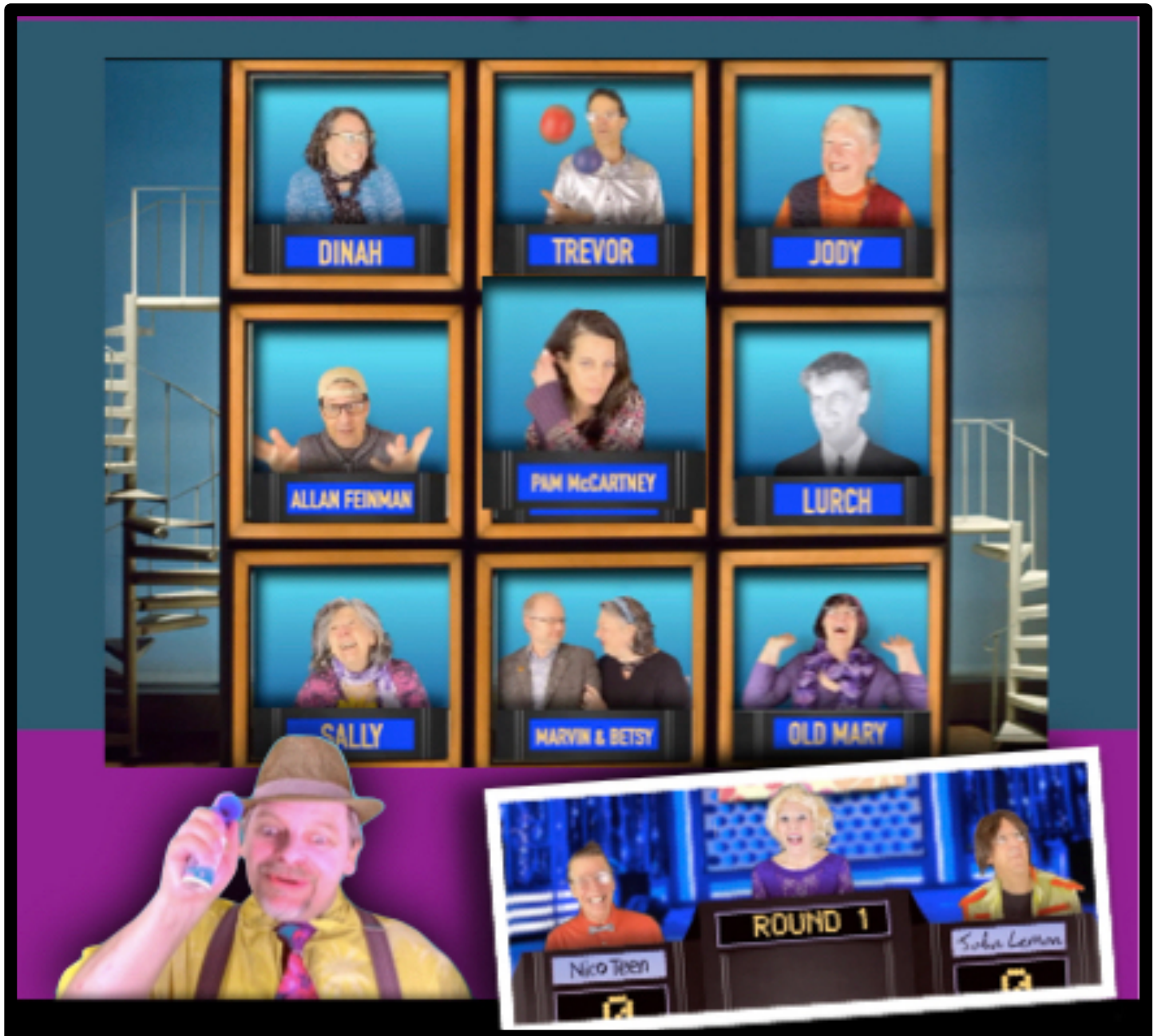


# GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Summer 2021 newsletter

# A note from the directors

No doubt May 2021 will go down in history as the month Gabriola got its very own game show, **Gabriola Squares**, thanks to the wacky creativity and hard editing slog of Ray Appel and Scott Rivers. It was broadcast last month, along with live performances of two new plays by local writers – **Social Distance** by Wendy Phillips and **A Divine Comedy** by Anne M. Holmes.

A huge thank you to everyone who bought a ticket and watched this virtual one-act play festival. As you can see below, the feedback about these three very different productions was incredibly positive.

A shout out also to Carol Ferguson and the Gabriola Arts Council for their support of the show. Their sponsorship was an enormous help.

We will actually be back in front of live audiences next month when Gabriola Players is taking part in **Cultivate** with performances on July 1 and 2 of **Life on Mars** by Elliott Hayes. The play will be staged in an open tent with limited seating and other pandemic safety measures taken. As we write, Dr Bonnie Henry has given the festival a thumbs up. Fingers crossed. (For more information about the play and an improv workshop we are also offering, see page 4.)

After that? Well, it's all up in the air, isn't it? We had considered bringing the Bard back to the garden in the Commons in late August with a staged reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Unfortunately, we've come to the conclusion that rehearsing and mounting a large cast production – even outdoors – before everyone taking part was fully vaccinated simply isn't practicable.

As for a panto at the Community Hall this winter, again, too soon to guess what might be feasible. By September, when we would normally begin rehearsals, the second jab should have been made available to everyone on Gabriola. We just don't know.

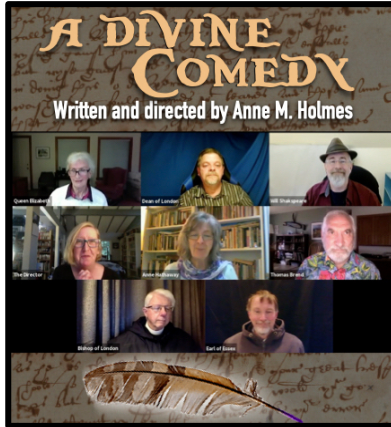
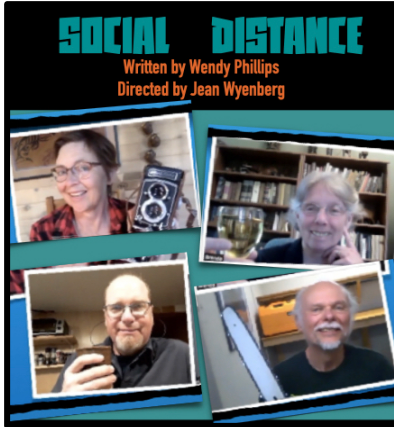
Rest assured, we *will* be back again – in one form or another!

Finally, a reminder that we will be accepting applications until the end of August for the **Don Whitton Memorial Bursary**, established in 2010 to assist Gabriolans pursuing studies in some aspect of Theatre Arts. More information on page 5.

<p>What a funny show!! So great to see it all together. <i>Social Distance</i> and <i>The Divine Comedy</i> were fabulous!! So awesome!</p> <p>"Very much liked the premise of "<i>Divine Comedy</i>." I think that was my favourite."</p> <p>"Loved the Gabriola Squares. I can't believe it was filmed separately. So incredible!"</p> <p>"Can't say enough about the Gabriola Players! What talent we have on this island!"</p> <p>"Thanks for a fun evening!!"</p> <p>"Great writing, fabulous performances &amp; awesome staging and characters!!"</p> <p>"Well done, Wendy Phillips!"</p> <p><b>Three fabulously written plays!</b></p> <p>"Loved the show! We felt very homesick for Gabe! Great job Gabriola players!"</p> <p>"[<i>Social Distance</i>] was so close to real life for many women. I loved it!"</p> <p>"Kudos to all the support staff behind the scenes!"</p> <p>"Really enjoyed <i>Social Distance</i> and <i>Divine Comedy</i> especially."</p> <p>"[<i>A Divine Comedy</i>] was good! I think I will watch the actual movie again."</p> <p>"The Gabriola Squares play was terrific! I learned facts I didn't know. When I visit the Island I will look some of the spots up!"</p>	<p><b>Well done, ALL!!! "Excellent plays!"</b></p> <p>"Gabriola Squares is a hoot! ...and informative!"</p> <p>"The production quality on the Gabriola Squares was quite impressive!"</p> <p>"The dedication to David Botten [in Gabriola Squares] was very appreciated and so well deserved."</p> <p>"Honestly...it was freakin' fabulous!!!!"</p> <p>"Fabulous! Please keep up the great work!"</p> <p>"Great performances!"</p> <p>"Gabriola Squares is a keeper!"</p> <p>"Victor Anthony songs and pictures at the beginning was worth the price of admission, alone."</p> <p>"Great shows! A lot of entertainment and fun to go around!"</p> <p>"So impressed with all three performances!"</p> <p>"A totally delightful evening!"</p> <p>"Great job!"</p> <p>"I really enjoyed myself and had a few laughs!"</p> <p>"Big props to the authors for great scripts, to 'Thomas Brenda' (Joe) who was hilarious, to Catherine as a most suitable Queen and to the actress playing Maggie, who was just wonderful. Congrats to the tech crew(s) as well - tricky to pull off zoom performances but everything was smooth as silk."</p> <p>"Love the costuming, characters, and performances!"</p> <p>"Great! Thank you!!"</p> <p>"Very clever - better than Fox News!"</p> <p>Congrats!</p> <p>"You've nailed the quick cadence of a genuine 1970s game show perfectly!"</p>
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# What a show!



Our 2021 (virtual) one-act play festival turned out to be one of the most popular – and varied! – shows we've ever produced.

Up first was **Social Distance**, the first play written by Wendy Phillips – a touching story about a woman starting her life over on a Gulf Island. (No marks for guessing which one.) According to Phillips: "Hearing my words in other people's voices, and following the director's advice on expression, motivation and emotional dynamics, then adding lighting and sound, was like filling a balloon with helium. Suddenly my play was three-dimensional, and had a life of its own. Now I'm hooked and I can hardly wait to get started on my next play idea -- for live performance this time, I hope."

Next up was **A Divine Comedy** by Anne M. Holmes. The play-within-the-play was originally written as a half-hour radio play which Holmes adapted to be performed on Zoom. Holmes says: "It was an absolute delight to see this play finally performed – and with such a marvellous cast. As one audience member observed, 'The Queen (Catherine Andersen) rocked!' So did everyone else. God's holy trousers! What fun!"

Audiences loved **Gabriola Squares**. The amount of work it took to produce this zany half hour in the midst of a pandemic was phenomenal, as creators Scott Rivers and Ray Appel explained to the *Sonder* last month. (If you missed the article, you can read it at [www.gabrielaplayers.ca/gabriola-squares](http://www.gabrielaplayers.ca/gabriola-squares).)

Normally after the final performance of any show there is a big party for cast and crew. No chance of that after **Christmas Crackers** in December. Nor would "plague protocols" allow for everyone from all three productions to get together – even outdoors. But there were two parties: one for the cast and crew of *A Divine Comedy* and another for the cast and crew of *Social Distance*, who were joined by the creative geniuses behind the hugely popular *Gabriola Squares*.



## A second chance at Life on Mars

In March 2020 we were halfway through the performances of our one-act play festival when live theatre (and life as we used to know it) was shut down by Covid-19. Obviously we were totally gutted – as were the people who'd bought tickets for the remaining two performances.

Well, we've got good news for them. At the request of the organisers of Cultivate, one of the plays, **Life on Mars** by Elliott Hayes is coming back for two performances next month.

The play, once again directed by Donna Deacon, is set behind a diner where two short order cooks, Mike (played by Scott Rivers) and Frank (Joe DiCara) are relaxing at the back of the diner after their shift, having a beer and contemplating the universe while watching a lunar eclipse.

Frank and Mike ponder some of life's big questions. Such as: "Where would you go if you left here?" Or: "Are we alone...or are there other beings way out there?" And: "Is Steven Spielberg a Communist?"

We are thrilled at the prospect of being back on stage in front of a live audience.

There will be two performances, with limited seating and pandemic rules strictly enforced: Thursday, July 1 at noon and Friday, July 2 at 6pm.

There will be two more familiar Gabriola Players faces at Cultivate: board members Ray Appel and Tom Radcliffe will be featured in *Red* by John Logan and directed by Frank Moher for Over the Moon Theatricals.

Gabriola Players will also be offering an **improv Workshop** at Cultivate, led by **T J Radcliffe**. This will be the second improv workshop offered to Gabriolans by Radcliffe, who explains what to expect: "A fun two-hour introduction to improvised theatre, which will introduce elements of spontaneity, character, problems, and plot via a series of games and exercises that will develop from the very simple to the simple. Focus will include listening, and taking small steps. This is a theatrical workshop focused on telling stories about characters with interesting problems."

The workshop, to be held on July 1 at 10am, is limited to eight participants, so book a spot quickly.

Tickets for *Life on Mars* and registration for the workshop are \$20 and can be purchased at [www.cultivate.artsgabriola.ca](http://www.cultivate.artsgabriola.ca).





## Don Whitton Memorial Bursary

A reminder that Gabriola Players is currently accepting applications for the **Don Whitton Memorial Bursary**.

Don Whitton was a member of Gabriola Players from its inception, involved in numerous productions before he passed away in 2010.

In his memory, Gabriola Players offers an annual bursary to a Gabriolan who is registering or has registered to study some aspect of Theatre Arts at a university, college or recognized training centre. The focus of study can be acting, directing, stage management or any related technical skill, such as lighting, sound or set design.

The Bursary may or may not be awarded in any given year, depending on whether there are applicants who meet the qualifying criteria. This year's bursary is **\$1000**.

If you know someone who might be interested in the 2021 bursary, go to <http://gabriolaplayers.ca/bursary/> for more information and to download an application form.



Luisa Hanford, the last recipient of the bursary, receiving a cheque from Sue Whitton.

## Board members

If you love theatre – whether or not you can imagine appearing on stage – and would like to get more involved in the activities of Gabriola Players, we would like to hear from you.

We are seeking to recruit board members to join us in 2021. We are particularly eager to hear from people who might be interested in taking on the job of treasurer, but also to hear from anyone keen to help us keep our wonderful organisation humming. Board members meet once a month and are elected (or re-elected) at our annual general meeting in September.

If you'd like to join us, please send an email explaining why to [gabrolaplayers@gmail.com](mailto:gabrolaplayers@gmail.com).

