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Theatre Orangeville?s ?Twas the Night Gala to return Nov. 16

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Theatre Orangeville's annual ?Twas the Night Gala will be staged at the luxurious establishment ? Hockley Valley Resort (783522 3rd Line EHS, Mono) on Nov. 16, where this party promises to be all it has been and more.

The banquet, silent and live auctions, will all be held in the hotel's Montclair Ballroom, which seats 300 people very comfortably. To have the silent auction there means patrons can still see the entertainment and have access to all the chances to spend.

During the course of the evening, Theatre Orangeville's artistic director David Nairn will stand for the 25th year as auctioneer, as only he can ? cajoling and teasing bidders to increase offers between competing bidders.

Theatre Orangeville fundraising committee chair Laura Sheehan Austin and committee member Hazel Mason spoke to the Citizen about the excitement growing for this event.

Austin noted this year's ?Twas Gala will be the last one David Nairn is hosting and that needs to be celebrated. As a major support in the theatre's fundraising efforts, she praised a great canvassing committee, with amazing volunteers, collecting silent auction contributions from an unbelievable community. Every year new people join the effort, including the incomparable Joy Bell, who has been with them all this time.

Traditionally: Father Christmas is attending. In the Montclair Ballroom, a pianist on the stage will provide seasonal music and the Theatre Orangeville Youth Singers will sing carols on the stairs.

For this most important fundraising event of the year, Austin is organizing the Silent Auction items, ?a huge amount of work,? she said, comparing it to ?84,000 emails.? She is willing though, for ?the actual night is so much fun, being in a room with a community who are raising funds, joyously living in a community within two degrees of separation.?

Ticket sales are doing well; tables are being reserved.

This year, people were looking for a change in the menu from prime roast beef. The new menu features a vegetarian meal of green salad and stuffed pepper. For meat lovers there is carved beef tenderloin and chicken supreme, with green salad. Dessert all round.

Once again, Anne Marie Warburton, founder and owner of Gallery Gemma at the Alton Mill Arts Centre, is donating a fabulous piece of jewellery.

There are several new Live Auction items, from wine tastings to tickets to the Shaw festival and tickets for the Women's Hockey League; likewise, another professional hockey game of choice. All of which have a one-night accommodation.

Both the Hockley Valley Resort and Adamo Winery have donated combination packages. The Taste of Orangeville offers dinner at Bluebird Restaurant and an overnight stay at the Nest Suites, located above the popular eatery, plus tickets to Theatre Orangeville.

Later, in conversation with David Nairn, he described his last ?Twas as ?bitter-sweet.?

For 25 years, he has been ?Master of the House and head cheerleader,? although he admits that he and his wonderful lady, Leisa Way are looking forward to attending the great event next year as guests.

?The name change to ?Twas kept things fresh,? he explained but, withal, the event is generally acknowledged as the beginning of the festive season. He confirmed that in as many of the Theatre Orangeville galas as he has attended and hosted, there has never been

one he did not enjoy.

Everyone he has attended has left him with admiration for the support, comradely and fellowship of the community.

When people see the talent of the singers and performers at ?Twas, he reminds them it is because of the support of people that helps these young people blossom, making the point that most of the donations came from local artisans and businesses.

?This is a fundraiser,? he was clear. ?The money is important ? all those sales are vital funds and also a darn good night mingling with friends.?

The proof of how good a night it is can be shown in the number of people who keep coming back. For entertainment, there are some ?superstars,? super-exciting and a few surprises, we were promised.

Why attend? Because it's a beautiful night out to get dressed up and support our theatre, something we want to continue.

David Nairn said, ?The success of annual fundraiser is essential or we wouldn't be able to offer the programs that we do.?

For tickets, call the festive folk at the Theatre Orangeville Box Office ? 519-942-3423 or go to www.theatreorangeville.ca.