

Caledon Town Hall Players prepare for new show, 'A Bench in the Sun'

By Constance Scrafield

Heidi Kachel is directing 'A Bench in the Sun,' next up on the Caledon Town Hall Players' (CTHP) season this year.

It opens next Saturday, February 17.

Kachel briefed the plot: It takes place at a seniors' retirement home. Two lifelong friends, Bert and Harold were boyhood friends who fell out but they came back together at home. Different as two can be, one is the curmudgeon and the other is all optimism.

One day, as Kachel put it, 'a B-rate actress' moves in and rattles the two quietly retired men, whose main business is to argue with each other.

'This is a comedy,' says Kachel. 'Lots of physical action and a surprise ending.'

The three characters learn their home is to be sold to developers but what can they do to stop that?

'A Bench in the Sun' is written by Canadian playwright Ron Clark, whose 60-year career, mainly in the US as the author of several comedies carries an impressive list of achievements. These include the screenplay of 'Silent Movie' for Mel Brooks, 'Revenge of the Pink Panther' for Peter Sellers and many more shows and entertainments.

The location of the story is 'someplace', a medium-sized city. It is a three-hander of two buddies well known to CTHP audiences and Cynthia Melba, who is new to the group.

'It's great when we have new faces. It is going amazingly well,' says Kachel. 'We're doing full run throughs with costumes and everything.'

'A Bench in the Sun' opens Saturday, Feb. 17 and runs over the two weekends to February 24, six performances in all with matinees and evening shows. Also for both Saturday evening performances, Knox United Church, which is a stone's throw away from the CTHP building in Caledon Village, at 2976 Charleston Sideroad, continues to sell dinner tickets as they have done for years.

Primarily, the company does comedies with an occasional mystery and suspense.

Caledon Town Hall Players are running their 60th season this year, a very remarkable fact that looks to see their secret of success. In Kachel's opinion, it begins with a good, dedicated band of volunteers. She came to the theatre company 40 years ago and was impressed with the welcome she received.

What keeps her at it, we were curious to know.

'The building has a certain magic. There was no running water; there were outhouses and stacking chairs. You wanted to see the Grand Old Lady go on.'

In 1992, they were able to add a green room and install running water. Then, the actual building was moved in the summer of 2003 to be placed further away from the highway to the south and the east, safer, quieter and much better parking.

'It's a Heritage building,' she commented. 'And it was important to keep it.'

Working with new ideas, Ms. Kachel did say they are 'tipping our toe in the water about doing a play in the summer.'

They need to see if people are interested in participating in the theatre during the summer. Not everyone leaves town for extended periods during the summer months.

As to why we should come see *A Bench in the Sun*: the tale is about friendship and how it can stand the test of time.

A lovely afternoon or evening out with lots of laughs ? a good time.

Anyone interested in working with a summer show should contact the theatre.

For all the details about times and dates and to purchase tickets, go to www.caledontownhallplayers.com or call 519-927-5460.