

# GABRIOLA PLAYERS



**Autumn 2016 newsletter**



## Director's message

Our 2016/17 got off to a powerful start with four staged readings of **The Laramie Project**, directed by Jean Wyenberg. The cast of twelve put their hearts and souls into the production (as you can tell from some of their comments on the following page). And the audience knew it. There were a lot of tears shed both on and off the stage.

These are just two of the overwhelmingly positive comments we received from audience members:

*"Beautifully and skillfully presented, wonderfully directed, deeply touching: thank you all."*

*"I very much enjoyed the play today...very moving. Such a powerful story. It was done so well. It truly brought me back to 1998 and all of the feelings I had watching via news this horrific act of violence. Bravo everyone involved. And thank you. "*

Following *The Laramie Project*, we had another well-received entry at the **Vancouver Island One-Act Play Festival**, with Christine McKim and Dean Clark giving their most heart-rending performance to date. (See BJ Godson's report on page 4 for more information.)

Next up, of course, we will be kicking off the holiday season with **The Return of Robin Hood** by Robin Bailes. This is – unbelievably! – going to be the **tenth** panto we have staged on Gabriola. It is also the third in a row written by Robin Bailes, who seems to have become the island's favourite pantomime author. (Director Miranda Holmes has received a lovely message from Mr. Bailes, which is shared – along with more information about this year's show, on page 5.)

**The Return of Robin Hood** will be performed at the **Community Hall** on Friday and Saturday **November 25 and 26 at 7pm** and on Saturday and Sunday **November 26 and 27 at 2pm**.

As our cover photo suggests, one sunny day in September we went to **Robert's Place** to present Robert and David with a certificate of appreciation to thank them for their ongoing support of Gabriola Players. This year is the fourth year that Robert's Place has been our season sponsor and the certificate cannot adequately express our gratitude. As always, we would like to acknowledge our sponsor and all the [season advertisers](#), without whom we really could not do what we do.

And finally, we are thrilled to announce that our friend **Garry Davey** will be offering a three-day **Back to Basics** acting workshop in January next year. (See page 7 for more details.) Space is limited, so book early!

See you at the panto!



Cast of *The Laramie Project*. Back row, l-r: Oscar Reeves, Peter Dzierzawa, Jack Bones, Alex Dewar, Peter ter Weeme, Roger Carter. Front row: Miranda Holmes, Kit Pepper, Donna Deacon, Corey Kuefler-ter Weeme, Ginny Lowes, Luisa Handford.

# The Laramie Project

For the director and cast **The Laramie Project** really was a labour of love.

As Jean Wyenberg said in her director's notes: "The idea of putting on a staged reading of the Laramie Project came to me just two days before the mass murder that took place in Orlando in June of this year. That event served to open our eyes to the fact that the kind of ignorance and blind hatred that resulted in the death of Matthew Shepard in 1998, is, tragically, still with us today. We have come a long way in a legal sense and in understanding and even in inclusivity, but we obviously still have a very long way to go."

Many of the cast members were new to the stage and shared their reasons for taking the plunge.



**Jack Bones:** "I'm thrilled be part of a production which has great personal significance to me."

**Kit Pepper:** "Only a script of such magnitude could draw me here, onto the stage, for this, my very-first-time-ever performance."

**Corey Kuefler-ter Weeme:** "I'm a first-time actor with Gabriola Players. As a transgender youth, *The Laramie Project* story means a lot to me."

Older hands were equally passionate about the project.

**Ginny Lowes:** "I was compelled to participate in this Gabriola Players' production to add my voice to the chorus calling for tolerance and understanding."

**Donna Deacon:** "*The Laramie Project* is close to my heart because I still vividly remember the day my friend came to school with a black eye after being beaten up because he was gay. It may be 2016, but this story still needs to be told and I feel privileged to be part of bringing it to the stage."

**Peter Dzierzawa:** "I feel honoured to be part of this play. I've thought much about the life of Mathew Shephard since. I am often reminded of the line in the script, 'Good is coming out of evil'. It is my hope to be able to add a bit to the 'Good'."

**Roger Carter:** "I'm very happy and grateful to be part of this show – a show that feels as relevant and necessary now as when it was first written."

**Miranda Holmes** "It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to work with a director and cast who feel as strongly as I do about this powerful play. Matt Shepard's life was brutally cut short, but his legacy of tolerance lives on."





# Vancouver Island 2016 One Act Play Festival



On the first weekend in November Gabriola Players entered *Heart In the Ground* by Douglas Hill in the annual one-act play festival in Qualicum Beach. We first saw this heart-wrenching drama performed at the Gabriola Players One Act Play Festival last May.

It was beautifully acted by Dean Clark and Christine McKim and thoughtfully directed by Dennis Johnston. The reaction of Gabriola audiences to the play (including more than one standing ovation) indicated that they were overwhelmingly touched. Encouraged by this success, the Board decided to enter the play in the festival, presented each year in Qualicum Beach.

In Qualicum, Christine and Dean offered what all the crew members agreed was their finest performance of the year. The audience seemed riveted and there have been many sincere congratulatory comments and emails for our team, including this, sent in by the writer/director of one of the Saturday night entries:

*"Thank you for a beautifully constructed play with two top notch performances. Incredibly crafted and rich in depth and detail. The audience was held in your hands from start to finish. Kudos to the actors and director."*

And this, from the general stage manager of the Festival:

*"The audience was profoundly affected by your actors' performances. The subject matter was disturbing and was delivered in a most sobering manner. I hope very much that your group will keep bringing the 'Gabriola theatre talent' to the mid-island...we are richer for it."*

This was our fourth time entering a play in the Vancouver Island One Act Play Festival, and it won't be the last!


Each year we seem to dig a little deeper, and we have learned over the years to take a chance on more edgy, poignant, sometimes even dark dramas.

Our 12th year of Gabriola Players magic, and we are still going strong. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our loyal members, friends and audiences. We couldn't do it without you!

*B J Godson*

## And now for something quite familiar

It can't be possible. This can't be the tenth pantomime staged by Gabriola Players, can it? Oh, yes it can! In 2007, Jenn Feenan introduced islanders to this great British holiday bit of nonsense, with a production of *Cinderella*. And we've never looked back. Since then our panto has become a firm family favourite, generally seen by islanders as the official launch of the holiday season.

**GABRIOLA PLAYERS**  
**THE RETURN OF ROBIN HOOD**  
  
**By Robin Bailes**  
**COMMUNITY HALL**  
**Friday & Saturday November 25 & 26 at 7pm**  
**Saturday & Sunday November 26 & 27 at 2pm**  
Tickets \$17 (Adults) \$5 (12 and under) at North Road Sports  
or online at [gabriolaplayers.ca](http://gabriolaplayers.ca)  
**Sponsored by ROBERT'S PLACE**

**The Return of Robin Hood** also marks the completion of what I like to call "the great Bailes/Holmes trilogy". It started in 2014, when I directed the world premiere of *Will Shakespeare The Panto* by Robin Bailes, continued last year with his *Robin Hood and His Merry Men*, and finishes this year with *The Return of Robin Hood*.

Although only a year has passed in our time since these characters were last with us, several years have gone by. Robin is retired, living in "domestic bliss" with his beautiful wife Marian. And the Merry Men are keeping themselves busy doing nothing.

But what's this? Innocent children being pursued by their evil uncle – and his even more evil mother? Sounds like a job for Robin Hood!

Gabrielans can expect more of the same from this third installment. Lots of singing, lots of dancing, lots of booing, lots of cheering and lots of audience participation. Yes, there will be more Abba, more Queen and, as always, a bit of Monty Python.

As always, I've had the joy of working with a wildly talented and wonderfully wacky cast, not to mention the amazing costume team and set designers. If you check the list for crew members in the programme, you'll see there are many more people beaver away backstage than there are onstage, each and every one of them playing an important role in ensuring the success of the show.

My thanks to all of them. They totally rock. Enjoy the show!

*Miranda Holmes*

## A few words from the author

The other day I received a lovely message from Gabriola's favourite panto author, which I'd like to share with you.

**Robin Bailes** wrote: *"When I heard the world premiere of my Shakespeare panto was being staged on Gabriola Island, I had to use Google maps to find out where that was – then I had to pull back and back and back, to see it."*

*"My shows have been staged in such distant and unlikely places as Beijing and Phnom Penh, but Gabriola Players is the group that reached out to say hello, and tell me how much they enjoyed my script, which makes them special to me."*

*"It means a great deal to a writer to be appreciated, and it seems that the people of Gabriola somehow get me. One day I hope to come visit, and see a show."*

## Meet the board

At our AGM in September we introduced our 2016/17 Board of Directors: **Lawrence Spero**, President, **Dennis Johnston**, Treasurer, **Dave Innell**, Secretary, **Jean Wyenberg** and **Ginny Lowes**, Co-Artistic Directors, **BJ Godson**, Advertising/Inventory, **Marshall Mangan**, Communications, **Lesley Hazeldine**, Membership, and **Charlie Cheffins**, Arts Council Liaison/Technical.

Many of these names will be familiar to you, but you may not have met **Marshall Mangan**, (pictured below as Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night*, wondering what he was getting himself into). Allow him to introduce himself.



*Hello from the rookie, the tenderfoot, the newbie! I just moved to Gabriola from Ontario in March, 2016, so I'm about as new to everything as one can be. My wife, Jenny Newton, and I had travelled all over North America since my retirement in 2011, and we eventually decided that Gabriola Island was the best place in Canada for us to live! I had heard some very general comments to the effect that, "there's a lot of artists and musicians on Gabriola," but the reality has far exceeded my expectations. I have been thrilled at both the quantity and quality of artistic happenings on this glorious isle, and Jenny and I have jumped in with both feet.*

*We got to know members of Gabriola Players when we took part in Twelfth Night last summer, and frankly, I was surprised when I was asked to accept a nomination to the Board of Directors. I had taken part in musical plays in my former home-town of London, Ontario, but I am far from a seasoned veteran of the stage. Nevertheless, I know volunteer organizations in small communities always need people to carry the load, and so I agreed.*

*Now I find myself the new Communications Director, and it's a very steep learning curve, I can tell you. My deepest thanks go to the outgoing Artistic Director and Communications guru, Miranda Holmes. She is still deeply involved – currently directing the Christmas Panto, for instance – but she has stepped down from the Board after a four-year stint. She has very graciously spent hours with me already, going over the nuts and bolts of maintaining the website and the newsletter. I will try to pay her back by turning in a creditable performance as Little John in the Panto. Jenny has bitten off the very big part of Stage Manager, so hopefully we can both make a contribution to the success of the new season.*

*If you have any interest in dramatics, whether on the stage, behind it, or around it doing all the things that must be done to make live theatre possible, please join us! It's lots of fun, and we can always use more newbies...*

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## Don Whitton Memorial Bursary

At the Annual General Meeting the Board was also pleased to announce that, for the second year in a row, the Don Whitton Memorial Bursary was awarded to [David Cosbey](#).

David, who has now entered his second year of Theatre Studies at the University of Victoria, appeared in the Gabriola Players spring production of Janet Vickers' one-act play, **Legends of the Ferry**.





# January Acting Workshop

Gabriola Players is pleased to be offering islanders an opportunity to take part in a three-day acting workshop in January 2017.

## BACK TO BASICS

A refresher course in basic acting techniques and an introduction for those who are just getting started.

Sunday, January 8 (1-4pm)  
Tuesday, January 10 (7-9pm)  
Thursday, January 12 (7-9pm)

ROLLO CENTRE

Fee: \$45 for members, \$60 for non-members

Gabriola's own Garry Davey will introduce participants to the fundamentals of bringing a character to life on stage. Recently retired as Artistic Director of TheatreOne, Garry brings decades of experience in acting, directing, and virtually all aspects of theatre to his role as instructor in this workshop. Highly praised by previous workshop participants, we know his guidance will prove invaluable for both beginners and experienced actors.

The course is limited to 10 participants. **To ensure your place, send an email to [gabriolaplayers@gmail.com](mailto:gabriolaplayers@gmail.com).**



Garry, pictured above, directing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, our first foray into the wonderful world of Shakespeare. There will be another workshop production next summer: *As You Like It*. Trust us, you will like it, so don't miss out!

# COMING IN 2017

## MARCH 2017 – ONE-ACT PLAY FESTIVAL

### GABRIOLA PLAYERS 2017



Although the programme for our popular festival of one-act plays has yet to be finalised, we are happy to announce that once again the show will include a new one-act play written by a Gabriolan.

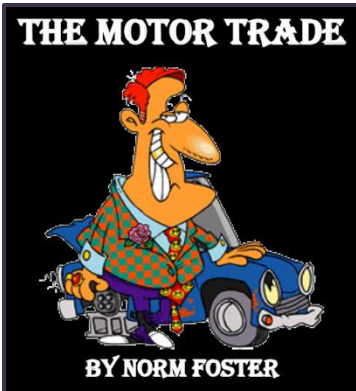
Our 2017 offering will be Lesley Hazeldine's lovely play *The Family Visit*.

**Auditions: December 6 at 7pm at the Rollo Centre**

**Performances at the Rollo Centre: March 10, 11 and 12**

## MAY 2017 – THE MOTOR TRADE

### THE MOTOR TRADE



They're the guys we love to hate: the used car salesmen.

It's Saturday morning at Dorval Motors. There's a blizzard outside. Phil's wife has just left him. He is being audited by Revenue Canada. His longtime business partner Dan wants out. And it's not even noon yet.

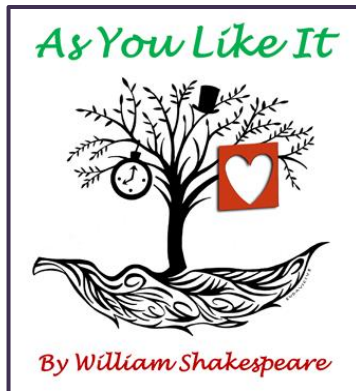
Vintage Norm Foster.

**Auditions: March 21**

**Performances at the Rollo: May 26, 27 and 28**

## JULY 2017 – BARD IN THE GARDEN

### As You Like It



*As You Like It* in twenty words or less: Rosalind, fleeing persecution in her uncle's court, finds safety and love in the Forest of Arden.

Of course, as always with a Shakespeare comedy, there's a lot more to it than that!

This year the Bard will be moving from the Bay to the Garden, with four al fresco staged readings at the Commons. As always, bring a picnic and enjoy!

**Auditions: June 13**

**Performances at the Commons on July 7, 8 and 9.**

## Are you a member of GABRIOLA PLAYERS?

You don't have to be a member of Gabriola Players to enjoy our productions, but we'd love it if you decided to become one! Your \$15 membership can begin whenever you want and lasts a year. Members receive a \$15 discount on any workshops offered by Gabriola Players and – as a small token of our appreciation – a free beverage at all performances. You can become a member – or renew your membership – on our website ([gabriolaplayers.ca](http://gabriolaplayers.ca)) or send a cheque to Gabriola Players, PO Box 374, Gabriola V0R 1X0. Not sure if your membership has lapsed? To check, send an email to Ginny Lowes at [gabriolaplayers@gmail.com](mailto:gabriolaplayers@gmail.com).