

Tipling Stage's Gaslight is set to thrill starting next week

By Marni Walsh

Tipling Stage Company (TSC) in Shelburne will soon open their 2017 season with the 1938 thriller *Gaslight*, written by Patrick Hamilton.

Set in the Victorian era, the play's suspense and thrills so captivated audiences that it was made into a 1944 film starring Ingrid Bergman as the central figure Bella.

Gaslight's TSC director Bev Nicholas called the play "one of the great classical psychological thrillers of the '30s," filled with "beautiful Patrick Hamilton dialogue, humour, and suspense with an exciting and unexpected ending."

"The competition for community theatre is great these days with all the electronic devices that are available," he added. "Many community groups are feeling this, and could possibly close down, which is a real shame as community theatre is the backbone of Canada's great tradition of professional theatre."

TSC hopes the popular thriller will be one of those shows that entice patrons to a night at the theatre. The female lead, Bella Manningham, is "more than half convinced that "like her mother who died insane " she, too, is losing her mind."

"In fact, her husband Jack Manningham is slowly, deliberately driving her insane," Nichols added. "He has almost succeeded, when a former detective who believes Manningham to be a maniacal criminal, visits Bella while her husband is out of the house."

"Rehearsals are going well as we have only just re-started," he said. "The weather played havoc with us this winter and we had to postpone this production from its original dates at the end of January to now, the end of March. We only have a month to go, but the cast is responding with good hard work."

That cast includes Jess Walker, who starred in *Barefoot in the Park* last October, taking on the demanding role of Bella. Michael Bedford, new to Tipling Stage Company, as Jack Manningham "the company's producer jokes that "the audience will really hate him."

Peter King, playing the retired Detective Rough, has appeared in several Tipling productions over the years and is a regular performer on Caledon and Hillsburgh stages. Jo Hubbard, well known to Shelburne and Dundalk audiences as both an actor and director, plays Elizabeth the housekeeper and Ashley Duncan will take on the role of the cheeky, flirtatious maid.

Gaslight will be performed at Grace Tipling Hall, in Shelburne March 31 and April 1 at 8 p.m., April 2 at 2 p.m. and April 8 and 9 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 at these Shelburne locations: Caravaggio IDA, Holmes Appliances & Music Shop, and Shelburne Town Hall. They can also be purchased online from the Tipling Stage Company website (<http://www.tiplingstagecompany.com/>) or at the door. For more information, email to info@tiplingstagecompany.com