

GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Winter 2022 newsletter

A note from the directors

When Miranda Holmes came out on stage at the Community Hall to introduce *Cinderella*, the fifth panto she's directed by Robin Bailes, she said we'd saved the best for last. She wasn't kidding. Fairy tales, it seems, really can come true. And stars really can be born right in front of your eyes.

There were many familiar faces from pantos past in the incredibly talented cast, but there were also a number of new ones, including our Cinderella, **Katie MacLean**, who appeared magically at the auditions and who'd never been in a play before, and our prince, **Benjamin Sams**, also making his first foray into theatre. It was a first panto for **Helen Shilladay** (who couldn't have been a more evil stepmother) and her husband **Neil Shilladay**, who along with **John Gooding**, had audiences in stitches as the ugly stepsisters.

The elements conspired against us. First snow, then wind, then the inevitable power failure cancelled the dress rehearsal, but the show went on! Our thanks to everyone who came to watch – especially the packed house who turned up for the final matinee, not knowing if we'd have stage lights or sound during that Sunday's planned power outage. (Thanks to a borrowed generator and the ingenuity of our sound man **Lorne Kraft** we did!) Everyone – cast, crew and audiences – agreed, it was the **BEST PANTO EVER!**

The season is far from over. We are still soliciting submissions from local writers for possible inclusion in our **2023 One-Act Play Festival**. Next month we will be holding open auditions for our next full production and for some of the one-acts received. See the next page for more details, then enjoy some memories of *Cinderella* in the following pages with photos taken by the wonderful **Bill Pope**.

Last, but by no means least, a huge thank you to **Tina & Guy**, our season sponsor, and all the other island businesses who support us by taking ads in our programmes. We really couldn't do what we do without them.



The phenomenally talented cast of Cinderella. Front: John Gooding, Hilary Farmer, BJ Godson and Christine McKim. Middle: Neil Shilladay, Helen Shilladay, Bronwyn Cameron, Katie MacLean, Benjamin Sams, Kerry Woodrow, Marshall Mangan, Jenn Feenan, Dianne Holme and Donna Deacon. Back: Wendy Phillips and Tom Radcliffe.

Make a note of these dates!



We will be holding open auditions at the Rollo Centre on Sunday, **January 8** from 2pm to 4pm for the remainder of our 2022/23 season.

Two plays are still in contention for our full production, both two-handers (one woman, one man). The final decision will be made by director Jean Wyenberg based on the best fit from the auditions.

The first play is *Dear Jack, Dear Louise*, playwright Ken Ludwig's love letter to the correspondence that began the love story of his own parents. "When two strangers meet by letter during World War II, a love story begins. US Army Captain Jack Ludwig, a military doctor stationed in Oregon, begins writing to Louise Rabiner, an aspiring actress and dancer in New York City, hoping to meet her someday if the war will allow. But as the war continues, it threatens to end their relationship before it even starts." (The two characters are in their late twenties/early thirties.)

Another stranger pairing is at the centre of the second play, *2 Across* by Jerry Mayer. "Two strangers, a man and a woman, board a San Francisco BART train at 4:30 a.m. They're alone in the car, each is married, both are doing the *New York Times* crossword. She's an organized, sensible psychologist. He's a free-spirited, unemployed ad exec. She is a crossword pro, he always quits. When he tosses his puzzle away, she snaps, 'Crosswords are a metaphor for life, those who finish, succeed, those who don't, fail.' Now he vows to finish. Why? He's a competitor and she happens to be lovely. Their trip is filled with unpredictable, but believable, surprises and, as the train ride ends, it's obvious each of them has been changed for the better." (The two characters are in their fifties.)

We will also be auditioning roles from **one-act play** submissions received before January 7.

No experience is necessary and all are welcome.

For the safety of all, participants will be required to wear masks during the auditions.

One-Act Plays



A reminder that the deadline is approaching to submit works for our **2023 One-Act Play Festival**. 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" no later than **15 January 2023**. (The earlier the better.)

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.

If you haven't penned a play yourself, but know someone who has, please make them aware that we are soliciting submissions.

Cinderella



Once upon a time there was a lovely young woman named Cinderella, who's still feisty despite being turned into a skivvy by her evil stepmother and far from pretty stepsisters.



One day in the forest she meets a handsome young man who invites her to a ball.



Although her stepmother forces her to stay home, her fairy godmother has other ideas. Cinderella *shall* go to the ball!



Love blossoms, but then the clock strikes twelve and Cinders must flee, leaving nothing behind except...



...one glass slipper.



The search leads to Bankrupp Hall. The shoe fits! But on whose foot?

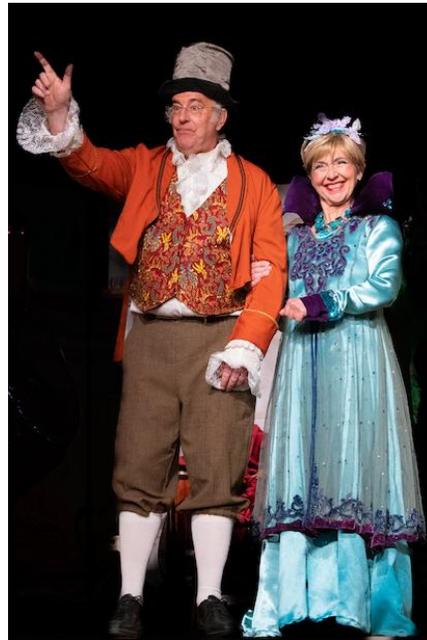


Thanks to Buttons the truth is revealed.

And then there were happy endings all round...



For the Prince and Cinderella



For the Baron and Fairy
Godmother



For Evie and Buttons

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! Membership fees help us cover non-production costs such as insurance and storage. You can purchase an annual membership – \$15 for individuals or \$25 for families – on our [website](#) or by e-transfer to gabriolaplayers@gmail.com or by sending a cheque to Gabriola Players, PO Box 374, Gabriola V0R 1X0. Or you might consider becoming a sustaining member with a regular monthly donation of \$5 or more. This can be done on the [Canada Helps website](#).

Not sure if your membership has lapsed? You can check by sending an email to gabriolaplayers@gmail.com.

But wait, there's more!



Helen Shilladay brought the house down with 'Evil Like Me'



It may have been painful to hear, but stepsisters Neil Shilladay and John Gooding "feeling pretty" was comedy gold.



And let us not forget dancing king Marshall Mangan ("Young and sweet, only seventy!") backed by BJ Godson, Dianne Holme, Jenn Feenan, Hilary Farmer and Bronwyn Cameron.

A panto to remember

Sometimes the panto gods align and magic is made. This was definitely the case with *Cinderella*.

According to director Miranda Holmes: "Three days before the auditions I knew I had strong candidates for many of the roles, but I had no Cinderella, no Prince, no set designer and some uncertainty about costumes. Things were not looking good. I did hunt down Benjamin, but it wasn't until Katie – new to the island and new to theatre – breezed through the door and knocked Cinderella out of the park that I realised just how incredible this show could be."

At every rehearsal and when Dave Nicholson's beautiful sets arrived and when Dar Yuile came up with yet another fabulous costume (or when Wendy Phillips and Jenn Feenan spotted Cinderella's ballgown just sitting waiting for us in the GIRO shop) and during every performance (especially during the final one when there was no guarantee we'd be able to rig the sound and lights to a borrowed generator), at every turn the cast and crew all knew this was something special.



Here's what some of them had to say after that magical Sunday matinee.

"I must admit my eyes have been well and truly opened to the amount of work a show like this requires, and from so many people! It is absolutely phenomenal that a tiny community like this has the people with the wide skillset needed to produce a show like that, especially under the increasingly difficult circumstances. I was surprised how emotional I felt that it was over. I wish we had more shows. It felt very special to be included in this incredible production."

"My soul has been recharged by the incredible passion and success each and every member of the cast demonstrated during this panto. It is so, so rare that a performance just keeps getting stronger and stronger every single time. I have never been a part of a production that doesn't have at least one clinker in it but *no*. Every time the actors stepped on stage it was like seeing new magic being created right before my eyes. Every performance I thought. Yeah – this is our best one. But, *no*, the cast came in for the next show saying, 'You ain't seen nothin' yet!' And what can I say about our backstage crew? For myself I had want of *nothing*. I know a number of pros who could learn a thing or two about commitment and dependability from this crew. Not to forget our lighting and sound guys who came through for us during a power outage. I can almost squeal like a teenybopper at a Backstreet Boys concert when I think of how amazing it went. And *those sets, those beautiful, beautiful sets!* Mon dieu!"

"What a team! I love how we all pulled together for not just an adequate performance but an awesome one. Everyone I've spoken to raved about the show and each of the actors and the sets and costumes and the professionalism of the whole troupe. I was very proud to be part of it all – and I had a great time doing it, too!"

"I am thrilled to have been part of this amazing troupe – both cast and crew. Such energy-filled performances, each one bringing the characters more and more to life with unexpected ad-libs, more body language and – joy of joy – after all those masked rehearsals being able to see each other's faces, and hear every word! I suspected from the beginning that this panto would be a really good one, but it truly was exceptional. And so much *fun*."

"It was absolutely *fantastic* to be in this pantomime with you all. I cannot tell you how much fun, how thrilling, and how rewarding this whole thing has been. Thank you to Miranda for casting me, because this was everything I hoped it would be. And to every single one of you – actors and behind the scenes – my heartfelt appreciation for all the support, encouragement, accommodations, patience, tips, laughs, and help in all sorts of ways. Thank you for welcoming me to this magical team for this absolute blast. It was sad to drive home after the final performance knowing we wouldn't be doing this again. I think theatre is a bug, and I am bitten."

"Honestly, I still can't believe we pulled it off in such spectacular fashion! I would like especially to give my fulsome praise and *huge thanks to our fantastic crew for making the magic happen in the face of crazy odds*. Working with this incredible cast has been one of the best experiences I've ever had with Gabriola Players. Thank you, Miranda, for casting me in this dream come true show."

"This show was amazing! We *nailed* all five performances, without benefit of a dress rehearsal, and with only partial power for Sunday's show! And we were blessed with perfect audiences: ready to laugh, eager to participate and enjoy."

"Words fail me. I cannot adequately describe how much being part of this truly amazing show and incredible family has meant to me. It really has been a magical experience."

"I can't remember the last time I had so much fun. Two days later and I still can't stop grinning."

"Three cheers for Miranda! That woman really does know how to make panto magic." (And back from Miranda: "Aw, shucks.")

The audience feedback was pretty good, too!

