

# GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Autumn 2021 newsletter

## Director's message

Well, wasn't that heavenly – the return of live theatre to Gabriola at Cultivate in July? We were thrilled to take part by restaging *Life on Mars*, the delightful play by Elliott Hayes. Everyone hoped this marked the beginning of a return to normality, but alas this was not the case.

We had plans to stage a panto this December, but it became clear by early September that this simply was not feasible. We're all looking forward to getting back to the Community Hall for more mirth and mayhem, but it will not be this year.

It's not all gloom and doom. In early September we were delighted to once again award the Don Whitton Memorial Bursary to **Luisa Handford**, who is entering her third year in the Acting for Stage and Screen program at Capilano University. There's been a lot more than acting going on for Lu, as she detailed in a lovely letter to us, reprinted on page 4.

In early September we ran a play writing workshop, led by Frank Moher, which so inspired some participants that they've started their own "First Draft Club" to share the work they're doing on one-act plays. Hopefully we will see some of these creations at the festival next spring. More on page 5.

Our thanks to those who took the time to attend our AGM. For those who were unable to do so, we were happy to report that, thanks to board member Tom Radcliffe's suggestion in the summer of 2020 that we attempt to go live online on Zoom, we did not end the last financial year in the red as we'd forecast, but in fact were able to report a surplus of more than \$3000.

The first live online show we did, is now available to enjoy again on our YouTube channel. See page 6 for more information on this and other Gabriola Players works which are available to view.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank **Donna Deacon**, **Brenda Joy** and **Lesley Hazeldine**, who've stepped down from the board this year, for their tireless enthusiasm in support of Gabriola Players. They may no longer be on the board, but, fear not, you can expect them to all be playing roles on and off stage in future productions! Meet the new board on page 5.

With panto plans up in smoke, we are currently working on **Christmas Crackers 2**, featuring Christmas-themed short plays by local writers, which will be broadcast live online **December 9-12**. We still very much hope that the One-Act Play Festival will be back in the spring, along with a full-length play, and that the Bard will be back in the garden next summer. Watch this space.



Board members Miranda Holmes and Donna Deacon join Sue Whitton in presenting a cheque for \$1000 to Luisa Handford.



## Life onstage at Cultivate

Live theatre back after so long. Sitting outside watching actors perform on an actual stage. Wasn't it glorious? Trust us when we say, after three Zoom productions, it was glorious for the actors, too, to be performing in front of an actual audience.



Scott Rivers and Joe DiCara at the dress rehearsal for *Life on Mars* by Elliott Hayes, directed by Donna Deacon for Gabriola Players.

The last live theatre seen on Gabriola was in March 2020 when Joe DiCara and Scott Rivers performed *Life on Mars* by Canadian playwright Elliott Hayes as part of our annual One-Act Play Festival. It seemed somehow fitting that this delightfully whimsical play would be the first live theatre seen since lockdown. (As we were saying, before we were so rudely interrupted...)

Our board members Tom Radcliffe and Ray Appel also wowed Cultivate audiences with their performances as the artist Mark Rothko and his assistant Ken in John Logan's Tony award-winning play *Red*, directed by Frank Moher for Over the Moon Theatricals.



There was a well-deserved standing ovation for Tom Radcliffe and Ray Appel for their performances in *Red* on the opening day of Cultivate.

And the weather gods (who've twice driven Bard in the Garden indoors the first weekend in July) smiled upon us. A week earlier we were melting in an unprecedented heatwave and the performances would never have been able to take place. Heaven.

# Don Whitton Memorial Bursary

The 2021 Don Whitton Memorial Bursary was once again awarded to Luisa Handford to help her pursue her dream of a career in the theatre. In this letter she shared her voyage of discovery with us.

Dear Gabriola Players,

Thank you so much for awarding me the Don Whitton Memorial Bursary, which will be a great help as I return to Capilano University for my third year in the Acting for Stage and Screen program.

The past two years have been an unforgettable experience for me, I feel words could never explain how much the program has taught me. Every day I feel very grateful to have the chance to study such a beautiful art form in this depth.

In just the past year, I've acted in many student films, stage productions, music videos and built my first demo reel. I've written commercials, short films, stage plays, zoom plays, monologues and stand-up comedy. Most recently, I've taken up an interest in directing. During my most recent term at Capilano, I directed three stage plays: *The Provoked Husband* (a 2021 version of *The Provoked Wife* by John VanBrugh), *Timely Matters* by Stephanie Cardona, and *Hidden Reflections*, a play I wrote, inspired by and including works by Canadian poet Shane Koyczan, an artist I have long admired.

*Hidden Reflections* was one of two plays which were performed and filmed in the Blueshore Theatre at Capilano. Seeing my work performed on this stage is a memory and thrill I will never forget. I never expected I'd ever see a story I wrote come to life. I always figured I was an actor and only an actor, but the empowering experience of my work being performed has helped me build the confidence to expand my skill set beyond acting. The program at Capilano has exposed me to so many levels of performing arts media in which I never thought I could ever succeed. I've learnt that success comes in many forms, and one of its finest forms is failure. I have learnt more, developed stronger, and succeeded further, from failing first.

My reasons for continuing to pursue this course are many. I know I belong in this profession, there is no career path I would rather follow. I love the learning experience and environment in which I am surrounded. I still have so much to learn and the education I have been receiving at Capilano is beyond anything I ever imagined. I will forever have this experience of learning as I pursue my dreams of a career in the performing arts.

Thanks again.

Luisa



The staging of Luisa's play *Hidden Reflections* at Capilano.



## Workshops



In early September Gabriola Players offered its first play writing workshop, led by playwright/director Frank Moher.

There were ten participants – including a surprise guest appearance by actress Nicola Cavendish, a long time supporter of Gabriola Players, who wanted to get past coming up with great names for plays she never wrote. Frank took us through our paces on character and plot development and introduced us to the “Five Ws & a D” of play writing: *Who* is the play about? *What* do they want? *What* do they do to get it? *Who/What* gets in their way? *Do* they get what they want or not?

Our overnight assignment was to write a scene featuring Violet, a protagonist created in class earlier in the day, and our own antagonist. One of the highlights of the workshop was hearing these scenes and finding out who everyone else had chosen as a protagonist. So much so that a number of the participants, all of whom have some sort of work in progress, decided to carry on with regular fortnightly meetings of what we’ve dubbed the “First Draft Club”. We’ll get together, read and listen to one another’s work, provide encouragement and help, where we can, with stumbling blocks.

The meetings will continue to the end of the year, by which time we’re all hoping we’ll have a one-act play ready to submit for consideration for production at next spring’s one-act play festival.

## The new board

President **Dave Innell**

Vice-President **Ray Appel**

Secretary **Marshall Mangan**

Treasurer **Joe DiCara**

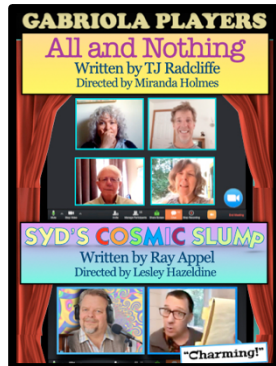
Artistic Directors **Jean Wyenberg & Tom Radcliffe**

Communications **Miranda Holmes & Ray Appel**

Membership/Outreach **Wendy Philips**

Public Relations **Scott Rivers**

## For your viewing pleasure



While we're busy working on **Christmas Crackers 2**, we wanted to offer you a little something for your viewing pleasure.

The first, pandemic-themed, live online show we did in September 2020 is now [available](#) to view on our YouTube channel.

Next month we will be adding last year's Christmas show for you to enjoy again.

Although by no means necessary, a small [donation](#) for watching these shows is much appreciated, as we are once again facing a large deficit at the end of our current financial year.

And don't forget, there are a number of popular one-act plays by local writers also available to watch again, including [An Unhelpful Complication](#) by Anne M. Holmes, [Lemon Yellow Laces](#) by Dennis Johnston and Lesley Hazeldine's plays [The Family Visit](#) and [Living in Paradise](#).



## Coming (we very much hope) in 2022

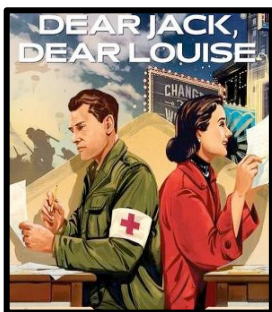
### March



Our always popular **One-Act Play Festival** will be back in March. The final list of works to be staged has not yet been confirmed, but, as per the article on the previous page, we expect to be premiering new plays by Gabriolan playwrights

The Festival will be performed at the Rollo Centre Thursday to Saturday, March 10 to 12 at 7pm and Sunday, March 13 at 2pm.

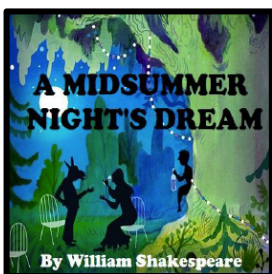
### May



Ken Ludwig's play **Dear Jack, Dear Louise**, described as a "poignant, funny tribute to the enduring power of love", is based on the World War 2 correspondence between the playwright's parents. The play begins with army doctor Jack Ludwig, based in Oregon, writes an introductory letter to aspiring Broadway performer Louise Rabiner. It isn't "love at first sight", but, as the war continues and the letters keep flowing, love definitely follows.

*Dear Jack, Dear Louise* will be directed by Jean Wyenberg and performed at the Rollo Centre May 12 to 14 at 7pm, May 15 at 2pm

### July



Back by popular demand, the play that first put the Bard in the Garden on Gabriola, Shakespeare's delightful **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. Once again you are invited to bring a chair or a blanket and a picnic. As always, 50% of ticket sales will be donated to People for a Healthy Community.

Three staged readings of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Commons on Friday and Saturday July 8 and 9 at 6pm (note earlier than usual start) and Sunday, July 10 at 2pm.