

## Theatre Orangeville's Victorian Christmas Gala coming Nov. 19

By Constance Scrafield

The Annual Victorian Christmas Gala, staged by Theatre Orangeville, is coming to the Best Western Inn and Suites Nov. 19. It's the largest fundraiser of the year for the theatre. It is also one of the best parties of the year, for many reasons. The whole set-up is beautiful; tables laden with silent auction items up and down the halls and reception rooms of the hotel, perfect for finding Christmas gifts; there is an oyster bar and champagne; charming people wandering around with trays of hors d'oeuvres, great draws for all sorts of things, like hockey tickets and fine jewellery.

All this is an introduction to the evening before the call to dinner. That is held in the main dining room, decorated and ready to welcome one and all.

During the meal, served with complimentary wine, Theatre Orangeville's Artistic Director David Nairn will run the most entertaining live auction you are likely to see and what a fabulous collection of items there are for bid. They include trips with Nairn to theatres in Stratford, Niagara on the Lake, Toronto (Harold Green Jewish Theatre); a Montreal Forum seat number 10 and signed by Guy La Fleur; platinum hockey tickets (fourth row from the ice); lunch with Terry O'Reilly and many other goodies. This is my eighth year being President of the theatre's Board of Directors; I've been Chair of the Victorian Christmas Committee on my own it used to be co-chaired for six years but doing both has not been done by one person before, commented Victorian Christmas Committee Chairman Roger Simmons.

Simmons went on to explain why he and his wife Bev have been so involved

Bev and I used to love to attend the Gala, he said. We've been coming since Colin (their son) was in Christmas Story. That was 13 years ago. The silent auction was great. The support from the community was wonderful.

In less than six hours, you do your Christmas shopping, there's great entertainment, good company, he added.

There is more to it than that.

It's the relationship with the young people in the community, he commented. Some of these kids are on the fringe, kids who just don't fit in at school. Come to Theatre Orangeville's Youth Programs and find a home there, Young Company the after-school programs. We've seen it beyond anything you could expect. It allows them to just be themselves.

Colin Simmons is now attending theatre arts programs for his BFA at Sheridan College.

The Simmons were told how impressed the admissions board at Sheridan were with the applicants coming from Theatre Orangeville's programs. If you've got any more kids like that, send them to us, they were told.

Why support the theatre? Simmons had a ready answer.

We support Theatre Orangeville and it supports the community with theatre arts programs, the relationship with Community Living Dufferin it touches everything and gives us great entertainment with some of the best shows anywhere.

The Victorian Christmas Gala is set for Nov. 19 at the Best Western Inn and Suites, 7 Buena Vista Dr.

For information, tickets and to donate items to the live and silent auctions, contact Theatre Orangeville in person at the Box Office at 87 Broadway or the Information Centre at Buena Vista and Highway 10; by telephone at 519-942-3423. Also check the website at [www.theatreorangeville.ca](http://www.theatreorangeville.ca)