

GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Summer 2015 newsletter

Artistic director's message

Oh, my goodness, what a season we've had for our 10th anniversary year! We went from a sold-out revival of our first-ever production, [The Vagina Monologues](#), to establishing the meaning of reasonable doubt in [12 Angry Men](#), to the rollicking world premiere of [Will Shakespeare The Panto](#). And that was all before Christmas!

In March, audiences got to meet the gals in [Jenny's House of Joy](#). Since then we've had three more world premieres – sold-out performances of [one-act plays](#) written and performed by Gabriolans. (*Eyes of a Blue Dog* by Mark Smith, *Lemon Yellow Laces* by Dennis Johnston and my own play, *That's Nice*.) To find out what the playwrights have to say about watching their creations come to life, see page 3.

And, as if all that wasn't enough, we rounded the season off by (excuse me while I mix my metaphors) taking the plunge and dipping our toes into the wonderful world of William Shakespeare with an *al fresco* staged reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Including this finale in the season was a leap of faith. We had never attempted Shakespeare before (well, not unless you count last November's panto) and it turned out the prospect left many members feeling somewhat clay-brained and flap-mouthed. Enter [Garry Davey](#), who'd long wanted to see an outdoor performance on Gabriola of the Bard's magical play.

What followed was a dream come true – for Garry, for the baker's dozen of Shakespeare novices who took part, and for the audiences who came out. (Not to mention People for a Healthy Community who received 50% of the ticket sales.) It was so popular, that "**Bard on the Bay**" will be back next summer. (A big thank you to George and Nikki Westarp who offered their beautiful garden as the setting for this year and have told us we're welcome back any time!)

Once again, thanks to Bill Pope for his photos of the [One-Act Plays](#) and [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#).

Also, as always, a big thank you to all the island businesses who [supported](#) our 10th anniversary season. When you patronise these businesses, please let them know that you appreciate their support of community theatre on Gabriola.

Miranda Holmes

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Auditions for *ROBIN HOOD*, this November's panto, will be held at the Rollo Centre on September 8 and 10. We don't just need cast members. We need lots of folks behind the scenes and are particularly keen to hear from any seamstresses who'd like to help with this year's costumes. If you're interested in getting involved, please drop us a line at gabriolaplayers@gmail.com. Keep an eye on our website for more details and watch out for the audition ad in the *Souder*. Make this the year you get in on the fun.

Our 2015/16 season will begin the weekend of October 2 with a staged reading of Nicole Moeller's dark, psychological drama *AN ALMOST PERFECT THING*. Tickets: \$15 at North Road Sports or online at gabriolaplayers.ca. For more information about the play and the rest of our new season, see pages 5 and 6.

One-Act Play Festival



Back row (l-r) the cast of *That's Nice* by Anne M. Holmes: Cec Ashley, Roger Carter, Madeleine Ani, Miranda Holmes, Donna Deacon, and Jenn Feenan. Front row: Peter Dzierzawa and Linda St. Clair (*Eyes of a Blue Dog* by Mark Smith), Nick Squire, Joyce Ashley, Dave Innell and BJ Godson (*Lemon Yellow Laces* by Dennis Johnston).

One of the many great things about Gabriolans is their love of and support for the arts. So it really wasn't a surprise that this year's One-Act Play Festival, featuring three brand new plays written by Gabriolans was sold out. The feedback from audiences was overwhelmingly positive.

And the playwrights themselves were also pretty pleased.

Mark Smith, author of ***Eyes of a Blue Dog*** (adapted from a short story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez), says of the experience: "I thought I knew what to expect on opening night. I knew that Linda and Peter had created believable, living people in their two roles, and I knew that they would, from their first exchange, relentlessly develop the connection between their two characters so strongly that, by the end of the 20-minute performance, the audience would carry away a visceral appreciation of their intense longing for a world that would never exist. I was wrong – wonderfully wrong – about how they would affect the observer. As She and He, Linda and Peter created their dreamworld (described by director Anne Drozd as a metaphor for longing that cannot be fulfilled) so powerfully that I, watching, felt as though I were present unseen in the room where they met, and that I, not they, was not real. Watching them, I felt a sadness that surprised me with its intensity and left me enormously proud of what we had achieved."

That's Nice author Anne M. Holmes (Miranda to the rest of us) says: "No playwright could have asked for a more perfect cast. Grumpy Greville, Roguish Ralph, Zany Zoe, Charming Charlotte and Marvellous Millicent leapt off the page and onto the stage. It was an absolute joy to work with them all. I can't wait to do it again. Oh, wait a minute, that means I need to write another play. Okay, let me get back to you on that."

It's been a year of firsts for Dennis Johnston. He didn't just write a play (adapted from a short story by his wife Sharon McInnes), he also directed it. "As both the playwright and director of ***Lemon Yellow Laces***, I learned very quickly that it takes a dedicated team to make a 'bunch of words' on a few dozen sheets of paper come alive," says Dennis. "The journey was exhilarating, stressful sometimes, and pure joy at others. Seeing my ideas and vision for the characters and story unfold and sharing the result with the audience, made it all worthwhile. And with so much talent on this island to help make it a success, I recommend you try the experience yourself. It's fun - I'm hooked – I'd do it again!"

Gabriola Players has entered ***Lemon Yellow Laces*** in the Vancouver Island One-Act Play Festival to be performed at the Village Theatre in Qualicum Beach in early November. Break a leg, all!

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Gabriola Players would like to offer a **HUGE** thank you to **Garry Davey** for giving up several weeks of his life to make **A Midsummer Night's Dream** come true. His love of the Bard was both inspiring and infectious for all involved.

According to Garry, "I've long wanted to see an al fresco performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Gabriola, so I leapt at the chance to take the lead on this production. With Shakespeare, it's all in the language, so it didn't matter in the least that all our 'lovers' were in their sixties or older. The play is about loving and being loved – with all the joy and heartache that entails. We all went through it in our teens and it was a lot of fun for us seniors to relive it.

"I've seldom worked with a cast who so enthusiastically embraced the challenge of bringing the Bard's words to life."

For the actors involved (all Shakespeare novices) the experience was as magical as the play.

This was particularly true for Adela Torchia (Puck), who said after the performances: "As a newcomer to both the island and to Gabriola Players (as well as to acting in general), I could not believe my amazing luck to have stumbled into this fantastic group and activity. It took me a while to grow into the role of Puck, but it was a magical and transforming experience for me.

"As a newbie, I was concerned lest my lack of honed skills might take away from the efforts of the more veteran actors, but everyone was so helpful and encouraging! Garry in particular inspired me with confidence and challenged me beyond what I thought I could do. I couldn't be more delighted with this as my first retirement project on Gabriola Island."

Donna Deacon sums it up beautifully: "This was one of the most richly enjoyable experiences I've had with Gabriola Players. The opportunity to learn about playing Shakespeare's text with such excellent support and encouragement was amazing. The ensemble became like a big happy family and I think it showed in our performances. Such fun!"

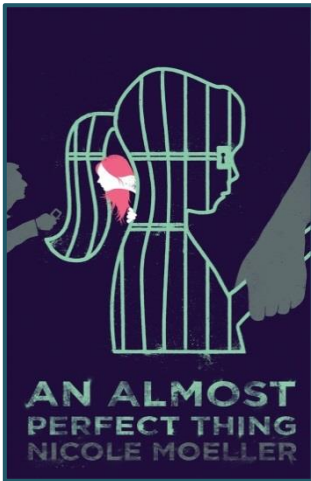
Audiences agreed – and told us they want more. Certainly every cast member is raring to go again. (Although when word gets out about how much fun was had, there may be stiff competition for roles next year.) And Garry didn't need to be asked twice. He's already decided on **Twelfth Night** for 'Bard on the Bay' 2016.



The Dream Team, left to right: Catherine Andersen, Cec Ashley, Joyce Ashley, Bob Weenk, Jean Wyenberg, Joe DiCara, Miranda Holmes, Adela Torchia, Donna Deacon, Peter Dzierzawa, Aleksandra Brozowski, Lawrence Spero and Dave Innell.

2015/16 Season

OCTOBER 2015



AN ALMOST PERFECT THING by Nicole Moeller

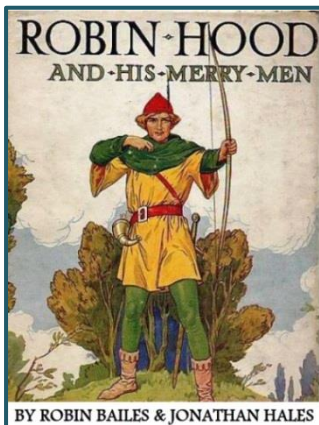
Greg is a journalist searching for a high-profile story to help revive his career. Chloe is the missing girl he wrote about years earlier who returned home to a world she no longer recognized. Instead of leading police to her captor, Chloe turns to Greg to share her story. Unfortunately for him, Chloe won't provide names or locations, and instead dictates exactly how the story should be told. But Chloe has become an international celebrity and the public all want to know, who is her kidnapper? Why is she protecting him? When Greg begins to question whether truth and fiction have collided, he takes matters into his own hands, despite the drastic consequences.

Directed by Jean Wyenberg

Performances: October 2 and 3 at 7pm, October 3 and 4 at 2pm. Rollo Centre

Mature themes

NOVEMBER 2015



ROBIN HOOD & HIS MERRY MEN by Robin Bailes & Jonathan Hales

The playwright and director who brought you *Will Shakespeare The Panto* invite you on a swashbuckling adventure in Sherwood Forest.

Cheer on Robin Hood and His Merry Men!

Boo the evil Sheriff of Nottingham!

And don't forget to wear your green tights!

Directed by Miranda Holmes

Auditions: September 8 and 10 at the Rollo Centre

Performances: November 27-29 at the Community Hall

MARCH 2016



ONE-ACT PLAY FESTIVAL

Although the programme for our always-popular weekend of one-act plays has yet to be finalised, we are committed to ensuring that at least one of them will once again be a new play authored by a Gabriolan writer.

Auditions: January 5 at the Rollo Centre

Performances: March 11-13 at the Rollo Centre

2015/16 Season

MAY 2016



WHAT GLORIOUS TIMES THEY HAD by Diane Grant

To mark the centenary of women first getting the vote in Canada, we are presenting Diane Grant's fast-paced play, *What Glorious Times They Had*. The play is a loving and lively tribute to Nelly McClung and the determined members of the Political Equality League.

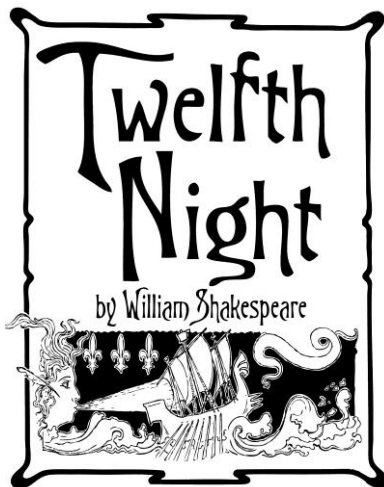
Directed by Miranda Holmes

Auditions: March 17 at 7pm at the Rollo Centre

Performances: May 27-29 at the Rollo Centre

JULY 2016

BARD ON THE BAY



TWELFTH NIGHT by William Shakespeare

In the aftermath of a shipwreck, Viola, believing she is now alone in the world, disguises herself as a young man named Cesario. As such, she enters the service of Duke Orsino. The Duke, frustrated in his wooing of Olivia, despatches 'Cesario' as an intermediary. Olivia promptly falls in love with 'Cesario' (who has, in the meantime, fallen in love with the Duke).

Take it away, Shakespeare.

Adapted by Garry Davey

Auditions: June 5

Performance: July 8-10 at 775 Seagirt Road

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

The Gabriola Players membership year runs from September 1 to August 31, so it's time to renew. You can do this on-line at gabriolaplayers.ca or visit our table at the Theatre Festival on Sunday, August 16, where you can also enter a draw to win a pair of opening night tickets for each of the five performances in our 2015/16 season. You can also renew your membership and enter the draw at our Annual General Meeting which will be held on Sunday, September 27 from 2-4pm at the Rollo Centre.