



The News Letter

The Newsletter of Theatre Newfoundland Labrador

From the Board Chair

Hello my fellow theatre-goers. I hope that this edition of the *Theatre Newfoundland Labrador* newsletter finds you safe and well and that you are enjoying all the arts and theatre performances that the Western region has to offer.

TNL is alive and well and we are very excited about our upcoming season at the *Gros Morne Theatre Festival*. It promises to be an exciting and entertaining season. On the home front in Corner Brook, The Sara...h McDonald Youth Theatre Program, under the capable direction of Adam Brake, is extremely busy. A reading of *The Wonderful Dogfish Racket* (Tom Cahill, adapted by Sara...H McDonald) will be performed at the Rotary Arts Centre in March. Then in April our talented students will present *Romeo and Juliet* (William Shakespeare) at the Arts and Culture Centre, in Corner Brook.

The Board of Directors continues to be busy behind the scenes. I know that each one of them encourages you to come out and support the company by attending TNL performances. Please consider donating to our theatre company so that we can continue to bring you top-notch professional theatre. TNL is a charitable organization and we need your help to continue to be a prominent showcase for professional actors, directors, and technical crew for years to come. No donation is too small and we thank you in advance for your past patronage and hope that we can count on your continued support. ***Come See Our Stories, Hear Our Songs*** Looking forward to seeing you at the shows! Wishing everyone a bright and wonderful Spring.

Katrina Basha, TNL Board Chair

A New Theatre for TNL

We are delighted to announce that construction of the New Theatre Complex for Gros Morne Theatre Festival will commence this spring. Opening is scheduled for 2019. We'll keep you informed of progress of this exciting project through this newsletter, and our website

What's On at TNL?



**Sara...H
McDonald
Youth
Theatre**

27-28 April, Corner Brook Arts & Culture Centre: *Romeo & Juliet*
(William Shakespeare)



**Gros Morne
Theatre
Festival**

**02 June -22 September,
Warehouse Theatre, Cow Head,
and Shallow Bay Motel (Ethie
Room), Cow Head.**

See page 3 for details of this year's productions, or visit our website.

www.theatrenewfoundland.com

Contact us: TNL, P.O. Box 655,
Corner Brook, NL A2H 6G1 Phone
709-639-7238, Fax 709-639-1006
Email tnl@theatrenewfoundland.com
Website
www.theatrenewfoundland.com

Who's Who in Theatre?

The Audience Member

The audience doesn't perform any of the myriad functions required of a theatrical production but they react to the content of a play, and give off vibes that I'm sure are felt by the actors. I wholeheartedly agree with Jeff Pitcher's belief that one of the main purposes of TNL is to tell our stories. It is wonderful to experience a play set in our own province, about people, events or ideas that come from here. But that doesn't mean that plays from elsewhere (such as the excellent Irish plays produced by TNL) are less interesting. Indeed, it is amazing to discover how much we are different and yet alike.

As is the case with most things we encounter we have preconceived notions. When we take our seat we decide if these notions match what we see on the stage or if the set sways us in a different direction. In either case the audience can be drawn in to the upcoming production before one word has been uttered on stage. In this "setting the stage" phase we view the physical interpretation of the play for this production. If it is a period piece there can be much to see such as in the *Mercer* plays of David French. Other productions are representational such as the spare set of *Tempting Providence* (Robert Chafe). If music is playing this can also set the mood.

Adaptations offer the opportunity to wrap your mind around a different setting for a familiar play. Perhaps Shakespeare's works are the ones most often adapted to a different time and place, demonstrating that universal themes can work in various settings. It can be disconcerting to encounter 16th century English spoken in a 20th century setting, particularly with modern clothing, but the story soon takes over.

The physical facilities are often an interesting part of the theatre going experience. Small settings permit an intimacy with the actors that is just not possible in a larger venue with the players somewhat removed on a larger stage. TNL's Warehouse Theatre is an excellent spot to experience this small theatre intimacy.

If the "facility" is the outdoors the audience is in for a real treat. TNL's production a number of years ago of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (W. Shakespeare) on The Head in Cow Head was a magical experience. More recently, *Short's Long Day* (Jeff Pitcher, based on story by Tom Finn), produced in the Gazebo on the Majestic Lawn in Corner Brook in 2016, provided a relaxed setting for a local tale.

Experiencing *The Tempest* on a promontory listening to the ocean waves cannot be duplicated indoors.

Contrasting different productions of the same play offers a unique opportunity to the audience member. Seeing *Stones in His Pockets* (Marie Jones) in three different productions in the space of a year in 2011 offered an opportunity to contrast the six actors appearing in this two-person play. My preference of the three strong productions was that by TNL.

A long running play such as the *S.S. Ethie* (Shane Ellis Coates) affords the chance not only to see how various actors bring differing emphases to the familiar roles, but also to experience the impression the Director has on the play. In the latter case the role of "Director" in the production has been played from over the top to more subdued and insistent.

The chemistry between actors is an exciting experience, one I have witnessed when Michael Chiasson and John Dartt appeared on stage together in *The Fly Fisher's Companion* (Michael Melski) a few years ago and then again last year in *Heroes* (Tom Stoppard, translated from Gerald Sibleyras).

Charles Cameron, a frequent TNL audience member.



Left: Craig Haley, Stephanie Payne, Keelan Purchase and Una Hill-McMullin in *Neddy Norris Night* (2017)

Right: Una Hill-McMullin in *Newfoundland Vinyl* (2017)



TNL is a registered charity (BN: 126589910RR0001). If you would like to make a donation please contact the TNL office at 709-639-7238 or visit the TNL website at <http://www.theatrenewfoundland.com> and click on "Donate Now".



I love this time of year as we put the finishing touches on our Gros Morne Theatre Festival season. Years of planning and work go into each season and when it ultimately comes together, casting the shows, hiring the artistic personnel and presenting it to you, our audience, that's when the excitement really begins! Seven plays, over 160 performances with more than 35 artists working to bring you the best of comedy, music and theatre. Here is the line up for TNL's GMTF 2018 – see ya at the show!

Ed & Ed – Trapped (Jeff Pitcher) Comedy.

Alone. Depressed. Dejected. Ah, the elements of Newfoundland comedy! It's 1991 and the fishery is closed. The wife's gone. No work. No nudding. Can anyone bring Ed out of his morose depression? The other Ed thinks he can. Caricatures, comedic situations and ridiculous lines but with a dose of good old Newfoundland pathos!

SS Ethie (Shane Ellis-Coates) Dinner Theatre.

Our dinner theatre opened at the inaugural Gros Morne Theatre Season in 1996 and has been playing to full houses ever since. The coastal steamer Ethie is docking once again at the Shallow Bay Motel for another wondrous journey back to December 1919 for her final voyage. Join Captain English, Cassie Brown and First Mate Gullage along with the colourful crew as they recreate the tale of how she came to rest on the rocks of Martins Point.

Newfoundland Vinyl Musical, direction by Allison Crowe

A fun-filled evening of music and madness with the hits of the 1960's, 70's and 80's by Newfoundland's biggest recording stars. They come to life with the hilarious Ed as show host and under the expert direction of Allison Crowe. This year "Vinyl" will feature popular tunes from the likes of Rex Hemeon, Joan Morrissey, The Wurzles, A Frank Willis, Corey And Trina and many more!

Outside Mullingar (John Patrick Shanley) Romantic Comedy.

Anthony and Rosemary are two introverted misfits straddling 40. Anthony has spent his entire life on a cattle farm in rural Ireland. Rosemary lives right next

door, determined to have him, watching the years slip away. Their journey is heartbreaking, funny as hell, and ultimately deeply moving. A compassionate, delightful play about how it's never too late to take a chance on love.

Neddy Norris Traditional Newfoundland Music (direction by Stephanie Payne)

A magical night of traditional Newfoundland music and recitations. Our music is at the very heart of who we are – it's a cultural touchstone, both a shared experience and a national badge of honour. With its narrative power, distinctive sound and strong links to Western Europe, traditional music represents the province's history and culture, and forms a vital link between the past and present. For many it's also a proud and powerful manifestation of the "unique Newfoundland and Labrador character

17 Men (Jeff Pitcher) Docu-drama.

The Cow Head War Memorial lists the names of 17 men who fought in World War I. This heart-rending "docu-drama" puts a face to men whose names are etched in the stone. Where did they come from? Where did they fight? Did they come home? Who are their families today? A personal and revealing portrait of 17 local heroes.

Our Frances (Berni Stapleton) Drama.

An extraordinary play celebrating the life and heroism of Frances Cluett, VAD. Fanny was born and lived in Belleoram, Newfoundland. In 1916, she joined the Volunteer Aid Detachment and was shipped overseas to London, ultimately serving for four years at the 10th General Hospital in Rouen, France. The play is inspired by her many letters to home, detailing the horrors and heartbreak she witnessed, and revealing how her humour and resilience captured the love and loyalty of all she encountered.

We'll also be presenting our Monday Night visiting artist series that will include guests Shirley Montague, Daniel Payne, Stephanie Payne, Allison Crowe, Dave Panting and Greg Simm as well as the play Shakespeare's Will (Vern Thiessen) produced by Bear and Co.

Join for wonderful theatrical summer in Cow Head, Newfoundland in the north end of the Gros Morne National Park on the shores of Shallow Bay!

Jeff Pitcher, TNL Artistic Director



It has been a very busy term at the Sara...H McDonald Youth Theatre, and we'd like to thank all of our audiences that supported us over this busy winter.

The Winter Carnival was a great time for our students in both the acting and the stagecraft streams as they both had events during the celebrations. Our StageCraft Students ran their second escape room project. *Escape: Carnival Caper* took place at the Corner Brook Public Library during the weekend of February 17th and 18th to a sell out crowd. Teams of four entered a room filled with puzzles and clues to help them solve the puzzle: who had been stealing important Corner Brook artifacts leading up to Winter Carnival. Only three groups (one including Leif The Lucky himself) were able to solve the mystery. From our 8 suspects they were able to name local actor and teacher Mark Bradbury as the Carnival Caper. Authorities have dealt with him appropriately and he has promised to never threaten the Corner Brook Winter Carnival again.

On Feb 24th, our youngest students presented our annual dinner theatre for kids by kids. The students performed in Robert Munsch's *Get Me Another One* (adapted for the stage by Adam Brake). We were very pleased with the success of this production. Our kids showed their work to kids their age and, judging by the laughs, everyone had a good time. Once again, the Sara...H McDonald Youth Theatre was generously supported by the best local pizza in Corner Brook, *Louis Gees*.



Cast of Get Me Another One

On 10 March, a mix of current students and alumni will present a staged reading of *The Wonderful Dogfish Racket* by Tom Dawe (adapted for the stage by Sara...H McDonald) as part of the 2018 March Hare, and as a tribute to Sara...H McDonald's work as a writer. Sara...H would be happy to be remembered as a writer in a venue where so many of her inspirations are also recognized. Current students *Jillian Way*, *Mira Buckle*, and *Luke Thibeau* Will join Sara...H's former students *Emma Anderson*, *Kassie Lukeman*, *Keelan Purchase* and *Brady Reid* at the Rotary Arts Centre.

Finally, our end-of-the-year performance of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* takes place on 27 - 29 April. When Romeo and Juliet fall in love they set in motion a chain of events that will result in the death of 5 teenagers, and the end of the bloody rivalry between the Capulets and the Montagues. This production featuring our older students, and some of our parents filling in the adult roles, promises to be R&J like you've never seen it before. Book your tickets through the Corner Brook Arts and Culture Centre.

Adam Brake, TNL Artistic Associate

DISCLAIMER AND EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY:

The statements, comments, views, or opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the respective individuals expressing or making them and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of Theatre Newfoundland Labrador Inc., its Board of Directors or any of its members, employees or volunteers.