

Local teacher creates final theatrical masterpiece

The creative juices of Rob Ciccotelli and Frank Adriano at Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School's Drama Department are mounting one last big fun musical before Ciccotelli retires in July.

This final production, called *Swingin' at The Savoy*, will be performed at the Pearson Theatre in Brampton June 7, 8 and 9.

A massive undertaking, it involves a number of former and current students. There are 20 alumni, 18 current students, a 21-piece jazz band and eight dancers involved with the show. The logistics of getting both students and alumni, many of whom are in their 20s and 30s, together to rehearse has been a huge undertaking.

"We've been rehearsing this show out of sequence, like how a movie is made, without everyone there at any given time," Ciccotelli said. "Days, nights, weekends. It's been very challenging. But the payoff will be amazing!"

The creative duo wanted to produce a final show that would be a tribute to the many years Ciccotelli has been creating and producing theatre. Adriano pitched incorporating his already first class jazz band into a cabaret style show.

"We already had a Jazz Band that could swing and jive like there's no tomorrow," he said. "The challenge was to create a story line that would involve those great songs from the '30s and '40s into a fun and entertaining play."

But that wasn't enough of a challenge for the two writer/directors. Ciccotelli also wanted to involve as many alumni drama students as they could. After writing the script and narrowing down the song list, they asked more than two dozen alumni to sing, act or work on production. Almost all of them said yes, enthusiastically jumping at the chance to work with the two popular teachers one last time.

Over the last 16 years, Ciccotelli and Adriano have created an astounding body of theatrical productions, most of them original, that have won numerous awards, gained national media attention and have performed all over the world. In 2003, they sold out the 1,000 seat Winter Garden Theatre in downtown Toronto with their cyber-punk version of *Macbeth*. *Macbeth* also qualified for the main stage of the International Thespian Festival in the United States and was performed to more than 2,000. They repeated their sold-out Winter Garden success in 2005 with their Brazilian take on the *Oliver Twist* story. In 2005, they had a huge hit with their Italo-centric production of *The Fine Art of Bocce* at the Toronto Fringe Festival. In 2006, their production of Daniel McIvor's *Never Swim Alone* also qualified for the main stage of the International Thespian Festival, performing to more than 2600. And another hit at the Toronto Fringe Festival was their original musical in 2007, *Le Spa: The Musical*. In 2011, they performed their original Canadian satire, *Dr. Arctic's Cinema Inferno* in London, England. In 2012, they performed the *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Abridged in Macerata, Italy. And in 2013, they performed their original breast cancer awareness musical, *In The Pink*, in an off-Broadway theatre in New York City. They performed their '80s inspired adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew: An '80s Musical* at the Stratford Festival in 2014. In 2015, they brought Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy* to the Hudson Theatre in Los Angeles. And last year, they brought *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* to the Chelsea Theatre in London, England.

The performances of *Swingin' at The Savoy* will be at the Pearson Theatre in Brampton June 7, 8 and 9, starting at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$23 (general admissions) and can be purchased online at www.rosetheatre.ca



These Grade 12 students are going to be appearing in *Swingin' at The Savoy*; (back) Mikayla Cattermole, Kayla Cavan, (front) Alayna DoAlamo, Michelle Coward and Victoria Laughlin.