

But is Dracula really dead?

Theatre Arts Guild brings comedy to the stage

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The 1897 novel by Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, introduced the blood-nourished stalker of the same name wreaking havoc wherever he went. By the end of the book, *Dracula's* hunters, Abraham Van Helsing and a small team, were said to have killed the culprit.

But did they?

The Theatre Arts Guild is staging a play to answer the burning question in a particularly comedic and complicated way, according to longtime volunteer and a director with Theatre Arts Guild, Bill VanGorder.

"*Dracula: The Bloody Truth* is a comedy in spite of the title. It tells the story of Bram Stoker — that he had it all wrong about *Dracula*," VanGorder explained. "And pro-

fessor Van Helsing has come (to the theatre) to tell the audience exactly what happened."

The play has 40 parts, noted VanGorder, 40 characters, but only four really talented actors to play them all. Nova Scotian actors Cathy Cameron, Eileen Carey, Heidi Hodgkinson and Jolene Pattison will take the stage at The Pond Playhouse again and again and again to tell the story.

"They're walking off in one costume and less than 15 seconds later they are back in another costume as another character," explained VanGorder. "From a production point of view, behind the scenes, it gets very complicated."

It's a busy play with something for everyone.

"This is the kind of theatre everybody likes. The props and sets are all characters too and do they do things — they



Bill VanGorder, longtime volunteer and a director with Theatre Arts Guild, is eager for *Dracula: The Bloody Truth* to come to life at The Pond Playhouse. **CONTRIBUTED**

perform. The lighting and the sound play a major role (in the play) as well as the stage itself. So there is a lot of action and

activity. It is a really fun play."

THE DELAY

Dracula: The Bloody Truth was originally supposed to open in March 2020, but the COVID edict, said VanGorder, closed the theatre and put the play on hold. And there it sat until now.

"Almost everybody involved with the play is back again and that is amazing in itself," he said.

The theatre will have some precautions in place regarding COVID. VanGorder said they are opening the theatre "with safety in mind. We think people are ready for theatre. They want to come back (but) they want to take care," he said. "The audience will be masked and we will have three shows of distanced seating and remove the front row."

VanGorder said the choice

of play to come back is perfect.

"No matter what kind of things you look for when you go to the theatre," assured VanGorder, "you'll find them in this show."

DETAILS

Dracula: The Bloody Truth was written by John Nicholson with Le Navet Bete in 2017. The TAG production is directed by Nick Jupp, produced by Geraldine McDonald and stage managed by Esther VanGorder.

For an afternoon or evening out to the theatre, tickets are \$18 per person for non-members; members, seniors and students, \$15 per ticket.

The play runs from May 12 to 28 at The Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Rd., off Purcells Cove Road in HRM.

Visit TAGTheatre.com for more.