



The Gateway Grapevine

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(June 2022)

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WE ARE BACK!

Hi to all Gateway Theatre Guild supporters! It's been a long time since you have heard from us ... but we have been busy in the meantime and now WE ARE BACK! There is so much to tell you about, and this newsletter is just the beginning.

In this Newsletter – henceforth to be called **The Gateway Grapevine** – we want to share with you some of what we have planned for the year to come.

Apart from the pandemic, a significant impediment to our activities over the past two years has been the lack of a venue for productions. North Bay desperately needs a new theatre that is not in an institution of any kind! The fabulous theatre at Widdifield sits there empty and forlorn after the school was closed, and, until recently, other schools have not been able to open their theatres to community use due to the pandemic. But now that schools are opening up again for community use, and with a new theatre at Canadore College, we are working hard on securing bookings over the coming year.

The activities outlined below are extensive, and *we are going to need your help in making it all happen*. And there are more initiatives planned besides those mentioned here, including a new Membership Scheme. So stay tuned for more in future editions of **The Gateway Grapevine!**

The Gateway Theatre Guild Board

The GTG Board currently consists of the following dedicated, community-minded people:

Paul Monaghan	President	Assistant Prof. Classical Studies, Nipissing University
Sue Miller	VP Operations	Office administrator, Bayland Property Management
Johanna McPherson	VP Artistic	Secretary, Student Services, West Ferris Secondary

Eretta Richardson	Treasurer	Senior Accountant, Cloud Accounting Services, Grant Thornton LLP
Natalie DeMarco	Secretary	Kinesiologist, Yoga teacher
Dermot Wilson		Executive Director, NRCC
Anna Iati		Meter Measurement Technician, Enbridge
Johanne Brousseau		Councillor, City of North Bay
Justine Gogoua		Director, Unique Theatre

We are all going to be working quite hard over the next year and more, so I want to express my deep appreciation for all the work the board members have done ... and will do!

GTG Shows

***Einstein*, by Gabriel Emmanuel**

Starring Rick Blair and directed by Rob McCubbin, this show was scheduled for May 2020, but had to be postponed after the pandemic hit town. We are very happy to announce that the show will finally hit the stage in September or October this year, most likely at Odyssee. It will be our first live show in 2 years, and we can't wait to see it happen. Stay tuned for details.

The "Mercer Trilogy": GTG's 2022-23 Season – Call for Directors

GTG is thrilled to be planning for our first regular season since 2019-20!

For its 2022-23 Season, GTG is planning a connected series of three full-length plays by renowned Canadian playwright, David French. The plays feature the lives of the Mercer family, originally from

Newfoundland but now living in Toronto, as they navigate life challenges and strong family forces. Each play takes the audience on a journey of love, loss, and forgiveness.

And we need directors for the first two productions. So send in your expressions of interest now!

FALL 2022: *Leaving Home* (1972) features Mary and Jacob Mercer and their teenage sons Bill and Ben. The play explores the many tensions between them.

Cast of 7 (4 Male, 3 Female); set in a Toronto house, in November in the late 1950s.

WINTER 2023: *Of the Fields, Lately* (1973) features Mary and Jacob, their son Ben, and Wiff Roach (an old friend of Jacob). Ben returns home two years later and learns his father has suffered a series of heart attacks.

Cast of 4 (3 M, 1 F); Set in the same Toronto house 2 years later in January 1961.

SPRING 2023: *Salt-Water Moon* (1984) takes us back to the romance of the young Mary and Jacob, both aged 17.

Cast of 2 (1M, 1F); set outside a house in Newfoundland in 1926.

Venues and dates: we are working with different options for venues and dates, and will be able to announce the details soon.

***Salt-Water Moon* will be directed by Johanna McPherson. If you are interested in directing one of the first two shows, please contact GTG VP Artistic, Johanna McPherson on vpgtgartistic@gmail.com and/or President, Paul Monaghan on presidentgtg@gmail.com. We will then send you an "Application to Direct for GTG" for you to complete.**

We are also starting to build future seasons, so if you have a production stirring in your imagination and would like to propose that it be included in the 2023-24 season or beyond, please contact Johanna McPherson on vpgtgartistic@gmail.com and/or Paul Monaghan at presidentgtg@gmail.com.

New and Local: Performance Works Cultivator

Gateway Theatre Guild is initiating a new focus in 2022-23 on the local creation of new works for performance.

This new focus will involve readings or “showings” of new works-in-progress by local writers/creators, and potentially full productions of some of the new works. Starting in 2023, workshops designed to assist and inspire the local creation of new works will also be offered.

“New works for performance” can include both the writing of standard “dramatic plays” as well as the creation of what might loosely be called “performance works” (non-traditional “blue-prints” or architecture for performance which may or may not be text-based in the standard way).

Selected locally created new “dramatic plays” will receive at least one “private reading” designed for the author to hear their new work read aloud by actors. If authors would like to receive feedback from both the actors and experienced members of GTG’s Artistic Working Group, friendly and constructive feedback will be provided.

A second, “public” reading may be organized with a limited number of guests invited to provide a wider, “audience” perspective, should the author so desire.

In the case of “performance works,” where a reading may not be the most suitable format to test out the new work, a “showing” of some kind with the participation of a small number of performers and invited guests to witness the new work and provide a sounding board for further development will be facilitated.

The artistic coherence of all new “dramatic plays” and “performance works” will be nurtured through workshops, readings/showings, and – in some cases – production.

To express your interest in this initiative, and/or to offer your services as readers, please contact Johanna McPherson (VP Artistic) on vpgtgartistic@gmail.com and/or Paul Monaghan (President) on presidentgtg@gmail.com.

Play Readings with/for Seniors

North Bay has an aging population. And North Bay seniors – quite a few of whom have been involved in GTG productions in the past – have become more isolated during the pandemic.

With this in mind, GTG is planning a series of casual play readings with diverse cohorts of seniors (both long-time residents and new arrivals) with the aim of reducing the sense of isolation experienced by many seniors in their daily lives, promoting intellectual stimulation, social engagement, interaction and general well-being. Gathering to read a play together and then discussing it afterwards, with refreshments, is an activity that amply serves these aims. Entering into the lives of the dramatic characters, even in a reading, and communicating to other characters within the dramatic situations and conflicts of each play generates observable pleasure amongst participants and allows them to experience vicariously situations that might be very different to their own daily lives. In addition, the intellectual and social stimulation generated by such vicarious encounters promotes a sense of vitality in participants.

The aim of “Play Readings with Seniors,” then, is to provide a point of re-engagement in a friendly, casual environment focused on reading a play. The readings are not designed for audiences; it is possible, however, that in some venues there may be others who join the reading group just to listen. The readings may take in place in three different kinds of venues (a) Retirement residences and assisted

living options in North Bay and the region; (b) Venues associated with specific seniors' groups or clubs; and (c) Accessible public venues that seniors feel comfortable about going to and are actually able to get to (e.g. the public library, community centres). *Stay tuned for more details as the project evolves.*

To express your interest in this initiative, please contact Paul Monaghan on presidentgtg@gmail.com.

Scandal Nights

At GTG's 70th Birthday celebration in 2019, a number of older GTG members told stories about productions they had been involved in a long time ago ... and what fabulous stories they were! The Scandal Nights will be an opportunity to hear more of these stories on a regular basis. They will be a way of celebrating all those who have been involved in GTG in the past, without whom we would not be here today. We will record the evenings, and the recordings will then become part of an 'oral history' component of our Archives which may also be featured in an Exhibition of GTG's Archives at the North Bay Museum in 2023.

Details of venue, dates and times will be revealed soon.

To express your interest in this initiative, and/or to help identify and contact "Story-tellers," please contact Joanne Bernier on joannebernier41@gmail.com.

QUONTA 2023

GTG will host the QUONTA festival in 2023. The timing of the festival is under discussion but could involve a shift from the usual March to late May. Stay tuned for more details.

The Archives Project

The GTG Archives consist of 7 large display folders filled with material dating right back to our foundation in 1948. We also recently acquired 6 X A4 envelopes (courtesy of Naomi Hehn at the Museum) stuffed full of relevant Nugget newspaper clippings. These folders and envelopes are absolutely priceless, and a good deal of work has been done on them by many, including more recently by Jeremy Cormier.

But there are gaps in the records, and we need to fill in those gaps. We are calling on all participants in GTG productions and other activities past and present to help us make the Archives complete!

We are planning an **exhibition of the Archives at the North Bay Museum** early in 2023 as part of a year-long celebration of our 75th Birthday (see below), with help from Pat Moulson and Naomi Hehn. We are also hoping to attract funding to employ an intern who could work full-time on this project for a year.

In addition, we plan to fully digitize all the material with a view to both preservation and developing an ongoing digital exhibition housed on the GTG website.

To express your interest in this initiative, especially if you have material to add to the Archives, please contact Paul Monaghan on presidentgtg@gmail.com.

GTG's 75th Birthday in 2023

Gateway Theatre Guild was founded in 1948 and is therefore one of the oldest extant community theatre companies in Ontario. In 2023 we will celebrate our 75th birthday, and we intend to do it in style! The whole year will be an ongoing celebration, but there will also be specific events – such as the Exhibition at the North Bay Museum – to celebrate the company and its history. A feature of the celebrations will be a Big Bash on a date to be announced.

To express your interest in being part of the Planning Committee for the Big Bash, please contact Paul Monaghan on presidentgtg@gmail.com.

The GTG Website & Social Media

With the assistance of the wonderful Justine Mullah, the GTG website is currently being redesigned with the aim of relaunching it at the start of 2023 in time for our 75th birthday. The new website will be more dynamic and contemporary; it will also be capable of housing a permanent digital archive of GTG's history.

Rock St and The Costume Room

Our storage room at Kinette Playground on Rock St, is now under the expert care of **Dave Carter**, who has been busy sorting, tossing, and rearranging what's in there to make it a more user-friendly facility. Our enormous thanks go to Dave for his work!

The GTG "Costume Room" is under the equally expert care of **Kim McNaughton (Carpentier)**, who won the QUONTA Award for Best Costume Design in 2020 for her creations for *The Comedy of Errors*. Earlier this year we received a donation of around 60 boxes of costumes from Theatre Cambrian in Sudbury, who sadly wound up and were kind enough to donate their entire wardrobe to us. Kim also recently received a donation – and purchased some other valuable items – from Unforgettable, the wedding store in North Bay that also wound up. Thank you to both Theatre Cambrian and Unforgettable! Kim has been tireless in sorting, cleaning, and cataloguing all the costumes we have.

There are still a lot of boxes to sort through and a lot of delicate hand-washing to do. We need your help! If you are interested in helping, please contact Kim on kimpossiblec@hotmail.ca.

What's more, the Costume Room needs to find a new home so we can maximize its potential, and because it currently competes for space with the needs of set-building and storage. We are looking for an accessible (and cheap!) space where we can house the Costume Room.

If you have any ideas for a new location for The Costume Room, please contact Paul Monaghan on presidentgtg@gmail.com

The Committee Structure

As you can see from this edition of *The Gateway Grapevine*, there is a lot going on now ... and a lot more about to happen at Gateway Theatre Guild! To make all this happen – and more – we need to renovate GTG's Committees. Being on a Committee does not mean you have the responsibilities and time commitment of being a Board member, but rather that you are able and willing to give your time and energy to specific areas of the company's activities. There will be Call for Participation sent out soon.

Regular Segments of the Gateway Grapevine

This edition of the GTG newsletter is already quite long, so we did not want to add anything more to it. But in future editions we plan a series of regular segments, including: GTG News and Projects; GTG Member Feature; From the Archives; Talking Theatre; Celebrating New Arrivals to North Bay; City of North Bay News; News from Community Partners; What's On in North Bay.

Watch out for the next edition of
The Gateway Grapevine!