

The PROMPTER

ALADDIN

“A gift from Shuswap Theatre to the community,” the program said of this Christmas pantomime. And what a gift it was! The talented cast kept the audience in stitches with clever gags, perfect timing and plenty to look at. And the crew kept everything running smoothly backstage. We have some up and coming young actors here!

Thank you, one and all!



IMPROVISATIONAL THEATRE

Despite the busy time of year, the first improv gathering happened on December 12 with nine enthusiastic participants. They played some theatre games and spent a lot of time laughing! The plan is to hold sessions twice a month, beginning on Thursday, January 10 at 7:00 PM at the theatre. No experience is required nor is it necessary to commit to attending every session. All you need is a desire to have an enjoyable evening, playing with some enthusiastic people. Thanks to Kevin McPherson for getting things off to such a great start.



SHUSWAP THEATRE EXECUTIVE

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Vice President: **Julia Body**

Treasurer: **Marion Huysmans**

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A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC COMMITTEE

Although the 2007-08 season has barely begun, our hard-working Artistic Committee is already thinking about *next* season. Some initial thoughts are:

- * a summer show for 2008, with a run of three to four weeks. (It is hoped to give bursaries to cast and crew through fundraising efforts and revenues.)
- * a one-act play or one person show that would run at the end of September and go to the Theatre BC one-act festival in October
- * a larger Christmas show - could be a pantomime, a musical, a cabaret ... with adults and youth or children, possibly involving high school students. This could be an original production, perhaps something local.
- * a winter production at the end of February
- * the Festival show in May
- * possibly some Second Stage pieces ... staged readings? multimedia presentation? something created in a directors' lab weekend workshop?

The Artistic Committee would like to hear from members who are interested in directing a play next season, or being an assistant director. Perhaps you have an idea for a play that you would like to see staged. Please contact Gayle Heinrich, gkheinrich@sunwave.net, James Bowlby, jwbowlby@telus.net or Peter Blacklock, pncblacklock@sunwave.net, if you have any questions or ideas.

Dreaming a Future for Shuswap Theatre



Jake and Cilla show us the cracks in the building.

After over three decades it was time to sit down together to re-vision our purpose and discuss goals for the future. On November 17th Kim MacMillan led twenty-three of us through a very successful workshop, leaving us all excited about the future direction of Shuswap Theatre. The day provided the raw material of a plan for growth of the society, volunteers and audience, along with an amazing collection of creative ideas to help energize and revitalize what happens on the stage and off. As your executive works through the ideas and information generated, watch for a more complete report of our vision and goals for the coming years. Jake and Cilla demonstrated with a tour, how our building is deteriorating and there was considerable enthusiasm expressed for exploring a new building with community partners.

Thank you to everyone who participated, and for those unable to attend we would love to hear your ideas. Remember, this is **your** community theatre and only with your participation can we ensure that Shuswap Theatre continues the powerful legacy of 30 years of first class, live performance.

TRACY STACER

This year, *The Prompter* will shine the spotlight on some of our faithful members.



Spotlight on PETER BLACKLOCK



The Widow Twanky

Peter, you are a relative newcomer to Salmon Arm. What brought you here?
We made several attempts to move to Salmon Arm during our working life but it was not until we retired that it actually happened. It is a combination of a city that is just about the perfect size, a wonderful setting and climate, and the fact that all six of our grandchildren are close at hand that has brought us to live here.

We've seen you on stage in a number of productions since you joined Shuswap Theatre. You obviously have previous theatrical experience. Tell me about it.

When I began teaching in 1972, teaching jobs were very scarce and I took a job in Quesnel teaching a whole combination of subjects including band, choral and drama. Never having been involved in theatre before, I thought it would be best to get some experience so I auditioned for Quesnel Little Theatre's production of *Oklahoma* and played the part of Will Parker. Over the next two years I played Starbuck in *The Rainmaker*, Cornelius in *Hello Dolly*, and Matt in *The Fantasticks*. I was obviously hooked on the magic of the stage and acted in, directed and produced high school and community productions with small and large companies, beginning and established companies.

One of my most memorable productions was *Barefoot in the Park* which was presented with a group of recent high school grads in the garage of our home in Fruitvale. We turned the garage into a very intimate little theatre which fit and audience of 40 and sold out for two weeks. It got such a great review that people were coming from all over the Kootenays.

So, you've acted, directed and produced. But you're also a playwright. What are some of the plays you have written? Have they been produced?

I think playwright is probably overstating what I do. While I was working with high school students I often wrote plays to fit the students with whom I was working. It is difficult sometimes to find a play with large casts and interesting themes so that was the impetus. Because music is also a passion, many of the shows were musicals. I have also written several plays that were designed for casts of 60 students

to fit drama school productions. Yes, they have all been produced, a number of them several times and a number of them have been rewritten to fit other groups.

Are you presently working on a play?

I have been trying to write a play about the life of Emily Carr for the past three years. The biggest problem has been finding her "voice" but I think I am getting close. Julia Body read the opening piece with the Shoestring Theatre at the Art Gallery and it felt just about right. So maybe the research is paying off and I have got something that will work.

Why did you choose Emily Carr as your subject and why a musical?

She is such a complex character and really quite a curmudgeon so I just thought it would be a wonderful experience to learn more about her by trying to write the story. The music seems to fit because my plan is to use her work as a backdrop and it inspires music.

What are your hopes for this play?

First...to manage to actually finish what I have started. After that to have it read and critiqued and ultimately I would like to see it on stage. It is truly a marvelous experience to hear others bringing life to your words and music.

You've experienced many different theatre groups. As a relative newcomer to Shuswap Theatre, do you have any particular hopes and aspirations for our group?

Having moved a number of times, I have always found that becoming part of a theatre group is a great way to meet many of the most interesting people in a community and the Shuswap Theatre certainly is a great example. Right from the beginning I have felt welcome and a part of the group. I think the work that has begun with the workshop last month will help the group to redefine and to plan intentionally and I am excited to be able to be a part of that.

I think as a newcomer it would be inappropriate to say what my hopes or aspirations for the group would be, but I can certainly bring to the discussions what I found to be the strengths of other community theatre groups with whom I have worked.

I guess I would have to say that theatre is so much more than "doing plays" and I hope we find some of that as part of our direction.

Before finishing, I'd like to add that, knowing how many hard working and talented people have been members of Shuswap Theatre for many more years than I have, I'm very honoured to be the one interviewed this month.

Theatre Around the Valley

Asparagus Theatre

Too Much CSI Feb. 16

Kelowna Actors Studio

On Golden Pond Feb. 7 - 24

Powerhouse Theatre, Vernon

Over the Tavern Feb. 13 - 23

SAS - Jackson Campus

Once Upon A Time Jan. 16 - 18

Sunshine Theatre, Kelowna

Famous Puppet Death Scenes Feb. 5 - 9

Western Canada Theatre

The Syringa Tree Jan. 24 - Feb. 2

The Satchmo' Suite Feb. 21 - March 1

Workshops a Success

On the weekend of Remembrance Day, three very successful workshops were held. Phillip Tidd led a number of folks in the art of set design and the group came up with a design for our festival play, *Dancock's Dance*. Jake Jacobson worked with four participants at the Theatre on lighting design. Finally, Gayle Heinrich introduced a number of people to acting. The most important lesson learned by this group? The shoes make the character!



The Attic, The Pearls And Three Fine Girls

Auditions for our first production of 2008 are scheduled for Thursday and Friday, January 3 and 4 at 7:00PM at the Theatre. The cast consists of three women, aged about 25 - 50, and the roles are physically demanding. Crew members are still needed in a number of areas. *The Attic, The Pearls And Three Fine Girls* runs from February 22 till March 1. Contact director Julia Body at 833-1496 or djbody@sunwave.net for more information, if you would like a script or to volunteer to crew.

Dancock's Dance

Auditions for our festival play, *Dancock's Dance*, will take place on March 2 and 3. Prior to that there will be a reading of the script on February 25. For more information or to volunteer for a crew position, please contact director Gayle Heinrich at 833-2175 or stage manager Denise Reimer at 804-0765.

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