

NEWS



ST. LUKE'S PLAYERS

COMMUNITY THEATRE SINCE 1948

SPRING 2020

2019-20 EXECUTIVE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



2020. It's a year we are all going to remember for a long, long time. I believe it is the first time we have ever had to close a show. Janine Longy and Geli Bartlet with their cast and crew had worked so hard to put on a very successful production. Everyone I spoke with loved the show. Congratulations to all who worked on *I Never Sang for My Father*.

The executive was torn about the decision to close early, but the decision was taken from us when the Anglican Diocese shut down all church buildings.

As the pandemic progresses we are following all of the information from the provincial health experts and Dr. Bonnie Henry. When we will be able to host an audience again is up in the air and totally dependent on the progress of the COVID-19 virus. Because we won't know until at least September, we have taken the sad step of cancelling our first two shows of our 2020/2021 season. That means we will not be presenting *The Unexpected Guest* (which had already been postponed from our 2019/2020 season), or our annual Panto.

Director Geoff Davidson and his cast and crew were all set to go when the decision to cancel was made. At this time, *The Unexpected Guest* will be included in our next productions. This will be totally dependent on Provincial guidelines at that time. As for cancelling the Panto, it would be unwise to corral that many children and adults together on stage so close to the tail end of a pandemic. Let's hope we can rescue at least two shows next season.

Bronwyn and I were very lucky recently when we asked to meet Rev. Daniel Fournier for a catch-up session. I say lucky because we actually met in person! I have been to so many Zoom meetings that this was a treat. We met in the cemetery practicing social distancing. We just wanted to let Daniel know where SLP was at and see what the church had to say about the closure of the church buildings. He will contact us as soon as he hears anything.

The executive has been thinking of things that we might do to keep St. Luke's Players great name out there during these strange times. If you have any ideas, let us know!

I hope all of you are well and staying safe. It won't be long before we are back together doing what we love! ■

Peace and best wishes to all! ~ Michael King

PLEASE NOTE:

SLP's usual July **Annual General Meeting** has been postponed and the current executive will be continuing in its present form until an AGM can be held later this year. ■

~ submitted by
Dave Hitchcock
Stage Manager
April 23, 2020

The recent practice at St Luke's Players is for the Stage Manager to write an article for the newsletter once a production closes, cast and crew have celebrated with a wind-up party, the set is struck, furniture, costumes and props returned and everything is tidied and left ready for the next production.

I Never Sang for My Father



A Porter (Andrew Sheppard) assists Tom Garrison (Malcolm Everett Harvey) and Gene Garrison (Mur Meadows) in Penn Station

However, due to COVID-19, we made the difficult decision to abruptly close *I Never Sang For My Father* in mid-March, after the first week of the run. So the cast and crew are yet to get together for a party and the set is still sitting on the stage. But I hope that writing this article will help to provide some much-needed closure for this production.

Having said all of that, there are many things that stand out for me about this production:

- An absorbing and well-written script by Robert Anderson. As it said on the front of the program – a provoking drama! Although not the usual type of production presented by St Luke's Players, this heartwarming play set in the mid 1960's is deeply moving, remarkably timely and strikes a universal chord on the subjects of family, ageing and loss.
- What an outstanding, talented, enthusiastic and easy to work with cast and crew! From the early planning over the summer months, auditions in October, through the rehearsals and other preparations in January, February and March, culminating with the curtailed

run in the second week of March, everyone worked incredibly hard, took direction well and provided valuable creative input all along the way. Thank you everyone!

- The play provided set design, décor, lighting and sound challenges, as it takes place in many very different locations, needing to move quickly from one scene to the next. Never used at St Luke's before, it was decided to build two revolves, enabling the next scene to be set up by the stage crew behind the scene in progress and then be revolved by cast members at the appropriate time. Décor wall pieces and minimal furniture and props were used to suggest the different locations. Suitable sound, lighting and costume design helped to depict the needed place, time and look.

- I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Neville Owen who passed away in February. Although struggling with his health issues at the time that the set was being designed, it was his clever suggestion to face the revolve walls with galvanized steel, so that the different magnetized wall décor pieces could be attached wherever we wanted. Thank you Neville!



Gene (Mur Meadows) and his father Tom (Malcolm Everett Harvey) in Tom's living room



Alice (Jo Barnes) and her mother Margaret (Gigi Gallant Mossman) in Margaret and Tom's living room

news was that at least we were able to perform for the Preview and then six regular performances before having to close.

- Like other SLP productions, a DVD was made of one of the performances. So, if you missed seeing "Never Sang" live, maybe, you can borrow a copy from one of the cast members – after all you probably have a spare evening or two at the moment! ■

- Audiences were generally small, but enthusiastic. As the first week of the run was during the early days of COVID-19 (referred to then as the Corona virus), some effort was made to space the audience seating, although this was a far cry from the recommended 2 metre social distancing that we are all used to today.
- The many comments overheard during the intermission, and as the audience left the hall at the end of each performance, were extremely positive. Although the bad news was that relatively few people were able to attend and enjoy this production, the good

Gene and Tom visit the undertaker, Marvin Scott (Steve Eastman)



WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING DURING THIS STRANGE TIME IN OUR LIVES?



Bronwyn Taylor:

I don't like to garden, but I've been doing it. I'm sure the neighbours appreciate that my dandelions won't be going to seed and blowing into their

yards. I like to cook, but doing it for one isn't much fun. I've been trying a host of recipes clipped from magazines and the paper, with mixed results. Exercise? Well, I'm not getting as much as I should, but . . . ■



Beverly's been enjoying her recent retirement and being true to her self-promise to get out there and workout and walk into shape. She's also been trying

out new low carb/gluten-free recipes, spring cleaning and purging. A recently-declared "Happy Hour" starts at 4 pm with serious gaming competitions. ■



Mike Chadwick sporting his home-made facemask?? ■



Approaching Christmas each year, **Helena** and **Dave Hitchcock** can often be found at St Luke's, working on the sets for the upcoming panto.

During the summer months, and particularly so this year due to COVID-19, their railway garden in View Royal becomes their theatre. There they work together setting up various scenarios to accompany the model trains that happily "chuff" around their yard. ■



Actors present "Shakespeare in the Park" to an appreciative audience — suitably socially distanced, of course!

FIFTY WAYS TO BEAT COVID-19

Don't hop on the bus, Gus,
Stay away from the pack, Jack,
Sneeze into your sleeve, Steve,
To keep virus free.

Stop touching your face, Grace,
Stay back to six feet, Pete,
Keep washing your hands, Stan,
And heed CDC.

Don't visit your Gran, Jan,
Wipe down every toy, Roy,
Don't hoard all the food, dude,
Please buy sensibly.

Just use some Purell, Mel,
Keep wipes near at hand, man,
Don't listen to Don, John—
You don't need more TP!

This isn't spring break, Jake,
Stay home if you're sick, Dick,
Just follow the rules, fools,
And stay virus free!

(If you haven't figured it out yet, this can be sung to Simon and Garfunkel's hit: "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover.")

Jo and Mitch Barnes have certainly been very busy:

Mitch took Janet Munsil's Playwriting Course and chaired SLP's Play Selection Committee.

Jo started Zoom rehearsals for *Heidi of the Mountains*.

Together they virtually presented the play that they wrote: *Firehoses and Family*.



As you can see above, they recreated great works of art and built new veggie planter boxes (right). ■



Langham Court Playwrights Unit of *The Canadian Play Thing* hosted by Janet Munsil, has had several ZOOM reading sessions of selections from Janet's students. Last week Merry Hallsor was one of the readers. One of the scripts was an excerpt from a new script by Mitch Barnes. Mitch also had a ZOOM reading of his play *Firehoses and Family*.

LOST (Lawyers on the Stage Theatre) has reluctantly decided to cancel their annual show at Langham Court Theatre this year.

Merry Hallsor was to direct the 2020 show. Instead they will be producing a Christmas Card video that will feature excerpts from past productions and some new music and bits. Watch for this in December.

When allowed under the Public Health rules, **Langham Court Theatre** will present the 2 shows that were closed this spring as their first 2 shows: *Silent Sky* and *Mambo Italiano*. ■

~ Merry Hallsor

Below is a screen shot of a 'just for the fun of it' Panto read-through of *The King's New Clothes* via Zoom.

We may not be able to perform it on stage, but stay tuned for more read-throughs! ■



SOUND AND LIGHTING BOOTH



At the beginning of 2019 St. Luke's Players' Executive, with the support of St. Luke's Church, formed a committee to research the idea of building a sound and light booth. Invited to sit on the committee were Dave Hitchcock and Nigel Banks. We were fortunate to have Dave's theatre experience and Nigel is a professional architect. Nigel drew up plans which were approved by the church and the Executive. The committee then received quotes from four contractors and were in the process of selecting one when the hall closed because of COVID-19. For now, the sound/light booth has been put to one side. If in the future this project is feasible, we do have the plans and would be ready to receive quotes. Many, many thanks to Nigel and Dave for all your contributions to the project. ■



St. Luke's Players' Executive at their May meeting via Zoom. Susan Ellis was unable to attend.

GHOST LIGHTS

Being a relative newcomer to theatre I had, and still have, lots of questions about the whole adventure. One of the questions concerned "ghost lights"; the single light left on stage while the rest of the theatre is dark. I received a couple of explanations; one, the prosaic one, was that it was an insurance or union requirement to ensure that no one fell off the stage into the orchestra pit when there was no other light in the theatre. The other, the ghost explanation, is that many old theatres had ghosts that sometimes interfered with performances putting cast and crew at risk. The provision of the light gives the ghost a light to perform under while the

theatre is dark and, one presumes, incentive enough to leave the actual performances alone.

I've found the ghost story to be the most appealing. Recently Brian Richmond, of Blue Bridge Rep Theatre, hosted a video in which he stated that theatre companies regularly deal in ghosts... dead authors, ancient stories retold, productions remounted... which, in effect, means that we, the performing companies, bring ghosts into the theatre.

I'm not sure why I've developed this affinity for a ghost light but I know how I felt, when as ASM at a Langham production, I was often the last person to leave the theatre or the first to arrive. When putting on the light, I felt as if I was passing off responsibility for the theatre to the ghost and, when returning, was taking back the task.



The light was always the reminder that, no matter how long the theatre was dark, we would be back to reclaim the stage and bring our ghosts back to life. Now, in these peculiar times, I think we need that reminder more than ever. ■

~ Malcolm Harvey

