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Theatre Orangeville?s 21st Victorian Gala sets new record

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Theatre Orangeville set a new fundraising record at their 2018 Victorian Christmas Gala held at the Best Western on November 17th. As the theatre's biggest fundraiser, proceeds from the 200 seat sold-out Gala go to support programming at the popular theatre year round.

The formal Gala is known as one of Orangeville's premier events of the season, but the event is always as warm and welcoming as it is elegant. Credit for this goes to the ten person Gala Committee, twenty-two wonderful theatre staff, 180 volunteers, and Theatre Orangeville's ever engaging Artistic Director and Master of Ceremonies for the evening, David Nairn. Their unfettered enthusiasm and dedication towards the iconic theatre, and the community at large, is nothing less than infectious.

?We could not operate without this event,? says David Nairn. ?It is integral to the operation and growth of Theatre Orangeville.? He says the support and efforts of the volunteer driven, Board-led event and the incredible generosity of the attendees is what makes it successful.

?The youth from our programs are the stars of the show,? Mr. Nairn says, ?and when people see what they are supporting they care and they go above and beyond to give their support.?

The Artistic Director says, ?We can look back at our youth over the years, knowing some of them will be, and are being, seen on major stages, and that they had the opportunity to develop their God given talents at Theatre Orangeville. The Gala attendees are responsible for those opportunities. They make them possible.?

Yearly programming at Theatre Orangeville supported by the Gala, includes fully professional main stage performances that focus on the development of new Canadian plays; locally created sets, costumes and props; programming for over 200 children and youth, including after school, musical and drama companies, and a skill-based program for youth with developmental disabilities. Over 5000 elementary school students experience live theatre, and adults with developmental challenges are supported through Theatre Orangeville's partnership with Community Living Dufferin in an effort to ?eliminate barriers? and build an inclusive community.

Over 150 donors supported the Gala event with silent auction gifts, tickets, jewellery, art, services, experiences, and more. With bidding led by David Nairn, the auction was an entertaining and exciting part of the evening. Highlights included, among many, bidding on the infamous, but cherished Leg Lamp from A Christmas Story. The Leg Lamp is bid out each season for a full year of proud display in a local establishment. Other bids included day trips with David Nairn to Stratford, Shaw, and Toronto theatres; metal smithing with actress Mag Ruffman; Toronto Maple Leaf tickets; and two airline tickets on Westjet.

A delicious prime rib dinner was accompanied by entertainment from the Humber Jazz Trio; The T.O.Y.S. Choir under the direction of Dennis Hahn and Amy Kieckeben; Theatre Orangeville's youth cast of The Secret Garden, directed by Pamela Demetriou; pianist Nicholas Mustapha; and vocalists Ella Stewart, Duncan Lang and Darcey Baker.

David Nairn says he is encouraged for the future of Theatre Orangeville by the many new, young faces he saw attending the Gala. Looking forward to the New Year, the Artistic Director says the company is working hard on their ?biggest dream? - producing Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Island Lake Stage in August, 2019. He says the ambitious production will include professional and youth actors, as well as a community choir. There is a great deal of excitement around this new ?first' for the company, as ?the jewel of Theatre Orangeville's 25th anniversary.?