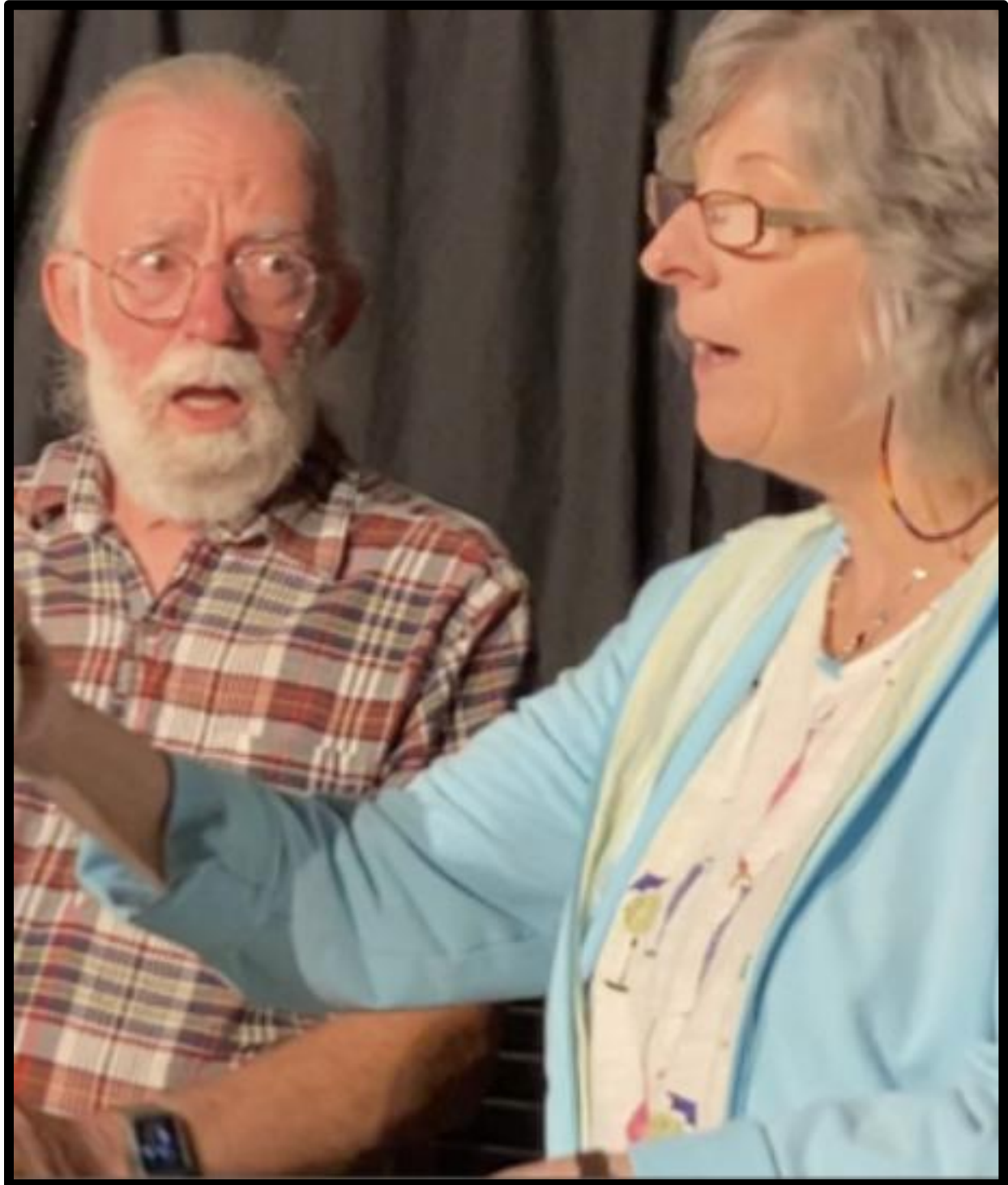


GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Autumn 2022 newsletter

A note from the directors

The plan started off small and grew into something big and beautiful with our performances in September of Will Eno's thought provoking and darkly funny play *The Realistic Joneses*. (See next page for more.)

At our annual general meeting in September we were sad to be losing two board members: past president **Marshall Mangan** and **Tom Radcliffe**, who kept us going (and sane) during lockdown by coming up with the idea for Zoom plays. We'll miss them on the board, but certainly not in our productions. (Both will be appearing on stage with us next month.) The board was happy to welcome **Linda Hellenius** and **Jenny Newton**, two longstanding backstage stars. Continuing on the board are **Ray Appel**, **Joe DiCara**, **Miranda Holmes**, **Dave Innell**, **Wendy Phillips**, **Scott Rivers** and **Jean Wyenberg**.

There were no successful applicants this year for the **Don Whitton Memorial Bursary**, so no presentation was made at the AGM, but we would like to offer our congratulations to past recipient **Luisa Handford**, who this year completed her theatre studies program at Capilano University. We all wish her the very best of luck with her future career.

And now for some big news.

The panto is coming back! Performances of *Cinderella* the first weekend of December will see the pentalogy completed. Robin Bailes wrote five pantomimes before his writing career took him in a different direction and, with *Cinderella*, Miranda Holmes will have directed them all. On page 4, Miranda looks back on this "fairy tale collaboration".

There will be five performances of *Cinderella* at the Community Hall: Evening performances on Thursday to Saturday, December 1 to 3 at 7pm and matinee performances on Saturday and Sunday, December 3 and 4 at 2pm. Tickets will be \$20 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. Available soon online soon at gabriolaplayers.ca or at the door. Please note: **for the safety of all, audience members – including children – will be required to wear masks.**

And let us not forget – a big thank you to **Tina & Guy** for sponsoring our 2022/23 season and to all the other businesses, groups and individuals who are supporting our productions.

CALLING ALL PLAYWRITERS!

Yes, it's that time again – time for us to decide which works to include in our **2023 One-Act Play Festival**. And, as always, it is our hope that some (if not all) of the plays will be penned by Gabriolans.

If you've written a play you would like us to consider performing, please submit it to gabriolaplayers@gmail.com with the subject "One-Act Play Festival". The deadline for submissions is **15 January 2023**.

Plays should be no more than 45 minutes in length. Given the limitations presented by performing at the Rollo Centre, small casts and simple staging requirements are helpful, but by no means a deal breaker.

You, dear reader, may not have penned a play yourself, but might know someone who has. If so, please make them aware that we are soliciting submissions.



The Realistic Joneses

Three years ago we invited members to attend table reads of scenes from some plays we were considering performing. One of those plays was *The Realistic Joneses* by Will Eno. At the end of the first scene we read most people, including the actors, were crying with laughter. It was immediately decided that *The Realistic Joneses* would be our full production in May 2020. And then Covid.

No one forgot about the play. Last summer, when the board was discussing whether or not there was anything we could offer before the panto in December, someone suggested doing something simple such as a couple of public table reads of this hilarious play.

Jean Wyenberg, who agreed to take the lead on this proposal, quickly decided it would not do justice to these Joneses. What she wanted to see – and went on to direct – was a full staged reading of the play.

Auditions were held and **Donna Deacon** (Jennifer), **Christine McKim** (Pony), **Bill Pope** (Bob) and **Scott Rivers** (John) were cast.

In her program notes Jean wrote: "Why do I love this play? The dialogue is witty – often hilarious – while at the same time insightful. Neighbours so seemingly different in every conceivable way, manage to connect in spite of themselves.

"During rehearsals, at the end of some scenes we all just sat and stared at each other with – I don't know – a bit of awe. How could we travel through the scene while constantly chortling at the dry humour? At the end we just sat silenced by the force of our emotions, the emotions of the characters. Working on *The Realistic Joneses* has been very challenging for everyone involved. And very rewarding."

She promised: "You'll laugh, you'll cry and you will be very glad you saw this amazing play." The people lucky enough to see one of the two performances agreed.

There was also general agreement that two performances of this amazing play simply were not enough.

You can definitely expect the return of *The Realistic Joneses* in a future full production.



Scott Rivers, Christine McKim, Bill Pope and Donna Deacon in The Realistic Joneses.

A fairy tale collaboration

In July 2014 I was minding my own business, enjoying a glass of wine and the view from the Surf, when the friend from Gabriola Players with whom I was sharing the wine said, "You do know you're going to have to direct the panto this year?" I did a Robert DeNiro "you talkin' to me?" doubletake, then realised, yes, it was down to me. I went home and started combing the numerous UK websites which specialise in panto scripts, looking for something *interesting*. At the end of one long alphabetical list I spotted *Will Shakespeare the Panto* by Robin Bailes.

Well, that *did* sound different. I ordered a copy of the script and loved it. (Unbeknownst to me at the time, it had only been published that month, so if the conversation with my friend had occurred a month earlier the play would not have been there.)

And so began what's turned out to be a long, happy collaboration. The cleverly written show, with its nods towards *Monty Python* and *Black Adder* was a huge hit with audiences, garnering fulsome praise in a [Sounder review](#). We're very grateful to Robin who last year, when we were unable to perform a panto at the hall, gave us permission to make *Will Shakespeare* available to view online. It's still [there](#), in case you missed it.



Flash forward to April 2015. With no sign of anyone else stepping up with an offer to direct that year's panto, I decided to see what else Robin Bailes had written. Two immediately caught my eye: *Robin Hood and his Merry Men* and *The Return of Robin Hood*. I ordered copies of both scripts. I actually preferred the sequel, but obviously that couldn't be performed without doing the original first. So I went to the board and told them they were in luck: Not only was I prepared to direct the 2015 panto, but I was prepared to commit to 2016, too.

Robin Hood and his Merry Men proved an equally big hit with audiences.



Who can ever forget Will Scarlett's air guitar in 'Don't Stop Me Now', the act one finale? I know I can't. (In fact I've found a spot for Paul O'Sullivan to do some air guitar in every Bailes panto I've directed since.)

And then it was time for *The Return of Robin Hood*. Ten years later and how's the happily-ever-after thing working out for Robin and Marian? Not so well, it turns out. Robin really needed to get the band back together for one last adventure.



Nobody expected the Spanish Inquisition. (To be honest, not even Robin Bailes. I was the one who decided to add that.)

After three years in the panto director's chair it was time for me to take a break and simply enjoy playing panto characters, which I did in *May The Farce Be With You* in 2017 and *Pirates of Nursery Rhyme Island* in 2018.

Maybe I'm just a bossy madam, but by 2019 I was ready for that chair again. Back to Robin. What else did he have up his sleeve? Oo, *Ali Baba*, that could be fun. And it was. Especially one scene that cracked me up at every rehearsal and which one audience member told me was the funniest thing he'd ever seen in 40 years of theatre going – Ray Appel doing his Elvis legs during one of Ali Baba's songs. If you missed it or just want to laugh out loud again, click [here](#). (And, yes, I did sneak the Spanish Inquisition in again.)



And then there was Covid. Plans cancelled for a panto in 2020 and again in 2021. We needed to come back with a bang this year and fortunately Robin Bailes had one bang left. (After *Will Shakespeare* Robin moved on to other things. Unless I can persuade him to write another panto, this is the last we'll be hearing from him.)

There will be some familiar faces in *Cinderella* (including **BJ Godson**, who's appeared in every panto since 2007). I'm thrilled to say there will also be many new faces, including **Katie MacLean** as our wonderful Cinderella and **Benjamin Sams** as our very charming prince.

Rehearsals are well underway and I couldn't be happier. The stepsisters (**John Gooding** and **Neil Shilladay**) keep getting funnier and funnier. The evil stepmother (**Helen Shilladay**) is getting more and more evil.

This is indeed going to be a happy ending to a fairy tale collaboration. I thank you, Robin, for all the laughter. So, too, I know does Gabriola.

Miranda Holmes

GABRIOLA PLAYERS

The panto is coming back!



Cinderella



By Robin Bailes

**Directed by
Miranda Holmes**

**Tickets:
\$20 Adults, \$5 Children**

**Available online at
gabriolaplayers.ca
or at the door.**

**For the safety of all, audience
members will be required to
wear masks.**



COMMUNITY HALL

**Thursday-Saturday
December 1-3 at 7 pm**

**Saturday & Sunday
December 3 & 4 at 2 pm**

Sponsored by Tina & Guy, Royal LePage