 P.M.

Matinée – Sunday July 16th at 2:00 P.M.

The box office opens June 8th for members
and June 15th for non-members.

For Reservations Call

477-2663

or visit

www.tagtheatre.com

TAG Board, 2005-2006

President Esther VanGorder
Vice President..... Debora Pollock-Post
Secretary Rebecca Humphreys
Treasurer Carolyn Boyer
Artistic Director..... Nick Jupp
Executive Producer..... Bill VanGorder
Technical Director Austin Reade
Publicity Manager..... Michele Moore
Building Manager J Carruth
Props/Costume Manager Judy Reade
Reservations Manager Lynn Bungay
Membership Manager..... Helen Goodwin
Newsletter Editor Eric Rountree
Special Projects Manager..... Rich Knowles
Member at Large..... Hugh Vincent

Saraguay Club

Dinner & Theatre

The Saraguay Club and The Theatre Arts Guild will be offering a dinner and theatre package (\$37.00 plus tax and gratuities) on Thursday and Friday evenings.

During the run of *Dial "M" for Murder*, the dinner package will be offered on July 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th, 20th, and 21st. Arrive at the Saraguay at 5:30, enjoy a three-course dinner, and then travel to the Pond playhouse by 7:30 for an evening of entertainment.

To reserve this package, call TAG at 477-2663.

The Theatre Arts Guild

Location: Mailing Address:

The Pond Playhouse **287 Lacewood Drive**
6 Parkhill Road **Unit 103, Suite 412**
Halifax, NS **Halifax, NS B3M 3Y7**

Telephone: (902) 477-2663

Internet: **www.tagtheatre.com**
 info@tagtheatre.com

President's Message (Continued)

all three weekends. Who knew Cole Porter wrote "Don't Fence Me In"? I certainly didn't. Being totally non-musical myself, I am always incredibly impressed by those who are and even more than usual with the cast of this show, who not only sang and danced, but did it not as characters that they created from a script, but as historical figures in the entertainment industry such as Noel Coward, Dorothy Parker, Ethel Merman, Elsa Maxwell (according to one audience member, Jolene Pattison "out Elsa'd Elsa"), and Cole Porter himself, to name just a few. Carolyn Boyer, as the orchestra on piano, played for pretty much the entire two-and-a-half hour show. When I saw her the other day, her fingers didn't look any shorter, but I didn't measure them to make sure.

On Saturday, May 27th, John Gratwick and his team revived the annual yard sale. Special thanks to everyone who volunteered their time (or their stuff) to the sale. You helped us raise approximately \$700.00 for the building fund.

Don't miss the last production of the 2005/06 season—*Dial M for Murder*—directed by Bill VanGorder, which opens on July 6th. We are only in the third week of rehearsals, but already the characters are taking shape and the suspense is very real. Don't worry about July's warmth—our cast will be sending chills up and down your spine.

—Estherprezzie *

Exciting Volunteer Opportunity for Several People

—Deb Post, Vice-President

For years now, TAG patrons have answered their phones to the cheery, chatty voice of Lynn Bungay, our reservations manager or Phone Phenomenon. At the theatre, people ask board members, "Is Lynn here tonight? I'd like to meet the lady at the other end of the phone!" Frequently, they do get to meet her. She's just as bubbly in person.

Well, Lynn is stepping down from her duties after a long, successful run. *Bravo* (or is it *Brava*), Lynn! A grateful theatre will remember your unique style.

Now, TAG member, if you would like to do an important job for the theatre from the comfort of your own home, then this is your opportunity to be a part of a new team of people Lynn will be helping to train to take over her job. Yes, a team—which will mean that the responsibilities and tasks will be shared. How great is that? It's *really* great!

The Theatre Arts Guild is one-hundred-percent volunteer-run. The five plays and all our special evenings like Puzzle Night, Variety Night, and the Summer Readings only happen because folks give a little of their time (or in some cases, a lot!).

The gift of giving, as it's called, has a lovely, often unanticipated result—the giver often feels he or she has benefited as much or more from the transaction. We have a warm, welcoming family at TAG, and all of us who spend time there feel truly blessed by the spirit of the place.

If you'd like to be a part of this, call 477-2663 or send us a contact e-mail at info@tagtheatre.com. Give us your name and contact information and indicate that you'd like to be a volunteer. We have other volunteer duties as well, so there's lots of choice to be had.

Thank you! *

More on *Dial "M"*

You will be on the edge of your seat with TAG's summer production of *Dial "M" for Murder*. Tony, a retired tennis player, has quite obviously married his wife, Margot, for her money. He decides, after learning about Margot's affair with Max, a young writer of detective stories, that though he still quite fancies her money, he can survive quite happily without her. As a result, he concocts an ingenious plot to get rid of her, providing himself with a perfect alibi and the police with numerous red herrings.

One aspect of the murder remains to be sorted out, however. Who will strike the fatal blow? Fortunately, Tony comes across an old school friend, Captain Lesgate, living somewhat on the wrong side of the law. With a little gentle coercion, Lesgate is persuaded to carry out the deed.

Although the perfect murder doesn't go as perfectly as planned, it seems at first that Tony has obtained the desired result. That is until Inspector Hubbard takes up the case...

A mystery with a twist that you will not want to miss.

Dial "M" for Murder is a classic. Alfred Hitchcock directed the movie version. But even if you remember the movie, the plot will still puzzle you. *

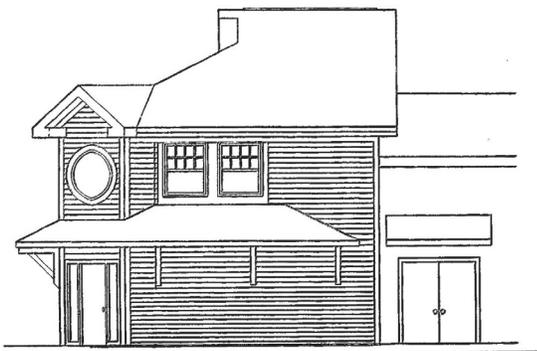
TAG's New Lobby and Rehearsal Hall

The expansion is underway, and the outside of the addition is almost complete. Now *we need your help* to complete the inside. Generous supporters and ticket sales have enabled us to raise \$78,000 toward the improvements, but we require a further \$100,000 to complete this phase of the project, which will eventually total approximately \$225,000.

With an expanded lobby, you won't have to stand outside in the rain or snow. A new rehearsal and workshop space will enable us to develop programs for youth and others who want to learn more about theatrical skills. New accessible washrooms are another major component of the expansion.

As a member of the Theatre Arts Guild (TAG), you recently received a letter of request from Joe O'Brien, Campaign Chairman, and Esther VanGorder, President of the Board of Directors. *Please respond to Joe and Esther's request as soon as you can.*

For more information on this fundraising initiative, contact Joe O'Brien at 422-9859, Lyn or John Gratwick at 425-1606, or Esther or Bill VanGorder at 453-4077. *



TAG's 2006/2007 Season

—Nick Jupp, Artistic Director

Since January, a group of volunteers known as the play reading committee has been meeting frequently with the artistic director, toiling away in the selection of plays for next year. Some scripts were submitted by TAG members, and others discovered by the committee members themselves. Libraries and many on-line sources were scoured to come up with scripts, and the whole process is really enjoyable, almost a puzzle at times that has to be solved.

With input from many sources, we have come to the TAG board recommending the following sequence of productions: a drama, a pantomime, a mystery, a comedy, and twin one-act plays. Many scripts in each category have been read by the volunteers, who prepared a review for each script, including technical details, rights costs, casting, length, and, of course, the script itself. This process is quite daunting, since there is so much material, and a thorough review of a script is time consuming.

The committee's recommendations have now gone to the full TAG Board and have been accepted. The selected plays, which now officially comprise TAG's 2006/2007 season, are listed below.

A huge thank you must go to the volunteers who participated: Elaine Casey, David Chambers, Carolyn Humphreys, Rebecca Humphreys, Rich Knowles, Michele Moore, Susan Murtagh, Deb Post, and Vanessa Walton-Bone.

We can promise you intrigue, laughter, tension, mystery, and some wonderful stories that will entertain you from September to July next year. *

September 28th to October 15th

Skylight

Drama by David Hare
Director: Angela Butler

November 30th to December 16th

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

Christmas Pantomime
Director: Rich Knowles

February 15th to March 3rd

Scotland Road

Mystery/Thriller by Jeffrey Hatcher
Director: Nick Jupp

April 26th to March 12th

Office Hours

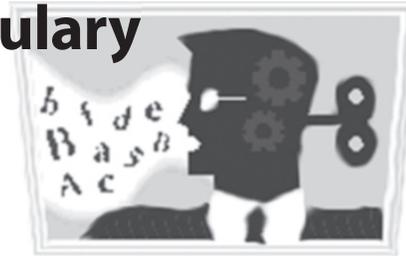
Comedy by Norm Foster
Director: Bill VanGorder

June 21st to July 7th

The Lovers and Night School

Two one-act plays by Harold Pinter
Director: Rebecca Humphreys

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary



The Play Becomes the Film

***Dial "M" for Murder* (1954, starring Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, and Robert Cummings)**

(The fifteenth in a continuing series)

—Judy Reade, *Props/Wardrobe Mistress*

Because of Alfred Hitchcock's later popularity in television, we tend to overlook his overall contribution to the development of the cinematic genre, in particular the "thriller" or suspense film.

At first glance, Alfred Joseph Hitchcock seems an unlikely candidate for the status of cinematic idol. He was born in the Leytonstone area of London in 1899 and educated at a Jesuit school. (He remained a devout Catholic throughout his life.) Leaving school at sixteen, he studied engineering and navigation at the University of London. Two years later, he found employment as an estimator at a telegraph company, later moving to the company's advertising department. The artistic talent he displayed took him next to Paramount, where he began his career creating titles for silent films. From artistic design, he moved to assistant directing, and the rest, as they say, is cinematic history. His career therefore spanned silent films (*The Pleasure Garden* was the first, in 1925), "talkies," significant technical developments (*Dial "M" for Murder* was a chance to try out the new 3-D technique) to his final offering, *Family Plot*, in 1976.

Although Hitchcock was a prolific director, *Dial "M" for Murder* is one of only a few of his films adapted from a play. Frederick Knott, whose play provided the screenplay for Hitchcock's 1954 film, had achieved great success in both London and New York in 1952 with his work.

The "signature" Hitchcock movies which brought his greatest renown in the '50s and '60s were taken from novels and short stories—*Rear Window* (1954), for example, from a short story by Cornell Woolrich, *Vertigo* (1958) from a suspense novel by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac, and the infamous *Psycho* (1960) from a novel by Robert Bloch. Perhaps to Hitchcock, the 'static' nature of the stage play did not provide sufficient breadth for storytelling and character development and a detailed exploration of his favourite themes—the threat of terror, the burden of guilt, the possibility of redemption—all of which are used to engage the audience until the denouement finally is played out!

Whatever your knowledge of Alfred Hitchcock and his films, however, I'm sure you will see what attracted him to *Dial M for Murder!* *

Audition Notice

Auditions for *Skylight*, TAG's fall production, will be held on Sunday June 18th from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. and Monday June 19th from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. Auditions will take place at the Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Road, Halifax (off Purcell's Cove Road at Williams Lake Road, just past the Frog Pond).

Skylight, by British playwright David Hare, was a Tony Award nominee for Best Play in 1997.

Cast: One woman (in her thirties), one man (in his fifties), and one young man (aged eighteen to twenty).

Skylight is an intriguing glance into the relationships between Kyra, an idealistic inner-city schoolteacher, her former lover, Tom, an obstinate and sometimes obnoxious upscale self-made restaurateur, and his bewildered teenaged son Edward.

The play explores issues of love, betrayal, passion, and potential. It also deals with social and political issues. The characters have a great deal of depth and passion and engage in a number of heated debates. The audience will find its sympathies shifting.

Please Note: This is a modern-day drama with adult content—there is strong language throughout. The play is set in London, but the characters are not necessarily British.

TAG's production runs from September 28th to October 14th, 2006.

For further information, please contact Angela Butler, either by phone at 866-0612 or by email at angrob@ns.sympatico.ca. If you are interested in learning more about the play, you can surf to www.culturevulture.net/Theater6/Skylight.htm *

Sobey's Tapes

Please keep those Sobey's tapes coming. They can make a significant contribution to TAG. There is no need to tidy or straighten them. Take them to the theatre, shove them into the Gratwicks' mail box (984 Bellevue), or pass them to a TAG member who is amenable to getting them to us. *

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presents

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June 7th to 24th 2006

Crichton Avenue Centre, Dartmouth, NS

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For reservations call 465-PLAY (7529)

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CentreStage Theatre

presents

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For information call (902)678-8040