

?Courage to SOAR? this year?s play by Creative Partners on Stage

By Constance Scrafield

The Creative Partners on Stage drama troupe, formed through a unique partnership between Theatre Orangeville and Community Living Dufferin (CLD), will present Courage to SOAR at the Orangeville Opera House May 31, June 1 and June 2.

For adults with special needs, the Creative Partners actors bring a whole new approach to theatre. They re-design it, really, so that it might almost need another name. However, theatre it is and, perhaps, some of the most impressive, moving theatre one will ever see. Jane Ohland Cameron has been writing and directing the annual productions now for five years.

?This theatre group is the most rewarding theatre I've ever done,? she said. ?I've learned more about theatre with this troupe than ever anywhere else.?

Like most people involved with theatre, it is her one true love and when she moved away from it, she longed for it and found her way back during the course of her life.

The shows are based on a theme and, to some extent, Ohland Cameron writes dialogue to which the actors add their monologues, which they compose themselves.

In previous shows, the performers move around the stage in a choreographed routine for which their individual support workers unobtrusively guide them as needed.

?Obviously, we're creating an approach to the theatre that is different and that is what the actors are bringing to the theatre, and we are just trying to keep up with them,? she explained. ?I (don't see disabled people) ? I see a collection of extraordinary people. If I could be as whole and as authentic as they are ? they help me aspire to (that).?

On stage this year are Christopher Dawe, John Garballa, Sarah Henry-Godfrey, Michael Goldie, Glen Hamilton, Kelly Hu-Dong, Jeremy Huntley, Barb Kameka, John Squirrel and Kassondra Stavley. Their stories are of the courage it has taken to fight and soar through dancing, words and song. Prepare yourselves for the laughs.

These actors are all veterans of the stage. They don't worry much about things going off on a tangent, often with funny results ? yet it never looks unrehearsed or undisciplined for, as much as any troupe of actors, these thespians are polished and experienced ? and they love the work, love being on stage.

This year, there are a couple of changes.

First up, there are five ladies who asked Ohland Cameron if they could be involved. She agreed and they are there at every rehearsal, making props for the show ? props that accommodate individual needs and are being made as the show progresses and takes shape. They are the prop team.

Said Ohland Cameron, ?I love having the prop team every week. They add to the dynamics. I love them being part of the product. Rather than the artistic team (that usually creates the props), it's so nice to have people from the community too.?

This year, also, the support workers are speaking about their relations with their clients.

?We're all finding our voices in following the actors to find the courage as well,? she said. ?This theatre is simply a gift. It makes me really want to get creativity and theatre back in the schools.?

?It makes me feel such abundance,? she added. ?I'm looking at it from a place of abundance, working with these actors.?

If you have never been to a Creative Partners show, take advantage of this opportunity. Tickets, as usual, are at the box office at 87 Broadway (Town Hall) or online at www.theatreorangeville.ca