

President's Message

—Esther VanGorder, president



Well, it's officially Spring. Let's hope Mother Nature is watching the calendar and doesn't throw any more winter weather at us. On that note, I'd like to thank the team of *Best of Friends* for working through the worst of the winter weather to get to rehearsals and performances, and to those intrepid theatre goers who braved the elements on the closing night of the show.

Activity never stops at the Pond Playhouse. No sooner had the set of *Best of Friends* been struck (i.e. dismantled) than the cast and crew of our next production, *Dancing at Lughnasa* by Brian Friel (directed by Louise Renault) had taken over the stage.

On March 19th, Judy Reade, TAG's Props & Costumes Mistress, directed her crew of helpers to move the costume items stored in the backstage loft to their new home in the former equipment room on the second floor above the lobby. Thanks go to all those who turned out to form the "accessory brigade" that moved everything through the building and up the stairs in record time. Special accolades go to the time-challenged trio who turned out extra early and got everything out of the loft and into the house. You know who you are.

Those of you who attended *Dead Guilty* last summer may remember that we asked all audience members to fill out a survey to give the board an idea of the things that were most important to our patrons. There were a number of categories including the physical comfort of the theatre and the type of plays you'd like to see on the TAG stage. The things that jumped out at us most were comments regarding the lack of space in the lobby, the amount of leg room in some of the seats, and the lack of air-conditioning.

We can't deal with all the problems at once, so after much deliberation over fish cakes and Eggs Benny, the Building Committee has recommended that this summer's renovation project be the enlargement of the lobby. A two-story addition will be built on the front of the building to create a larger, more comfortable space for patrons, more washrooms and a more efficient ticket area and bar. The additional space on the second story will give us workshop, meeting and temporary rehearsal space.

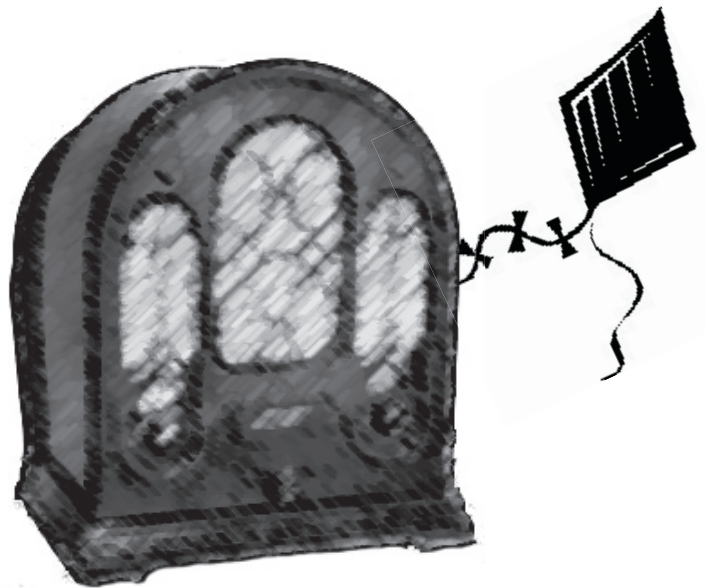
This doesn't mean we're never going to address the other issues, and we did seriously consider working on the seating and air conditioning this year, but the project was shaping up to be far larger than the short time available allowed as well as being more expensive than we can afford at this time.

As you know, we've been working on our Capital Campaign for several years now. The Board made a promise to the membership that we wouldn't embark on any major projects until we had the money in
(continued on next page)

Our Next Production...

Dancing at Lughnasa

by Brian Friel



Directed by Louise Renault

Produced by Bill VanGorder

Stage Manager: Esther VanGorder

April 28th to May 14th, 2005

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at 8:00 P.M.

with one Sunday Matinée on May 8th at 2:00 P.M.

The box office opens March 24th for members and
March 31st for non-members.

For Reservations Call

477-2663

or visit www.tagtheatre.com

TAG Board, 2004-2005

President	Esther VanGorder
Vice President	Nick Jupp
Secretary	Michele Moore
Past President	Frank MacLean
Treasurer	Carolyn Boyer
Artistic Director	Brenda Tyedmers
Executive Producer	Louise Renault
Technical Director	Austin Reade
Publicity Manager	Bill VanGorder
Building Manager.....	J Carruth
Props/Costume Manager....	Judy Reade
Reservations Manager	Lynn Bungay
Membership Records	Helen Goodwin
Newsletter Editor	Eric Rountree
Special Projects Manager...	Rich Knowles
Member at Large	Hugh Vincent
FOH Manager.....	open
Fund Raising Manager	open

Saraguay Club—Dinner & Theatre

The Saraguay Club and The Theatre Arts Guild offer a dinner and theatre package (\$37.00 plus tax and gratuities) on Thursday and Friday evenings during TAG's productions.

During the run of *Dancing at Lughnasa*, this package will be offered on April 28th and 29th, and May 5th, 6th, 12th, and 13th. 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

(continued from page 1)

the bank – There will be no debt at TAG! We will be able to complete this major project without incurring any liabilities, however, we do need to raise an additional \$10,000 this spring. For anyone who made a 3-year pledge in the past, please honour your annual promise. For anyone who has been thinking about it, now's the time.

As an added incentive, an extremely generous benefactor (who wishes to remain anonymous) has offered to match any donations made to the lobby expansion project up to a total of \$5000. Let me publicly express my own sincere gratitude personally and as President, and the gratitude of the board and the membership. May Saint Genesius*, the patron saint of theatre, shine on you for all of your days!

Please don't forget to reserve for our annual Variety Night on April 2nd, which some say is the most fun event of the TAG season. And, bring your *Dancing shoes to Lughnasa* – as Stage Manager, I can safely say that we have a wonderful, talented cast who are just waiting to make an audience laugh and cry. *

* An Actor hired to work in a play that made fun of Christian Baptism. In the middle of the performance he suddenly received a word from God, realized the truth of Christianity, and converted on stage. He refused to renounce his new faith, even at the emperor's orders, and was martyred by order of Emperor Diocletian.

More on Lughansa

—Bill VanGorder, producer

Dancing at Lughnasa

by Brian Friel

Directed by Louise Renault

The action of this nostalgic play is told through the memory of an illegitimate son as he remembers the five women who raised him: his mother and four maiden aunts. He is only seven in 1936, the year his elderly uncle, a priest, returns after serving for twenty-five years as a missionary in a Ugandan leper colony. For the young boy, two other disturbances occur that summer. The sisters acquire their first radio, whose music transforms them from correct Catholic women to shrieking, stomping banshees in their own kitchen. And he meets his father for the first time, a charming Welsh drifter who strolls up the lane and sweeps his mother away in an elegant dance across the fields. From these small events spring the cracks that destroy the foundation of the family forever. But this haunting play is Friel's tribute to the spirit and valour of the past and its people.

Book now to see *Dancing at Lughnasa*, starring Angela Butler, Elaine Casey, Terry Coolen, Ryan Horne, Chris Morse, Cheryl Theriault, Vanessa Walton-Bone and Alice Woodbury. The crew includes Assistant Director Roz Marshall, Stage Manager Esther VanGorder, Assistant Stage Manager Roxanne Smith, Lighting Designer Austin Reade, Set Designer J Carruth, Costumer Sian Morris-Ross and Props Master Carl Anderson.

\$12 for Non-Members. Members, students and seniors \$10.

The Box Office is now open at 477 2663 or book on the TAG website at www.tagtheatre.com *

TAG's Summer Production

The Hollow

a mystery by Agatha Christie

July 7th to 23rd, 2005

Directed by Iris Patterson

An attractive man, his wife, his mistress, and his ex-mistress are present during a weekend at the home of Lord and Lady Angk-tell. This explosive combination turns into murder. Everyone is suspect as the plot unravels, but "who done it?" This vintage Christie mystery is full of the usual "red herrings," which Inspector Colquoun must avoid in order to unmask the murderer.

Auditions — April 17th & 18th

Auditions for *The Hollow* will be held on Sunday April 17th and Monday April 18th from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. at Saint Augustine's Church, 290 Purcell's Cove Road.

There will be a read-through of *The Hollow* on April 13th, 2005, from 7:15 to 9:00 P.M. in the Upper Balcony of St. Augustine's Church. This is a pre-audition read-through.

For further information, call Iris Patterson at 832-2558. *

The Melville Boys (TAG at Neptune)

—Nick Jupp, director

Our production of Norm Foster's *The Melville Boys* has been cast, with Frank MacLean, Rory Young, Leslie Milne and Kim Parkhill playing Lee, Owen, Mary and Loretta respectively. Show dates at The Studio, Neptune are June 8th to 12th, with tickets going on sale at the Neptune box office in May.

The play is centered around two brothers (one carrying a very big problem) at their Aunt's lakeside camp for a weekend. They're away from the plastics factory where they both work, away from family and fiancé, a whole weekend of fishing, beer, and camaraderie. However, two sisters appear, paddling down the lake—local residents, no doubt. Now, what could possibly transpire at Auntie's camp, by the lake, out in the woods, when two girls meet two boys?

It's all very innocent and maybe just a little awkward until the local legion dance comes up in conversation. The story follows our newly-mets as they return from the dance to the cottage, etc.

Plays by Fredericton-based Foster have become internationally popular, and we are pleased to bring the humour and tender discoveries of *The Melville Boys* to Neptune's Studio stage. *

"Foster declines to settle for the obvious, giving us instead, a story that has the uncertainties and the complexity of real life." —London Free Press



Upcoming TAG Productions

Saturday April 2nd, 2005

TAG's Variety Night

Produced by Bill VanGorder

April 28th to May 14th

Dancing at Lughnasa, A Drama by Brian Friel

Directed by Louise Renault

July 7th to 23rd, 2005

The Hollow, a mystery by Agatha Christie

Directed by Iris Paterson

TAG's Variety Night ...

TAG's 2005 Variety Night will take place at the Pond Playhouse on Saturday, April 2nd. Mark your calendar now for a great evening of fun and fellowship. Variety Night is for members only, just one more great reason to be a TAG member. If you're not a member yet, just pay for your membership (a mere \$10.00) at the door.

Producer Bill VanGorder has assembled a stellar line-up for this year's Variety Night, including Master of Ceromies Rich Knowles and performances by Lori Errington, Nick Jupp, Cheryl Theriault, Lyn Gratwick, Helen Goodwin, Judy Reade, Frank MacLean, Louise Renault, J Carruth, Bill and Esther VanGorder, Patricia Martinson, Vanessa Buhr-Rountree, Elaine Casey, Dot Roberts' Quarter Notes, and Vicki Strand and Nancy McLaughlin performing as "Duck Sounds From Titan."

Doesn't that sound like a grand night? There may even be a Grande Variety Knight!

Admission is a \$5.00 or more donation to the Building Fund. Call 477-2663 for Reservations. *

...and Silent Auction!!

There will be a new twist on Variety Night this year! Bring your checkbooks, and get ready to bid on fabulous items at our first-ever Silent Auction! Cheryl Theriault is organizing this event, and she may still be looking for contributions.

If you have something you would like to auction off, or if you would like to help out, call Cheryl at 492-0838. *



Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary

Ireland to England and Back Again

(The eleventh in a continuing series)

—Judy Reade, *Props/Wardrobe Mistress*

Brian Friel (b. 1939, Omagh), the author of *Dancing at Lughnasa*, has had a somewhat easier passage than many of his compatriots of past generations. Friel has been able to write in a home environment, for theatres and theatre companies dedicated to the staging of Irish plays, within a culture supportive of the work of Irish writers, directors, and performers. This is in direct contrast to past centuries, when many of the most prominent Irish playwrights had to learn their trade and forge a reputation outside the country, usually in England.



Oscar Wilde

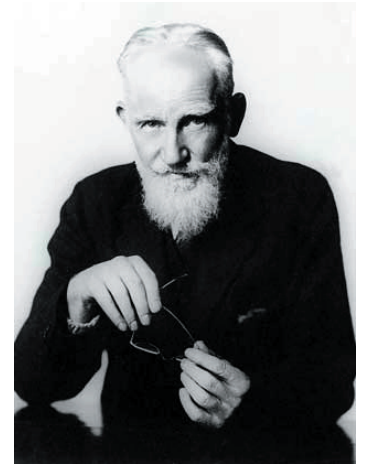
Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, two of the most successful playwrights in 18th century London, were born in Ireland, Goldsmith in Roscommon and Sheridan in Dublin. Goldsmith's most famous piece *She Stoops to Conquer* was written in 1773, and is still regularly performed. Sheridan's father was the manager of the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, and Sheridan himself became the owner of London's famed Drury Lane Theatre, which he bought from David Garrick.

In 1990, TAG presented



The Importance of Being Earnest, the most famous work of yet another 'transposed' Irishman, Oscar Wilde (full name Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde). Wilde studied at Trinity College in Dublin, then won a scholarship to Magdalen College in Oxford. The production of *Lady Windemere's Fan* in London in 1892 set him on the road to fame and eventually made him the dominant influence in British theatre at the end of the Victorian era.

Yet another Dubliner who made the move to London was George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950). At the age of 20, Shaw moved to the English capital intending to become a novelist. He was also interested in politics, however, and began using his written output to promote his socialist agenda. In 1986, Shaw's *Candida* was presented at TAG, and his *Pygmalion* was a TAG favourite of the 1930s. You may know *Pygmalion* better in its musical adaptation as *My Fair Lady*, a transition of which purists may not have approved, but which certainly benefited the National Gallery of Ireland, to which Shaw left the royalties from his work! *



George Bernard Shaw

RU on the TAG E-Mail List?

If you are not getting regular e-mails from TAG, let us know, so we can put you on the list for one or both of our regular e-mail systems.

We send out an e-mail "blast" whenever there is something new happening at TAG. These e-mails come out once or twice a week. These are especially useful for those wanting to know the status of seat availability for current productions or for those interested in auditions and other community theatre activities.

The other mailing is a once-a-month e-mail of news for the

entire month. Not as current, and you may miss an event, but it does mean less e-mail in your inbox.

To get on either or both of these e-mail lists, send an e-mail to bill.vangorder@ns.sympatico.ca *

TAG T-Shirts for Sale

Have you seen the wonderful TAG T-shirts designed by Sheena Dickenson? Buy yours next time you are at the theatre. Twenty dollars will give you a T-shirt you will be proud to wear. T-shirts are available at the Bar. *

Support Our Friends

Dartmouth Players
presents

Caught in the Net

March 30th 2005 to April 16th 2005

Tickets: \$12.00 adults; \$10.00 students/seniors

First 2 evenings of production are \$5.00

For reservations call 465-PLAY (7529)

www.dartmouthplayers.ns.ca

All Saints Bedford Players
presents

Barefoot in the Park

April 28th 2005 to May 14th 2005

All Saints Anglican Church, Bedford NS

Showtime is 8:00 P.M.

Tickets: \$10.00 adults; \$8.00 students/seniors

For reservations call 832-3300