

GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Winter 2022 newsletter

A message from the directors

It was a bit of a Christmas miracle. (Although not as much of a miracle as the power not going off on Christmas Day.) At our board meeting in mid-October, following the sad decision that once again the pandemic made staging a panto at the Community Hall impossible, various scaled-down options were discussed. No one particularly wanted to go back online. Perhaps a staged reading of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* and *A Christmas Carol*? Or...? Ultimately it was decided that, assuming we had the material, it would be better to do something fresh and original online. That was a **big** assumption, because in the middle of October we *didn't* have the material. By the end of the month we had three brand new Christmas-themed plays thanks to board members **Ray Appel**, **Tom Radcliffe** and **Miranda Holmes**. And with vaccinations and strict protocols, we didn't have to return to Zoom, but could present the plays as *plays*. (Plus in Ray's case, a delightful video montage.) Thanks to the actors throwing themselves into a shorter than usual rehearsal schedule, by early December we had a show!

Of course, having plays is a great start, as is the playwrights agreeing to direct. And a cast is important, obviously. But these aren't the only important elements in a great show. A huge shout out to stage manager **Brenda Joy** and assistant stage manager **Lu Lazzarotto** for all the great work done behind the scenes to make the show run smoothly.

A big thank you, too, to the businesses and organisations who supported Christmas Crackers 2, especially the **Gabriola Recreation Society**, who gave us a grant, **Tina & Guy**, our 2021/22 season sponsor, the **Gabriola Arts Council** and **Scott's Painting Services**.

As you can see from some of the reviews below, audiences loved the show.

And while we're doling out thanks, a huge thank you to **Robin Bailes** for agreeing to let us screen our 2014 world premiere of his play *Will Shakespeare the Panto* online through the holiday season. Not as much fun as a live panto at the Community Hall, but still a wonderful opportunity to enjoy this absolutely hilarious production again – or, for those who weren't around seven years ago, to see it for the first time. Alex Dewar's first appearance as the perfect pantomime hero, Joe DiCara's first perfectly villainous villain, a Dancing Queen (Jenn Feenan on the cover) and star turns from so many others. A bit of Monty Python, a nod to Black Adder. Everything combined to make this, as the *Sounder* said in a rave [review](#) at the time, one of the best pantos ever.

Now we're all holding our collective breath to see what the pandemic is going to throw at us next. One thing we will need is laughter. So, for those who were unable to see the original screening of **Christmas Crackers 2** or who were too busy in December to sit down and watch **Will Shakespeare the Panto**, we are leaving them online to view throughout January.

Stay safe.



Christmas Crackers 2



Wendy Phillips, Joe DiCara, Donna Deacon and Marshall Mangan in **Waiting for Nick** by Anne M. Holmes.



Peter Robbins and Dave Innell in **Gabriola Christmas Carol** by TJ Radcliffe.



Scott Rivers, Jean Wyenberg, Lesley Hazeldine and Don Moser in **JJ's Christmas Wish** by Ray Appel. Also featuring Brenda Joy, Lu Lazzarotto and the voice of Kerry Woodrow.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us last month for **Christmas Crackers 2**.

Three plays that did not exist in October provided an evening of delightful entertainment.

It was also a delight for the actors – thanks to vaccinations and Covid protocols – to be able to rehearse and perform together after appearing in little Zoom boxes in previous online shows. The fun they were all having shone through.

One of the most generous reviews came from someone in Toronto. (If there is an advantage to online shows it is that anyone anywhere can watch.)

"I've been watching Gabriola Players online since the start of the pandemic and Christmas Crackers 2 is by far the most entertaining, most polished digital production so far."

"I really enjoyed all three plays including the musical numbers in between each segment - all well done and so much fun!"

"The actors were quite superb in their roles and all the performances were shot and edited so well that it allowed me to focus on the stories and what was happening between the characters - like a real show (unlike previous years where the live-streaming, technical glitches were distractions)."

"I would encourage people to get a ticket - time well spent, great entertainment!"

Sorry you missed the show last month? Not to worry! As per previous page, a recording of Christmas Crackers 2 is still available to view online.

Three fun plays and three great musical numbers (see next page) **for only \$10!**

Click [here](#) to get your ticket to view.



The twelve daze of Gabriola Christmas

It wasn't just new Christmas plays last month. Our online show also featured some cracking musical numbers.

Our thanks to Gabriola Players stalwart **BJ Godson** for her contribution – a Gabriola twist on the Twelve Days of Christmas.

On the first day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
a bridge-free mentality

On the second day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
two brand-new ferries and

On the third day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
three sailing waits (but)

On the fourth day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
four hundred potholes

On the fifth day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
five thousand deer

On the sixth day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
six bands a-jammin'

On the seventh day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
seven cyclists weaving

On the eighth day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
eight Hydro call-outs

On the ninth day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
nine turkeys crossing

On the tenth day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
ten stoners taking

On the eleventh day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
eleven eagles soaring

On the twelfth day of Christmas, Gabriola gave to me
twelve orcas leaping

To enjoy the rendition by BJ and Wendy Philipps, click [here](#). There's even a chance for a singalong at the end. There were other musical guests, including [The Lundsmen](#), who performed a lovely rendition of 'It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas', and a very [blue Santa](#) (Marshall Mangan).

Will Shakespeare returns!

Our heartfelt thanks to **Robin Bailes** who agreed to let us stream our 2014 world premiere of ***Will Shakespeare the Panto***.

Miranda Holmes, who directed the production and watched it again over the holidays, says, "I'd forgotten quite how side splittingly funny the script was and quite how marvellous all the performers were." Robin Bailes, who's finally been able to see the first performance of the panto, summed it up in one word: "Fantastic!"

On opening night seven years ago one audience member was overheard voicing relief at the arrival of the interval because, she said, "I was laughing so hard I thought I was going to pee my pants."

If you didn't have a chance to sit down and watch it in December, fear not! *Will Shakespeare the Panto* will be able to view for a suggested donation of \$10 until the end of January. Click [here](#) to enjoy the fun.



Now what?

We wish we knew.

Last autumn we genuinely believed we would be able to hold auditions early this month for a full-length production in March of Ken Ludwig's **Dear Jack, Dear Louise**. Of course that was before the Omicron variant. A poll of actors and backstage stalwarts unsurprisingly revealed grave concerns about auditions and rehearsals taking place any time soon. The director, Jean Wyenberg, and the rest of the board of Gabriola Players, of course, concurred.

At the moment we are still hoping to stage **Dear Jack, Dear Louise** in the summer, with our annual **One-Act Play Festival** going ahead as planned in mid-May.

And, with a bit of luck, Garry Davey will be putting us through our Shakespearean paces again with an encore presentation of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** in July.



Cast of the 2015 performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream

We just don't know in what seems to be these unremittingly uncertain times. We'll keep you posted.

In the meantime...

Other than the plays performed outdoors at [Cultivate](#) last summer, there has been no live theatre on Gabriola since March 2020. We all miss it. Once again, if we can't get back on stage, Gabriola Players is facing a substantial deficit at the end of our current financial year.

We hate to ask, but...

If you are not a member of Gabriola Players, please consider becoming one. Membership fees (\$15 individual, \$25 family) help us cover overhead costs such as insurance and storage. (And they show us you care about theatre on Gabriola.) If you are a member, please encourage others to join the family. Memberships can be purchased on our website, gabriolaplayers.ca.

If you would like and are able to make a larger donation you can do so:

- online [here](#) or
- by sending an e-transfer to gabriolaplayers@gmail.com or
- by sending a cheque made out to Gabriola Players to PO Box 374, Gabriola, BC V0R1X0.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donation over \$25.

If you missed [Christmas Crackers 2](#) last month or haven't yet found time to watch [Will Shakespeare the Panto](#), now's the time to enjoy them for a donation of \$10 or more.

Thank you so very much for your support in whatever form you are able to make it.