

New Theatre Orangeville season filled with anticipation

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

It is worth mentioning 25 years of a not-for-profit theatre imbedded in enriching the community. The fact that Theatre Orangeville survived is worth celebrating; it is the only professional theatre company in our Riding (Dufferin & Caledon) supported by the Ontario Arts Council. David Nairn, Artist Director of Theatre Orangeville, was very happy to say.

Always there to provide the best entertainment, there is a bit of a switch-around to the way the productions have been scheduled this season that is going to be a lot of fun.

At the very beginning, is a high humour five day run with Dan Needles and Ian Bell, regaling audiences with Mr Needles' tales of his life in rural Ontario. Some of his story telling comes from his latest book, a compilation of his 25 years of writing for a long list of (local, mainly) publications. The rest is Mr Needles' making us laugh the way he does...

Ian Bell is bringing songs to fit both the county stories and the grand humour. They two worked together frequently some years ago and this coming back to play together again is more fun than ever, as Mr Bell told us.

Dan Needles, of course, is our own Wingfield author, although, "I didn't write," quoth he, "I just sat in coffee shops and listened to the cattle farmers."

Mr. Needles cut his teeth, writing plays in Theatre Orangeville, with the laugh out loud funny Wingfield series, where he discovered, rather to his surprise, that he could earn a living writing plays.

Ian Bell, on the other hand, says he has played in places nearby but never in Orangeville. Needless to say, he is very pleased and excited about the upcoming five days of performing here.

Messieurs Needles and Bell are appearing at Theatre Orangeville, opening September 19 and running to September 23.

That is the "Special Add-On Show," for which we buy tickets while we are purchasing our subscriptions for the 2018/19 season of productions.

Follows are the beginnings of the reasons to be sure you support your theatre: wonderful entertainment, laughs, the best concert, and plenty to think about.

We start with Norm Foster, one of whose plays is featured annually here at Theatre Orangeville.

Mr Foster is the most prolific, most produced playwright in Canada with nearly 70 plays to his credit. Three years ago, the Foster Festival opened at the beautiful new Arts Centre in St. Catherine's, Ontario, where Mr Foster premiers an impressive two new plays a year. Two years ago, Mr Foster was awarded the Order of Canada.

This year, at Theatre Orangeville, he brings his Lunenberg, a tale of one Iris Oulette, an American, coming to Nova Scotia with her best friend, Natalie, where she has inherited a house from her recently deceased husband. All their marriage long, Iris had known nothing about her husband's Canadian home.

Add the neighbour, Charley, a fine example of Nova Scotian manhood at its best and you have more intrigue, laughs and romance from the Foster sharpened pencil.

Lunenberg runs from October 11 to October 28.

For Christmas this year, is the return of A Christmas Story by Philip Grecian, about a boy with a primary wish for Christmas, with the interesting to and fro between himself as a child and as his adult self telling the story.

"This is an audience favourite," David Nairn commented. "It's a great opportunity for families to come out and see a traditional show."

About the casting: "I need to find the kid first and find the adults around that. We have our eye on a couple of prospects but I have to know if the kid has grown a foot taller over the summer."

A Christmas Story is a great Christmas show that everyone loves and runs from November 29 all the way to December 23.

Bursting into the New Year, at long last, Theatre Orangeville brings us a full run of a Leisa Way show, this one: Across the Pond, the British Invasion.

Just imagine how much fun this will be, for, written by Leisa Way, this is not just about the Beatles, although they make up a part of it.

Along with them comes a long list of the best and best known music stars from the '60's to today.

"The lovely, enchanting Leisa Way," crooned Mr Nairn, who is partner to the lady, "is coming with her British Invasion ...people will be literally dancing in the aisles. The timeless music of the Beatles, to the contemporary, Adele, sung by Leisa, with her talent and her energy."

It may be cold and snowy outside, but we will be able to forget all that while we are rocking with Ms. Way and "The Lonely Hearts

Club Band? in the theatre.

This show runs from February 14 to March 3, 2019.

Theatre Orangeville is pleased to bring us two World Premiers during the spring of 2019 but both playwrights are already known to us.

John Spurway's *Off the Grid* is a comedy about a married odd couple, architect Martha, who is keen on the idea of self-sufficient houses and Leonard, a loans officer, who clings to his creature comforts, as he sees them.

These two have come to spend a week off the grid in a house that is off the beaten path, while Martha writes a feature on the subject and to celebrate their sixth anniversary.

Their retired neighbour, Lowell, who has been living there for the last two years, comes on as a possible guide to this life style.

Naturally, there are surprises...

Said Mr. Nairn, 'This story is a romance ? after all, it is Theatre Orangeville. But we're holding more junk, more stuff. We always think we need so much.'

Mr. Spurway brought us his very funny *The Numbers Game* a few years ago.

Off the Grid runs from March 28 to April 14, 2019.

Theatre Orangeville's second World Premier of the season is Kristen Da Silva's *Where You Are*.

Audiences may remember her *Sugar Road*, produced here in 2017, with some of the funniest moments on the main stage.

The story centres on two sisters, Beth and Glenda, both retired and living a peaceful sort of life on Manitoulin Island, making and selling jars of jam.

More or less as a hobby, they keep tabs on their handsome veterinarian neighbour. They are also preparing for the visit of Beth's adult daughter.

The secrets they each harbour look ready to surface and the re-assessments of three lives could change everything.

Where You Are will run, as the last play of the season, from May 2 to May 19, 2019.

As with all the productions that run at Theatre Orangeville, the comedies ? fun though they certainly are, none are simple and superficial.

Each has a story that could reflect on a person's life. All them present food for thought to mull over, while one is still laughing at the humour.

Subscriptions for all five shows, or three, are available now, as are tickets to see Dan Needles and Ian Bell.

As David Nairn said of your Theatre Orangeville, 'We've been here for 25 years. We're a resource for the community, whatever that means.'

Tickets and subscription, details and information are all available at the Box Office, 87 Broadway and the Information Centre on Buena Vista at Hwy 10; by telephone on 519-942-3423; and online: tickets@theatreorangeville.ca