

CONTACT

The Official Newsletter of the Theatre Arts Guild

Canada's Oldest Continually Operating Community Theatre



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The Pond Playhouse
6 Parkhill Rd. Halifax NS
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NEXT AT TAG

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof March 31st to April 23rd

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was quoted to be one of Tennessee Williams's personal favourites and his best-known works. Pulitzer Prize winner for a Drama in 1955 and adapted into an Academy Award nominating film in 1958. Due to the Hays Code, (a production code that spelled out what was acceptable and what was unacceptable content for motion pictures produced for a public audience in the United States) Brick's portrayal of sexual desire was limited and it diminished the original play's critique of homophobia and sexism. Williams so disliked the toned-down film adaptation of his play that he told people in the queue, "This movie will set the industry back 50 years. Go home!"

the play but the strongest is the latter.

LIES- "A false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive; an intentional untruth; a falsehood." A classic definition of an act that generally carries a negative connotation, to deceive and hurt but some lies are used positively to protect and console. The most difficult lie to live with is to oneself. Can we live within our own skin if we are denying who we really are? Throughout *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* we witness the deterioration of a man because of his inability to face his own truths about himself.

"Mendacity is a system that we live in. Liquor is one way out an' death's the other."

Set on the plantation home in the "Mississippi Delta" of Big Daddy Pollitt, a wealthy cotton tycoon, the play examines the complexities of family life, the torment of confronting one's own mortality and the bitterness that comes with being untruthful. There are several themes threading through

- Angela Butler, Director

Tickets on Sale NOW!

TAG Ticket Prices

\$15 Members/Seniors/Students
\$18 Non-Members

Note: TAG prices include all Ticket Atlantic service fees

Buy Your Tickets

- At the 23 participating Atlantic Superstore outlets
- By Phone (902) 451 1221
- At the door (subject to availability)
- Online at www.ticketatlantic.com
- Ticket Atlantic Box Office

March/April 2016 Contact

Mailing Address: Theatre Arts Guild 287 Lacewood Dr. Unit 103 Suite 412 Halifax NS B3M 3Y7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been a busy few months at TAG. The Pantomime, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, was yet another fun and successful show which delivered on song, dance and laughter. It was great to welcome some new talent to our stage and of course welcome back many of our regular Panto performers. The 85th Anniversary event showcased some of the strong female characters from

multiple well-known plays and musicals. I would like to extend my personal thanks to all those who worked hard to honour this milestone.

There are two more plays left in this season, both of which are shaping up to be fantastic! The cast and crew of the iconic play, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, have been rehearsing for weeks and are on the home stretch to Opening

Night, which is March 31st. The cast of the season finale, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, has already begun music rehearsals.

I am confident both of these shows will sell out quickly, so mark your calendars and tell your friends. Join us first for some drama and then for some mystery.

- Rayna Smith-Camp, President

EVERYONE'S FAMOUS at TAG

With a very busy schedule, we hardly ever have time/space available for other groups to rent our building. However, last summer we were able to have the folk from the Everyone's Famous comedy web series do some filming on two occasions. The web series is the brainchild of Andrew Bush (Picnicface, the feature film Rollertown), Walter Forsyth and Angus Swantee. Check the website <http://everyonesfamous.ca> for details on the seven episodes of season one, plus other comedy specials. Nicole Steeves is the ballerina in the picture and Rhys Bevan-John works the sock puppet.

NEW PARKING RULES AT TAG

Limited parking is available at the Pond Playhouse for our TAG audience. In addition, cars may park (carefully) along the SOUTH side of Parkhill Road (the opposite side of the street from the Pond Playhouse). Cars are not allowed to park on the north side (close to the Pond Playhouse) of the street. Parking is also available on Forward Ave (off Williams Lake) and there is a parking lot at the Frog Pond Trail off Purcell's Cove Rd. Thank you for observing the parking rules.

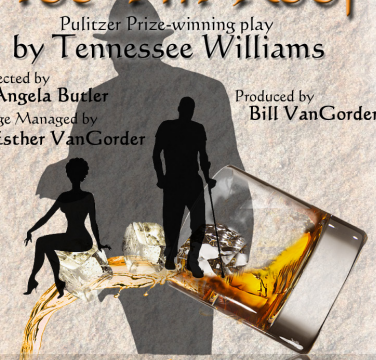
Theatre Arts Guild presents

Cat On A Hot Tin Roof

Pulitzer Prize-winning play
by Tennessee Williams

Directed by
Angela Butler
Stage Managed by
Esther VanGorder

Produced by
Bill VanGorder



March 31 - April 23, 2016
With 2 matinees

Tickets: 902.451.1221
www.ticketatlantic.com

Pond Playhouse
6 Parkhill Rd.
Halifax, NS.

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THEATRE ARTS GUILD
1931-2016
www.tagstheatre.com

IN SEARCH OF THE SELF

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary - the 61st in a continuing series

I seem to be getting quite an obsession with the passage of time these days, having just finished the 85th Anniversary Show and basing that on female characters in plays seen on the TAG stage since 1931. As part of this presentation, I made the point that, although what we now know as drama had its origins in the 6th century B.C. in Ancient Greece, it was not until the middle of the 17th century A.D. that women could make their living on the stage. Various factors – social, religious, financial – prevented the appearance of female actors and consequently, the discussion and presentation of issues pertaining to women. In our own day, fortunately, this discussion of current issues and their appearance as pieces of theatre doesn't take quite so long!

Since one of the major themes of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is homosexuality, centred on the character of Brick, husband of Maggie (the 'Cat' of the title), I looked back at our past productions to see what we had presented which dealt, directly or indirectly, with this subject. I found there was a correlation between what we had featured and what in the world at large was known or acknowledged about romantic relationships between those of the same sex. (An important point to note here – I'm not including in this article works by authors known (or later discovered) to be gay – Oscar Wilde, for example, or Noel Coward, when these works deal with conventional situations and relationships).

Tennessee Williams play was first performed in 1955 and the emphasis on Brick's feelings for his dead friend and his angst at defining these feelings (amongst other passages) led to demands

for the revision of the piece on several occasions. Some ten years later saw the success in Britain of the plays of Joe Orton, unashamedly homosexual and finding favour because of their comedic treatment of many of the sacred cows of society. It took rather longer for the plays to cross the Atlantic, but the Guild presented *What the Butler Saw* in 1987, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* in 1988 and *Loot* in 1993.

In 1994, the work of the American playwright Terrence McNally was brought to our attention and we considered scheduling *Lips Together, Teeth Apart*. The stage requirements were beyond us however, since the setting is two cottages on a beach, and we abandoned the idea. I read the play again recently, and it marks another stage in this unfolding revelation of homosexuality. There is no hesitation in talking about the subject, but the discussion is a practical one. Sally Truman has inherited one of the cottages from her brother, who has died of AIDS. What does she do with items which he has used? Is it safe to use the swimming pool in front of the cottage? An acknowledgement of the existence of a condition associated with same-sex relationships, but lack of understanding at dealing with the same. Our failure to present this piece was mitigated when in the summer of 2014 we had great fun with *The Full Monty*, for which Mr. McNally wrote the lyrics and in which a gay couple is sympathetically portrayed.

In an article such as this, I cannot close without mentioning the seminal modern piece about homosexuality – *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner, written in 1993. From the tangential treatment of Tennessee Williams' play to Kushner's six-hour marathon, sub-titled *A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*, we've come a long, long way. I recently saw a clip of a scene from the 50th Anniversary of Britain's National Theatre, starring Dominic Cooper and Andrew Scott. It was pure emotion - and stunning. - Judy Reade

Community Notes

Dartmouth Players presents:

And Then There Were None
Visit www.dartmouthplayers.ns.ca or call 465-PLAY for more info

Bedford Players presents:

Anybody for Murder
Visit www.bedfordplayers.ns.ca or call 832-3300 for more info

Coming Soon

The Mystery of Edwin Drood

June 2nd to 25th

The last and unfinished novel by Charles Dickens is transformed into a musical comedy. A large cast of suspects sing their way through the question of "whodunit". The fascination for both cast and audience lies in the play's unusual twist, which obligates the audience to choose the ending.