

Theatre Orangeville announces 30th season of shows

Written By **Constance Scrafield**

Theatre Orangeville's artistic director, David Nairn, talked about the theatre's 30th-anniversary celebration this year, telling us the theatre is licensed to sell beer, wine and cider for Friday and Saturday performances. This is thanks to the sponsors Adamo Estate Winery, Hockley Valley Brewery Co. and Pommies Cider. The concession can also accept payments by card now.

Said Mr. Nairn, "This speaks to the entire community for Theatre Orangeville's 30 years, with the Museum of Dufferin (MoD), In the Hills magazine and Dufferin Arts Council (DAC) as the virtual communicators to the community.

"It is the support of those who consistently give their patronage all these years that is such a testament to the community," he remarked.

Then there is the miracle, a dream General Manager, Sharyn Ayliffe to ask what if all the children could see the shows for free, for this one year?

And so it is: by virtue of donations specific to the plan, on the part of "generous supporters of Theatre Orangeville," every child who attends the theatre as part of a school program can come for no charge, with \$100 to help with bussing costs.

During Covid, many children lost opportunities to attend live performances.

The ambition, as Mr. Nairn told us, is to bring 3,000 to 4,000 kids to live theatre!

Late last year, Elisabeth DuBois took up the reins of TOYS. Their first performance on the main stage was hugely appreciated by the audience. TOYS is back, increasing in numbers and already seeing performance opportunities.

Theatre Orangeville offers subscriptions for five or three shows per season, plus the add-on at the beginning of September, for focussing people on coming back to the theatre.

He talked about the critical role theatre plays, what a remarkable experience it is to gather together, to share a creative story experience.

"It's in our DNA," he reasoned. "We are hard-wired to be together. Now, we remind people that humans have always come together to listen and tell stories."

Theatre Orangeville's Stage to Screen brings the theatre productions to screens at home for anyone not wishing or able to come in person. People living anywhere can access this system. Productions are seen in real time, with the 270 people sitting in the theatre.

"We need to remind ourselves who brought us here, are the patrons. For the last 30 years, we've been telling stories about Canadians with plays written by Canadians," he said.

This is the moment to offer very brief notes about this 23/24 season.

The View from Here, starring Jamie Williams and Melanie Janzen is first, from Oct. 12 to 29. A married couple, this comedy by Mr. Williams is about a couple wondering about life's differences from their expectations; you can count on the laughs.

Over the holidays from Nov. 30 to Dec. 23, is Theatre Orangeville's first Panto: Cinderella...If the Shoe Fits. Mr. Nairn laughs just to mention it. He and Debbie Collins have written it. Years in Pantomime, Ms. Collins has brought all the hilarity of Pantomime, the

music and audience participation.

He told us, 'We'll do this again next year.'

Feb. 8 to 25 shows Norm Foster's Doris and Ivy in the Home, the ladies spin-off from his hilarious Jonas and Barry in the Home.

By the Light of a Story by Kristen Da Silva runs from Mar. 7 to 24 and is about a young widow grieving her novelist husband's death who has to deal with the 'ghost writer' coming to complete his unfinished book.

Commissioned by Theatre Orangeville, Leslie McCurdy and Cassel Miles have written an original work, The Darktown Strutters' Ball, running April 25 to May 12, a fascinating history of song, dance and storytelling.

And that is what David Nairn is sure it is all about.

To purchase a subscription, go to www.theatreorangeville.ca or call the box office at 519-942-3423, also located at 87 Broadway.