



CONTACT

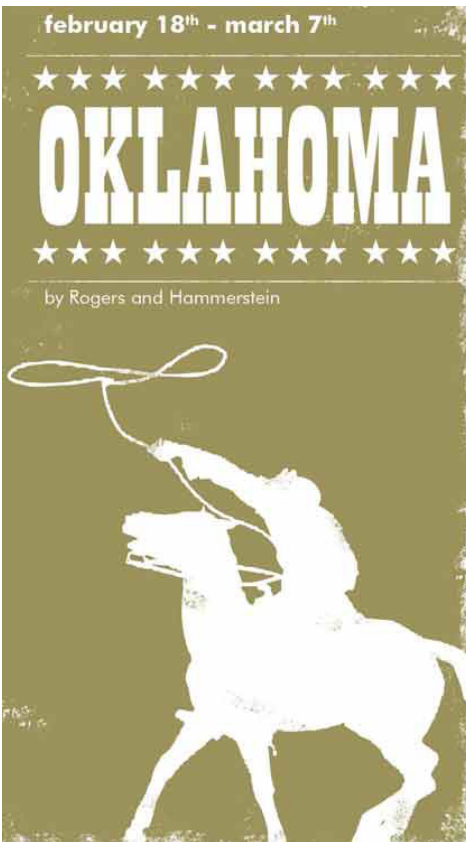
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATRE ARTS GUILD



TAG BOX OFFICE
477-2663

THE POND PLAYHOUSE - 6 PARKHILL RD. HALIFAX NOVA SCOTIA INFO@TAGTHEATRE.COM

TAG PRESENTS OKLAHOMA!



**Opening
February 18th**



**Reservations
477-2663**

www.tagtheatre.com

When *Oklahoma!* burst on the collective consciousness of folks in the fifties with the newly-developed wide screen film format, it was, as they say, a different time. The film version adhered fairly closely to the stage version and the movie-going public basked in the performers' singing and dancing capabilities, very much as they would have done, had they gone to see the musical live at the theatre. Nowadays, we tend to expect more technical wizardry from a movie and marvel at a multitude of skilful effects. There is, however, no substitute for the stage. We are challenged by the immediacy, the spontaneity of the moment and are engaged emotionally to the

extent that scenes, characters and songs become permanently fixed in our memory. Who of that era does not remember *People will say we're in love* or *Oh, what a beautiful morning*? And who does not remember Jud's name? What happened in the dream scene? It is not just with a sense of nostalgia, though, that we'd like you to come to see this show. Bring with you also your curiosity and desire to see what it was about this production that has allowed it to last these many years: the vibrancy of the vocal selections, the freshness of a farm-oriented era, the colour of the costumes and the electric exuberance of the dance. *Oklahoma!* – OK! ~ *Gisela O'Brien, Director*

Ladies and Gentlemen, Please Take Your Seats!

Dedicate a Seat for \$500 and take a permanent place in the history of the Pond Playhouse Your seat will be identified with an engraved plaque.

- Celebrate a special occasion/event
- Cherish the memory of a loved one
- Record a milestone
- Raise your company's community profile
- Show your support for the arts



Use the enclosed form to make your tax deductible contribution. All proceeds go towards the TAG Capital Campaign. Contact Valerie for more information (422-8176, TagSeatSale@ns.sympatico.ca)

Mailing Address: Theatre Arts Guild 287 Lacewood Drive Unit 103 Suite 412 Halifax N.S. B3M 3Y7

A **BIG** THANK YOU to our many Renovation Volunteers

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I read the November 2008 issue of the newsletter with interest and was struck by Judy Reade's informative article about the historical aspect of fairy tales (as compared with the Disney version). Never fear! Pockets of Disney resistance are dotted about here and there! With absolutely no way to verify this other than my personal experience, I maintain that there must be at least two dozen people who realize that Walt Disney did not create the stories he depicted - in fact, he seems to have borrowed heavily, altered mightily and credited history in a paltry fashion or not at all. Or am I just cranky? Bill Peet was one of Disney's best illustrators and animators, although after 27 years, he left the 'wonderful world of Disney' and started a second career as a children's book illustrator. When my daughters were little, we read his books as well as scores of other children's stories, fables and fairy tales. I entertained my poor little poppets regularly with a little speech entitled 'all is not Disney',

followed by heavy-handed observations about the dangers of subtle propaganda in his films - for example - the bad guys and evil do-ers invariably have British accents - a little technique that has survived unchallenged in much of Hollywood's output since Hollywood itself began. I wonder how we would feel if the American film and television industry switched to making every villain and 'perp' in the movies, on Law and Order and on CSI, into Canadians? Parents and psychologists agree (I know this because I heard a show on CBC Radio!) that children are fascinated, enthralled and delighted by the 'horrible' tales collected by the Grimm Brothers and most youngsters survive unscathed having devoured these pager-turners countless times. I don't have the same feeling about today's crop of darkly realistic and violent computer games, where it seems important to kill everyone on sight in a gore-fest. Somehow I miss the moral of that kind of story. ~ *Debora Post*

BRINGING TAG TO A NEW AUDIENCE

In October 2008, TAG presented excerpts from "Marie Antoinette: the Color of Flesh," to an appreciative audience at the Keshen Goodman Branch of the Halifax Public Library. Rayna Smith-Camp played the ill-fated Queen



of France, Helen Goodwin was portrait painter to the French Court – Elisabeth Louise Vigee Le Brun. and Phil Reid the Count Alexis de Ligne, a nobleman with revolutionary ideals. Interspersed with the

excerpts where 'behind the scenes' explanations from Nick Jupp, Bill Barnaby, Mark Monk and Judy Reade.

It was a lot of work for a single performance, but certainly worthwhile to bring TAG to a new audience.



Let's hope those who saw us decide to come to the Pond and see the whole play! ~ *Judy Reade*

Send your newsletter
submissions to
valerie.dubois@ns.sympatico.ca

Renew Your TAG
Membership
Today!

COMMUNITY NOTES

Dartmouth Players presents *SEA MARKS*: February 4 - 21, 2009; an intensely romantic and thought provoking play by Gardner McKay.

For reservations: call 465-PLAY or visit www.dartmouthplayers.ns.ca

PRESIDENTS REPORT

December 2008 was a momentous month for TAG. The first audiences to enjoy the renovated theatre watched the Pantomime production and by all accounts the renovations are a huge success.

We are enormously grateful to our renovation volunteers that worked tirelessly to get the job completed on time.

We are also indebted to the many people who donated funds for the building project. From a loonie left on the bar to the cheques received by mail, every single dollar has been leveraged with volunteer time and supplier donations to maximize its value. We do not have a proper analysis, but our estimate is that every dollar donated was worth two dollars for the project through volunteer and donation leverage. Thank you one and all for your financial support.

The renovation financial cupboard is now bare, but everything has been accomplished on a cash basis, no

borrowing, no mortgage, no indebtedness of any kind. Now we need to re-roof the playhouse and complete some interior work that was not vital for code compliance. Please continue to support our renovation projects whether a single loonie or a very large cheque, it all adds up and it all helps.

Turning to the balance of the season, I hope you will enjoy the lively and very lovable Oklahoma musical. It's a big production for our little theatre, but the production team and cast are working hard and are very excited; get ready for a fabulous show. Into the spring we have the ever popular and very funny Norm Foster play *Drinking Alone*, followed by the provocative *Marianne Antoinette* and the *Colour of Flesh* in the summer.

We look forward to seeing you over the winter and don't forget to book for the warm and sunny show *Oklahoma*. ~ *Nick Jupp, President*

RENOVATIONS

Pantomime audiences were the first to enjoy the our recently completed renovations. Gone are the peculiar steps, gone are the awkward aisles and gone are the leg crunching seat arrangements. Instead we have beautiful and spacious aisles, plenty of leg room and standardized steps.

Also of note is the open ceiling that removes the claustrophobic effect some people felt in the higher seats and also allows for better ventilation and stage lighting improvements. The two new emergency exits are clearly indicated and the whole plan conforms to our specialized consultant's emergency exit design. Other not so obvious

benefits are a new modern heating system, set painting clean-up station, upgraded costume storage room and backstage wet props preparation area. In and around all this is completely new electrical, plumbing and fire alarm infrastructure. We are hugely indebted to the TAG volunteers who made all of this possible; one can't help but think of the Churchill quotation "never in the field of conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." Our happy few that lead the renovations must at times have felt as if they were in a conflict. Cutting concrete walls, pulling down gyprock, climbing through the rafters and surviving countless bursts of

AUDITION CALL DRINKING ALONE by Norm Foster

Canada's most prolific and popular playwright gives us a romantic comedy set in the midst of a dysfunctional family reunion. The show will run April 23rd to May 9th.

Audition Dates: Feb. 22 & 23

Time: 7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

**Location: Pond Playhouse
6 Parkhill Rd. (off the Purcell's
Cove Rd.).**

You will be asked to read a part from the script. We are looking for 5 characters (2 men and 3 women): Joe (Main Character: 25-45); Ivan (Joe's Dad: 50-70); Renee (Main Character: 25-45); Carrie (Joe's Sister: 25-45); Phyllis (Ivan's second wife: 50-70). For more information contact Director, Frank MacLean (454-0417, frankmaclean@eastlink.ca).

**Renew Your TAG
Membership Today!**

UPDATE

dust and dirt. Even the old copper plumbing and wiring was cashed in by a volunteer to help pay for more new material.

We are certainly indebted to those who not only worked so hard, but achieved results that passed building code inspection with flying colours. TAG is now current code compliant and ready to move forward and celebrate our 100th birthday in 2031. The volunteers that worked on the renovation would not appreciate public recognition, but they have given TAG the gift of security, comfort, safety and longevity. An enormous gift many will enjoy as the years roll by. ~ *Nick Jupp, President*

"WORDS AND MUSIC, OR SHOULD THAT BE MUSIC AND WORDS?"

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary - the 25th in a continuing series...



Musical composition is usually a solitary occupation, but add words to the music and the necessary collaboration of musician and lyricist does not always run on a smooth path! Fortunately the partnership of the creators of "Oklahoma," Richard Rogers (1902-1979) and Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960) was a happy one, beginning when both were students at Columbia University and progressing through the 1940s and 1950s, with works such as "Carousel," "South Pacific," "Flower Drum Song," and "The Sound of Music," later to be considered some of the most successful examples of American musical theatre.

Rodgers fared less well with his earlier collaborator, Lorenz Hart. Though the relationship began well and the two eventually produced over twenty shows and 550 songs, their approaches to life differed – Hart was a perfectionist and serious in his approach to producing the words, but disorganised in his personal life. Rodgers was more methodical and rigorous and was the one to handle all their business dealings. The increasing intrusion of Hart's personal affairs (and reliance on alcohol!) into the partnership led to its dissolution. By the time 'Larry' Hart died in 1943, Rodgers had already found a new partner and "Oklahoma" had had its successful premiere. Rodgers' summary of his first meeting with Hart is a good summary of their collaboration...."I left Hart's house, having acquired in one afternoon a career, a partner, a best friend and a permanent source

of irritation."

Personal problems also led to the breakdown of relations for another well-known duo. After early success with "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat," "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and "Evita," Andrew Lloyd Webber and his writer, Tim Rice went their separate ways. Lloyd Webber's constant activity and Rice's more laid-back approach (and his habit of 'vacationing at will' during the composition process!) led to a parting of the waves (plus the fact that, at the time, the married Rice was having an affair with an actress/singer destined to be the star of an upcoming project!).



The possible problems inherent in a close collaboration seem to have been avoided by another duo familiar to TAG audiences – the composer John Kander (b. 1927) and his lyricist Fred Ebb (1933-2004). The creators of "Cabaret," and "Chicago," whose songs were featured in the revue "The World Goes 'Round," presented at the Pond Playhouse in 1994, frequently discussed their ideas with the producer/director Harold Prince and made a point of selecting two 'muses' (Liza Minnelli and Chita Rivera) who formed a focus for their work, and from whom they drew inspiration.

Of course any and all problems can be avoided by writing both words and music oneself (!), which is exactly what Noel Coward did and Irving Berlin too, though Berlin was a self-taught pianist and frequently used an arranger to polish his compositions.

As a member of The Gilbert and

Sullivan Society of Nova Scotia, I certainly can't end this article without mentioning one of the most famous collaborations of writer and composer – Sir W. S. Gilbert (1836–1911) and Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900). Both these gentlemen had found some success before presenting their first joint offering "Thespis" (1871) - Gilbert as a producer of comic verse and plays, Sullivan as a composer of orchestral pieces and hymns. Through eleven more operettas, the two experienced unparalleled success and were the toast of London's theatre-going public, but the working relationship was often strained. Sullivan shied away from conflict, whilst Gilbert was easily upset and confrontational. Gilbert never moved far from his early comedic roots; Sullivan, with a desire to be remembered as a serious composer, preferred subjects with more realism and the opportunity for deeper emotional content. After a quarrel precipitated by a dispute over a carpet and other expenses for the Savoy Theatre, the two took separate paths. In 1891, after several failed attempts at a reconciliation, the two agreed to work together again, on the urging of their music publisher. "Utopia, Limited" in 1893 had only limited success however, and "The Grand Duke" (1896) was a failure. The two never worked together again.

Rest assured, Mr. Rodgers and Mr. Hammerstein never quarrelled over a floor covering, so enjoy the fruits of their collaborative labours!
~ Judy Reade

