

Theatre Orangeville holding summer arts festival at Mount Alverno

By **Sam Odrowski**

Just when it seemed like summer couldn't get much better, with the return of many annual events local residents know and love, Theatre Orangeville has stepped in with a new one.

The Summer Arts Festival, which is the first of its kind for Dufferin, is bringing live music, stand-up comedy, theatre, drag performances and visual arts to Mount Alverno Luxury Resorts from August 10 to 14.

'It's a little bit of everything,' said Lisa Lahue, Theatre Orangeville (TOV) technical director and event organizer. 'It's a five-day event that ropes in the Toronto Fringe Festival, children's programming, aspects of our Young Company Shows. We have Drag Queen Bingo with some performances, and local musicians.'

Visual art will be on display throughout Mount Alverno's property.

TOV partnered with Mount Alverno last summer for their annual Young Company program and from the partnership, the idea for a Summer Arts Festival was born.

'It's such a beautiful property and they're such a great team out there and so supportive of us, and also of the entire arts scene in our community, not just in Orangeville,' said David Nairn, TOV's artistic director. 'They were hoping to partner on something with us again, and it just made sense for us to bring together creative performers from all of our communities.'

Nairn noted that the Summer Arts Festival has a diversity of experiences for attendees to enjoy.

'People could come every day and experience something completely different, be it sketch comedy or be it stand up or open mic ? any of those opportunities,' he said. 'If they want to perform themselves? I think of this is a real emphasis on local, not exclusively, but there's a real emphasis on showcasing local talent.'

The stand-up and comedic components of the festival is a new style of entertainment for TOV. Nairn said they're really looking forward to bringing it to the community.

For a few years leading up to the pandemic in early 2020, Theatre Orangeville partnered with Toronto Fringe Festival and Nairn also noted that he's looking forward to bringing their shows out to Orangeville for the festival.

He stressed that the five-day event is a full arts festival and not just theatre.

'As much as I don't believe it ? Theatre's not everybody's thing ? but if it's music, or if it's comedy, or if it's something that you think your kids would really like, come on out,' he said.

Schedule of events

When looking at some of the events planned for the Summer Arts Festival, Broadway Bound is a family friendly show, hosted by TOV's Musical Theatre Company, diving into musical theatre with students in grades 7-12. It starts at 7 p.m. on August 10.

Toronto-based female sketch comedy group, Herbeaver, will get audiences laughing with their fast paces, feminist and absurd comedy, shared through music and satire. It starts at 8 p.m. on August 11.

Music Together Class will engage old and young audiences alike with song, rhythmic rhymes, movement, and instruments. The

family friendly event will get attendees singing and dancing at 4 p.m. on August 12.

After attending dozens of productions from the Toronto Fringe Festival, TOV is bringing the 'Best of Fringe!' to Mount Alverno, featuring two carefully selected shows to entertain local audiences at 8 p.m. on August 12.

Dungee the Dragon and the Just Okay Juggler is journeying back to the Medieval Ages where the Kingdom of Awesome is under attack by a sassy fire-breathing dragon! The show is back by popular demand and is on at 11 a.m. on August 13.

Fay and Fluffy Storytime will feature culturally diverse books, a few off key songs, and a supportive/inclusive environment focused on having fun. Fay and Fluffy are Drag Queens who will be doing their storytime at 12:45 p.m. on August 13.

Drag Music Bingo brings a twist to the classic game, songs are played and must be matched to attendees' bingo cards, with drag queens there to host and provide entertainment. The bingo game will be followed by a drag show and kicks off at 9 p.m. on August 13

The Campy Camp Campfire Show brings original songs and a summer's worth of camping fun to the Summer Arts Festival on August 14 at 12:15 p.m.

Nicholas Mustapha and his quartet will be at the festival on August 14 at 7 p.m., closing it out. They'll provide easy listening swing and jazz music over a sunset.

There's a wandering art gallery featuring visual, performance, and wearable art, artisan creations, music, magic and interactive workshops on August 14 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Patio stage programming features Larry Kurtz on August 10, Emily Gilbert on August 11, Andrew McArthur on August 12, and Sara May on August 13.

When looking at stand-up comedy there's a youth open mic night on August 10 from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. and an adult open mic night from 9:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. on August 11.

A lot of the events going on over the five-day festival are free, while others will cost \$10 per ticket to help Theatre Orangeville recover some of the money they put into hiring artists and performers. Main stage events will be \$25 and attendees who buy more than one ticket get 50 per cent off each of them.

Tickets are available at theatreorangeville.ca.

'We double dog dare you to be bored. I don't think it's possible,' said Nairn. 'There's something there for everyone.'