

Theatre Orangeville's 'Twas the Night Gala' starts holiday season

Written By **Constance Scrafield**

Great news: there are still tickets for 'Twas the Night Gala, Theatre Orangeville's most important fundraiser of the year, set for Nov. 25 at the Best Western Plus Orangeville Inn and Suites. This year's date for 'Twas the Night Gala does not conflict with the Santa Claus parade, which offers more people the chance to come.

The evening is always the first part of the upcoming holiday season. We wear our best 'bib and tucker,' stroll the wonders of the Silent Auction, appreciate the jazz trio and nibble on trays of hors d'oeuvres.

When dinner is announced, we make our way to our assigned tables, ready to enjoy the meal, the wine and the entertainment. Along with the last is David Nairn, auctioneer of the Live Auction, which he will work through during the course of the evening.

In anticipation of this grand event, the Citizen sat down for a Zoom with Laura Sheehan Austin and Hazel Mason (committee co-chairs), Amanda Doerrie (TOV marketing strategist) and artistic director David Nairn to hear more about the fun for this season's Gala.

Two matters were first.

'The Theatre Orangeville crew and admin team are outstanding,' David Nairn enthused. 'They put this show together with the stage, sound, lights, all of it, all above and beyond their work at the theatre. At the end of the Gala, tuxedos and dresses are swapped for jeans and t-shirts and they're clearing the venue.'

Next was praise for the people without whom this event could not happen: the volunteers. Many volunteers are coming back from last year and more. Ms. Austin's and Ms. Mason's daughters are both helping this year. There are volunteers from Young Company this year, too, and the comment was, 'Good to see it come full circle.'

Already, donations for the silent auction have been delivered, and many gift certificates for restaurants, theatres and services - one for \$300 worth of interior decorating. A Rickenbacker guitar, John Lennon's favourite guitar brand, is in the auction mix, plus top hockey tickets.

There is still time for items to be donated, an excellent way to draw attention to an individual business' product lines.

The 30th anniversary Theatre Orangeville is celebrating is traditionally marked by pearls. This year, jewellery maker extraordinaire Anne-Marie Warburton will pick pearls she loves to create a fabulous piece of jewellery as a donation to the Gala's fundraising.

Yes, as Mr. Nairn always promises us, 'There will be entertainment.'

The Theatre Orangeville Youth Singers (TOYS) choir is finally back as of late last season! Directed by music director Elisabeth DuBois, they will sing from the staircase in the lobby of the Best Western to begin the 'Twas Gala evening. This season, the choir has expanded from 13 members to more than 20. TOYS is singing from the staircase to begin the evening. This is the first of their six or seven performances scheduled over the holiday time.

Mr. Nairn said humorously, 'It was nice of them to fit us in!'

On the stage in the ballroom where dinner is served, there will be a number of performers, with David Nairn taking turns between to auction off the fabulous Silent Auction items.

Some are trips, usually escorted by Mr. Nairn himself, to Stratford or Niagara-on-the-Lake (Shaw Festival) for lunch and to see a show. These unique theatre trips include going backstage to meet the actors and see how the magic happens. You might meet actors you have also seen in a Theatre Orangeville production.

He reminded us that every dollar raised for the theatre goes to support the many programs Theatre Orangeville runs over the year. Theatre Orangeville is a charity that needs to raise funds in order to continue to "satisfy our hearts. Without your support," he said, "we cannot exist. Step up and say the theatre is important."

He hinted about the entertainment, "There will be a couple of surprises. One very special performer - one I've been trying to get here for a while."

For tickets to "Twas the Night Gala on Nov. 25, call the Box Office at 519-942-3423 or go online at www.theatreorangeville.ca and click "Support us." The Box Office is open at the Opera House, 87 Broadway, Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.