

UPEI Theatre Society and Its Fall Productions

By Bruce Henry

What happened with the auditions?

The Theatre Society (TS) held its one act plays, The 15 minute Hamlet and The Valiant, last weekend. The TS committee agreed not to have any auditions because they ended up with just the right number of members to suit each role, resulting in more responsibility for the directors. According to Bruce Barton, Chair of the TS, auditions for the one act plays would take place only if there was a lack of cast members; if a cast member changed character or if someone was needed someone to fill a previously unfilled role. Paul Trahan and Matthew McRae, both members of the TS, felt that the directors picked members from the TS before going to anyone else because they knew the members acting ability and they knew how interested the members were in doing a play. One member also mentioned the importance of auditions and how it gives equal opportunity to each student. It allows, especially new student, a time to express their talent and ability in acting, and it gives them a chance to meet other members and directors. Nevertheless, auditions will take place for the Spring production. So, if you want a chance to show your talent and ability in action, go to the audition.

Play rights!

For each and every play conducted by the UPEI Theatre Society, they need written approval by the author or agent. In this submission the TS must include where, when, why and who will be producing the play? They must

also include the venue and an approximation of expected spectators. If the author is still alive the TS must guarantee the play will not be altered in any way. If the author is dead, the director may alter the play. Once the TS receives the written approval from the author or agent they can begin with the mechanics of the play.

In the past.

Ideally the Theatre Society tries to put on at least three one act plays in the fall and one big production in the spring. This year there were four proposals brought to the committee. The play The Second Shepherd was suppose to be presented but earlier in the year, the directed felt it was too much work and dropped out. The other proposal was a play called The Toilet, even though the TS strongly recommended the production of this play, they were unable to get permission from the author to establish a copy right approval, so they had to drop it.

The Plays

Cast members for The Fifteen Minute Hamlet

Jamie Soy as Hamlet
Ryan Pollard as Gertrude and Ophelia
Curt Matchett as Claudius and Polonius
Daniel Rankin as The Ghost of Hamlet's father and

Laertes

Kerry Maze as Bernardo-Marcellus and Osric
Kylie Gavard as Horatio and Grave Digger
Directed by Louise Dumas
Stage Manager: Renay Fraser
Props: Tom Carlaw
Production Assistance: Joanne MacNevin

Cast members for The Valiant

Matthew Mooney Hennesay as Warden Holt
Matthew McRae as Father Daly
Mike Farrell as James Dyke (Prisoner)
Karen MacIntyre as Josephine Paris (Prisoners sister)
Paul Demostan Trahan as Wilson (Jailer)
Directed by Christopher Ward
Stage manager Sarah King
Assistant Stage Manager: David Goodwin
Lighting Technician: Laura Smith
Technical Director: Carl Mathis
Front of House: Kristina Hegyes
Producer: Bruce Barton

I conducted my interview with each cast member of The Valiant during one of their rehearsals, and unexpectedly Chris Ward asked me to participate in their warm up. They started with facial and other stretching exercises, normally they also include vocal and memorizing exercises but decided not to do them this time. I was asked to give an example of a tongue twister, so I said "The big, black, blue bird blew big bubbles" and then every one else had to repeat it. So, if you like to act foulest and do crazy things, join The Theatre Society.

History of the Theatre Society

UPEI opened its doors in 1969.

1969 : founding member of UPEI English Professor Leigha Lee Brown directs several student plays.

1974 : Brown resigns. The stage is dark.

1975 : Steel Hall completed for music recitals, yet offers some possibilities for theatre.

1976 : The Beggar's Opera by John Gay, Ad hoc production.

1977: Breathless, The Agreement, Pass, Cry of the Gull, directed by Robbin Ward; The Wise People of Gotham; Overtone by Alice Gerstenberg, Ad hoc production.

1978 : H.M.S. Pinafore by Gilbert and Sullivan. Ad hoc production.

1978-79 : Searching for continuity and legitimacy, some students form a "University Theatre Society," while simultaneously some professors create a "Theatre Committee." Students have actors and right name; professors have clout. The two merge under Dean of Arts. Henceforth all productions, as well as workshops and sponsorships (not listed), are UTS managed. The general practice has been to mount a minor production in the fall, usually an evening of student - directed one-act plays, and a major production of high risk, guest-directed, in the spring. Most are performed in Steel Hall, Duffy Amphitheatre, or the MacKenzie Building. Chairs of the Society have been Terry Pratt, Edward Edmonds, Mike Reed, Richard Lemm, Douglas Malcolm and Shannon Murray.

1979 : She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith.

1980 : An Evening of Dramatic Exercise; World Tipped Over and Laying on Its Side by Mary Feldhaus-Webber; Bed Time Story by Sean O'Casey; As You Like It by William Shakespeare.

1981 : The Hostage by Brendan Behan; Passion, Poison, and Petrification or The Fatal Gangrene by George Bernard Shaw.

1982 : Under Milkwood by Dylan Thomas; Many Moons by James Thurber.

1983 : The Skin of our Teeth by Thornton Wilder; If I Were You by Larry LeClair; The Committee by Nick Grant.

1984 : Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead by Tom Stoppard; The Tempest by William Shakespeare.

1985 : True West by Sam Shephard; The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams.

1986 : Baby With the Bathwater by Christopher Durang; Patio Porch by Jack Heifner; Nurse Jane Goes to Hawaii, by Allen Stratton.

1987 : Electra by Sophocles; Box and Cox by John Maddison.

1988 : Count Oederland by Max Frisch; Papers by Allen Stratton.

1989 : The Beaux Stratagem by George Farquhar. The Bear by Anton Chekhov.

1990 : Hay Fever by Noel Coward; Love is Strange by Paul Ledoux and David Young.

1991 : Sorry, Wrong Number by Louise Fletcher; "The Valiant" : by Holworthy Hall and Middlemass; White Lies by Peter Schaffer.

1992 : Life on Earth by Roddie Weatherbe and Heather Morrison; The Dumbwater by Harold Pinter; Bedtime Story by Sean O'Casey; The Real Inspector Hound by Tom Stoppard.

1993 : Quiet in the Land by Anne Chislett; The Sandbox by Edward Albee; The Golden Fleece by A.R. Gurney; The Waiting Room by Sharon Leighton.

1994 : Mr. Pickwick by Charles Dickens; Spreading the News by Lady Gregory; What's On by Mike Bertrand.

1995 Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare; God by Woody Allen; Sex Love and Infidelity : Sganarelle

1996 : The Three Cuckolds Overruled by Bernard Shaw; Salve Regina; The Fifteen Minute Hamlet by Tom Stoppard; The Valiant by Holworthy Hall and Robert Middlemass.