

CONTACT

Canada's oldest continually operating community theatre. 76 years and growing.

June, 2007

The Official Newsletter of



www.tagtheatre.com
info@tagtheatre.com

The Theatre Arts Guild
The Pond Playhouse 6 Parkhill Rd. Halifax, NS

Next at TAG

Night School and The Lover

Two One-Act Plays by Harold Pinter

"Night School" and "The Lover" are two thought-provoking plays by Harold Pinter. "Night School," which will be presented first, is directed by Rebecca Humphreys, and "The Lover" is directed by Eric Rountree. Christine Comeau is producer for the show.

The production opens Thursday, June 21st and runs Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at 8:00 P.M. until July 7th. There will be one Sunday matinée, on July 1st at 2:00 P.M.

Pinter's plays are hard to sum up in a brief synopsis. Nothing is ever what it seems in the worlds Pinter creates. For example, in "Night School," a young man—who is continually getting himself thrown in prison—returns home to his two aunts in the hope of reclaiming some normalcy in life. He finds instead, to his chagrin, that his aunts have let out his room to a boarder, a young schoolteacher who is also taking night classes. But is this young woman really who and what she claims to be? The young man endeavours to find out.

In "The Lover," meanwhile, we have a comfortably-married couple who are so comfortable, in fact, that they have no problem talking about their extra-marital affairs with each other. But as the play unfolds, we see that even this tawdry but run-of-the-mill scenario is not at all what it appears to be.

This pair of Pinter plays promises to prompt plenty of pondering from patrons. But rest assured that in amongst all the layers of meaning lie plenty of laughs. Pinter is a master of dialogue, and his characters come to life even on the page, so just imagine what a cast of TAG actors can bring to the stage.

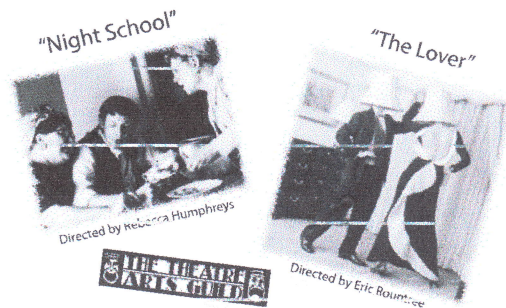
And what a cast we have! "Night School" stars Angela Butler, Cheryl Theriault, Ryan Horne, Jennifer Robbins, Rob McIntyre, Jonathan MacDonald, Heather Gaskill, and Phil Reid. "The Lover" stars Vanessa Walton-Bone, Phil Reid, and Jonathan MacDonald. A stellar troupe! We can't wait to bring this show to you.

TAG Parking Tips: Parking for our TAG audience is available in our parking lot as well as in the lot behind the Sikh Temple, two driveways past the theatre. As well, 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 both sides of Parkhill, so the north side (close to the Pond Playhouse) does not have parking. If cars park on both side of the street, it provides significant obstruction to through-traffic and may block emergency vehicles altogether. Thank you for observing the parking rules.

The Theatre Arts Guild Proudly Presents...

Two One-Act Plays

by Harold Pinter



Directed by Rebecca Humphreys

Directed by Eric Rountree

Produced by Christine Comeau

June 21st to July 7th, 2007

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Evenings at 8:00 P.M.
Sunday Matinée July 1st at 2:00 P.M.

For Reservations, call 477-2663

or visit www.tagtheatre.com

Presented at The Pond Playhouse
6 Parkhill Road
(off Purcell's Cove Road, just past the Frog Pond)

Produced through kind permission of Dramatica Play Services, Inc.

Backstage we have Jolene Pattison as stage manager and Rayna Smith-Camp as her apprentice, Mark Monk and John Munro as assistant stage managers, Ian Vanderberg designing the set, and Judy Reade taking on costumes. With lighting designed by Austin Reade and sound by Carl Anderson, this promises to be a show that TAG audiences will never forget

TAG Box Office 477-2663

Mailing Address:

287 Lacewood Drive Unit 103, Suite 412
Halifax, NS B3M 3Y7

Judy Reade

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary

DEGREES OF LAUGHTER

(The nineteenth in a continuing

The juxtaposition of "Office Hours" by Norm Foster and "The Lover/Night School" by Harold Pinter as the fourth and final offerings of the 2006/2007 season provides an opportunity to look at two somewhat different approaches to the task of making an audience laugh. Norm Foster takes quite a direct approach and presents us with characters and situations taken from reality. He then introduces certain 'crisis points' and entertains us while we watch the characters extricate themselves - successfully or unsuccessfully! (If you saw TAG's production of Foster's "Melville Boys" in the Studio space at Neptune in June of 2005, the crisis point is the admission by the older brother of his terminal illness; Foster then explores how this news affects the relationships between all four characters).

Pinter, though his approach appears to be direct and more 'low-key,' is going to insert in his seemingly normal situations some element which will disturb the balance between the characters. We then observe how the characters deal with the sometimes bizarre results of this imbalance. "The Caretaker," presented at TAG in 1985, is a good example of this stratagem - a play in which two young men must deal with an elderly tramp they find living in the attic of their house. In "Night School," the upset to the universe is the decision by two elderly aunts to rent the room of their nephew, since this young man seems to spend most of his time in prison. I'm afraid that I can't divulge what the situation is in "The Lover" - it would give too much away. Let's just say you're

in for a surprise! And, of course, how the characters resolve their various dilemmas will cause you to laugh. Let's not forget either that Pinter's plays date from the 1960s, when British drama was rife with experimentation of all kinds. I certainly hope that you enjoy these two one-act pieces, which present normality and then tip it 'off-base.'

Though "Office Hours" and the Pinter pieces are comedic, they are not farce. You might say that farce takes comedy as its foundation, and then racks up the activity quotient! There's little sophistication in farce - the doors bang, the phone rings, the scantily-clad secretary hides in the closet! Characters mix up names and faces; the plot is improbable, the gestures exaggerated and the pace frantic. In other words, the laughter is produced primarily through what the audience sees, as opposed to what the audience hears. "Noises Off," produced at the Atlantic Theatre Festival last summer, is the archetypal farce, particularly its Act II, in which there is no spoken text, just a chain of hilarious actions and interactions between the cast members.

Just one more type of comedy to point out to you - the 'comedy of manners,' since an example was performed recently by the theatre students at Dalhousie University. The comedy of manners produces its laughter by focussing on human behaviour and exposing the absurdity of individuals (and society) as they strive to conform to perceived norms or goals. In March the Dal students presented "The Bourgeois Gentleman," by Moliere (written in 1670), in which the author mercilessly ridicules a member of the middle class whose overriding ambition is to become accepted as a member of the aristocracy.

Judy Reade

Props/Costumes Mistress

GET YOUR NEWSLETTER IN COLOUR! Members, you can receive your newsletter in COLOUR, electronically -- and it will save TAG the printing and postage costs. Just send the request along with your email address to: info@tagtheatre.com

Deb Post

The President's Message

Fond greetings to all of our TAG members and supporters. Today, May 13, warm weather has replaced the long, grey, chilling weeks of 'spring'. Despite having forgotten all about Nova Scotia for months, the sun shines without a trace of guilt. What an actress she is! Just now a bright male American Goldfinch landed in the magnolia tree in my front garden, singing loudly. He was joined by his mate and they spent a minute enjoying the blossoms that burst late and in a hurry. These finches made it impossible to hold a grudge about bad weather.

Our theatre has been full of activity these past weeks. I'll list some notable things, and you may read about them in more detail in other articles.

I mentioned Office Hours, our second last production of the season. This Norm Foster comedy, directed by Bill VanGorder and produced by Ann Miller, drew sell-out crowds and was a justified hit. The cast radiated teamwork, energy and verve and the behind the scenes production had that wonderful glow that comes when all the little details are well-looked after.

The team of core 'Building committee' volunteers continues to spend hundreds of hours a week planning, getting quotes, costing out material and labour and actually doing those tasks for which they have the expertise and aptitude. If we had to pay for all of the time and work these people have gladly donated to the theatre - just during the long life span of the 'lobby extension idea', we would doubtless be in debt to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. As it stands, we have achieved a remarkable amount of work (framing, insulation, rough wiring, fixture installation) inside the new building and are moving on to the tricky business of retro-fitting the old lobby to the new - a task made more challenging because it has to be done in the very restricted time between plays, and as well, we must have enough

money to finish it once we begin. This is our current challenge, to obtain sufficient funds to complete sufficient work in a strictly limited time so that we can have a functioning lobby for all of our plays. Our goal is to meet our funding requirements in time to complete the work during the summer.

To that end, our fundraising committee has announced that John and Lyn Gratwick (two of our most ardent supporters) have repeated a very generous offer for a limited time. Between now and September, they will personally match any donation of \$50 or more made to the theatre, with a maximum donation on their part of \$5000. This means that your donation will double in value and go twice as far to help us finish the lobby extension.

As well, John Gratwick reminds us all to save our Sobey's receipts and bring them to TAG when you come to a play. For every \$1000 of Sobey's receipts, TAG earns a little bit - and each of those little bits is very helpful.

Our Artistic committee is putting the final touches to the proposed season for 07/08. They have been meeting since the fall of last year, reading and discussing plays, dates, directors and all the nuts and bolts of the theatre biz. It's exciting work and we expect a sizzling season of entertainment.

I look forward to welcoming you to our final production of our season, two one-act plays by Harold Pinter: *The Lovers* and *Night School*, directed by Rebecca Humphreys and Eric Rountree. Meanwhile, enjoy every scrap of spring.

Deb Post

President

Contact June 2007

Nick Jupp

Scotland Road at Neptune

For those who did not see Scotland Road, you will get another chance. We have been invited for a short run at The Studio, Neptune Theatre this month. The show schedule at Neptune will be:

June 13 -16 at 8:00 pm

June 17 at 2:00 pm

Tickets can be purchased at the Neptune Box Office. For more details e-mail Nick at njupp@dymaxion.

Joe O'Brien

The Gratwicks – The Gift That Keeps on Giving

Lyn and John Gratwick, who have performed on the Theatre Arts Guild stage on many an occasion and who have helped backstage on production, set building, costuming or any other need that has arisen, have come forward once again with a commitment to match contributions to TAG's capital building campaign.

Lyn and John will match every building fund contribution, which is over \$50.00, to a maximum of \$5,000. This potential contribution of \$10,000 would move us a long way to raising the \$45,000 needed to meet our campaign goal of \$208,000, the estimated final cost of our two storey lobby and rehearsal hall extension.

Members and other supporters of TAG have been exceedingly generous in contributing \$163,000 to date. Among the "Friends of TAG" whose names will be permanently displayed in our new Lobby, we have 2 Benefactors (over \$10,000), 6 Patrons (over \$2000) and 28 Supporters (over \$500). We hope to see all these names on our new Lobby Wall in September.

On behalf of everyone who has enjoyed TAG's plays, our thanks to Lyn and John, whose generosity of spirit and of purse, have done so much for the Theatre Arts Guild.

Joe O'Brien

Chair

TAG Capital Campaign



TAG 2007-2008 Season

Belles by Mark Dunn Directed by Angela Butler

This heartwarming play consists of 45 different phone calls between six very distinct sisters who live all over the country, but still find the time to "keep in touch". When the eldest daughter calls to tell her sisters about their mother's latest health scare, we get a glimpse into each of their individual lives, their struggles, and how family ties bind them together in the end.

Dates: Sept 27th to Oct 13th

Jack and the Beans Talk: A Genetically Modified Pantomime by Brenda Tyedmers and Cheryl Theriault.

Directed by Cheryl Theriault

Times are desperate and Jack's mother has ordered him off to market to sell the family cow. But when Jack awakens to find that Lotty (the cow) has run off to seek fame and fortune he follows and discovers the secret behind the mysterious drought, a solid reason to not expect your apples to be TOO shiny and...oh yes...talking beans!?!

Dates: Dec 6th to Dec 22nd

A Night in the Theatre by Lawrence Casler

Directed by Nick Jupp

Margaret and Stanley Locker and their friends, Donna and Walter Pace, are at the theatre for their weekly dose of culture. This week's ordeal is Hamlet. As the evening progresses, secrets emerge and friendships unravel amid the audience's laughter. You may even recognize these rude playgoers as the obnoxious people who sometimes sit behind you.

Dates: Feb 21st to March 8th

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime by Constance Cox, based on a short Oscar Wilde story.

Directed by Iris Patterson

The rather gullible and incompetent Lord Arthur Savile finds out from a palm reader on the eve of his marriage that he is destined to commit a murder. He decides to commit the murder before getting married in order to save his fiancée from embarrassment. With the help of a loony anarchist and his sensible butler, Lord Arthur embarks on what turns out to be a madcap comedic adventure.

Dates: Apr 24th to May 10th

A Perfect Crime written by Warren Manzi

Directed by Frank MacLean

A traditional mystery thriller with a sexy, probably guilty psychiatrist wife accused of bumping off her wealthy, sickly husband. A detective, assigned to the case, seeks to discover who murdered the husband, if he was murdered at all, while fending off the wife's advances.

Dates: June 26th to July 17th

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS

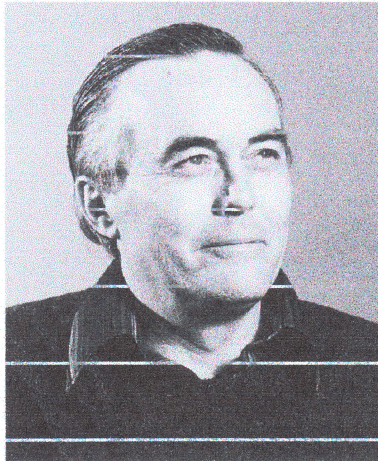
Jeanne Thomas is a TAG volunteer helping with reservations and mail outs. She has volunteered for several years with The Nature Trust of Nova Scotia, IWK, Lighthouse Preservation Society, the VON, and Bloomfield Centre. Jeanne is also a committee member of the Contemporary Art Society, painting in oils. She has been an avid sailor for several years and has lived in the Jollymore, "Home of TAG" for the past 12 years. Jeanne excited to be part of this wonderful community spirit.

Dave Chambers – In Memoriam

We are deeply saddened by the passing of one of our long-time and active members, David Chambers. After a short stay in Dartmouth General Hospital, David went to the home of his uncle where, on Sunday the 6th of May, he took a turn for the worse and did not survive. He was 55 years of age. His passing was much more sudden than his family or any of us had expected. The family had brought him home from the hospital on Wednesday and had expected Dave to be with them for many months. He had asked that as soon as possible that he should be able to do three things: strum his guitar, have a game with his poker buddies and come to a performance of Office Hours at TAG. Dave's friends in theatre meant a tremendous amount to him.

David had been rehearsing as a cast member of TAG's most recent production, Office Hours when he took ill. He was to have played the role of Mark Young. Dave's previous performance was as Mellersh Wilton in TAG's spring 2006 production of Enchanted April. He was a valued member of TAG's Artistic Committee, a lighting designer for a number of productions as well a regular volunteer for work parties and light hangs.

Dave first became active with the Theatre Arts Guild in the early 1980s where he soon became TAG's Technical Director.



David Chambers

David Chambers was wry and complex, canny and kind. He loved life and loved to hear our laughter. We shall certainly miss both his company and his contributions to our Theatre Arts Guild.

By Bill VanGorder with contributions from Judy Reade and Deb Post.

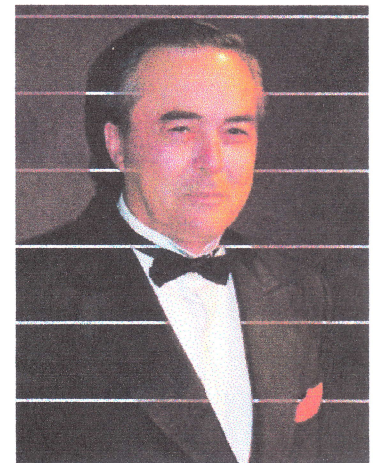
Austin Reade became his Assistant Technical Director, and together they worked on The Caretaker, presented at the Pond in

February/March of 1985. The Caretaker was repeated in June at Neptune, as part of the Nova Scotia Drama Festival, and won the award for best technical production. At one of the 'Neophyte Nights' of the 80s, Dave made his directing debut with The Komagata Maru Incident, by Sharon Pollock. In the summer of 1985, Dave made a wonderful villain in the melodrama Dirty Work at the Crossroads, which was the ideal vehicle for

both his acting and singing talents.

Having given up the Technical Director position, Dave moved to working with

Dartmouth Players and other groups. However, he still maintained contact with TAG by assisting on lighting hangs and focus sessions. His re-introduction to TAG was in Angel Street (2003), in the part of the Inspector.



(Left) The cast and crew of Office Hours, TAG's spring 2007 production.

YOU CAN RECEIVE THE TAG EMAIL UPDATES

You can receive regular updates on Theatre Art Guild activities by subscribing to our email updates. These messages are sent out to our members and friends to keep you up to date on auditions, plays, special events and other community theatre news. To add your address to the TAG Email Updates list, send a request to the email update editor, Bill VanGorder at bill.vangorder@ns.sympatico.ca or go to our website, www.tagtheatre.com and sign up

THE THEATRE ARTS GUILD

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Submissions for **CONTACT** can be emailed to **TERRY COOLEN** at trcool@ns.sympatico.ca

Contact June 2007