

New production marks first for professional theatre company

by GREG VANDERMEULEN

The first production from the Looking Glass Theatre will take to the stage in Steinbach and Morden.

See *No Evil*, written by Marc A. Moir, will be produced by the newly created Looking Glass Theatre, the first professional theatre company to be based in the Southeast.

Moir said he first wrote a draft of the play about 15 years ago, recently revising it for the stage.

A synopsis issued by the theatre company shares the plot.

“On the evening of their first wedding anniversary, Mary’s husband tells her he plans to murder her – as he has killed seven times before. Or does he? Is Russell a serial killer or is Mary the victim of paranoid delusions? This chilling tale will keep you on the edge of your seat, and keep you guessing until the final curtain.”

Moir, who plays the role of Russell, and Laura Kathleen Turner (Mary) cocreated the new theatre company and said this first production features a remarkable cast and innovative rehearsal program.

While normally rehearsing for a stage production would take about three weeks of 9-5 days, they decided to do it over three Saturdays instead.

“Wonderful actors make this possible,” Moir said. “It’s been wild. It’s been a very fast rehearsal process.”

The cast includes some interesting characters.

In addition to Russell and Mary Partridge played by Moir and Turner, the cast includes Charles Leblanc, a police detective played by Kenton Dyck and his wife Victoria Leblanc, his “desperate for adventure” wife, played by Shannon Loewen.

Other actors include Emily Wiebe, Ian Wiebe, Hannah Klassen and Dryden Dilts.

Moir said the production will keep the audience guessing.

“The audience is on their back foot for the entire production,” he said. “From the very first moment of the show to the very last moment the audience isn’t going to know what to believe.”

He added they will be entertained.

“It’s in a similar vein to Hitchcock where you go from these moments of great intensity to laughter,” he said. “There’s laughs, there’s chills, there’s thrills. It’s got something for everybody.”

Turner said it’s exciting to play a character in this type of production.

“As an actor, these are the kinds of roles that you really just enjoy so



Actors Kenton Dyck (Charles Leblanc), Shannon Loewen (Victoria Leblanc), Laura Kathleen Turner (Mary Partridge) and Marc Moir (Russell Partridge) run through some lines in their final rehearsal.

much, because you get to play this heightened emotion that you don’t normally experience in real life, but it’s this uniquely safe space to explore that,” she said.

Both actors are aware of the crowd reaction, though Turner said they differ in how things register when they’re on the stage.

“Marc notices people a lot more,” she said. “He’ll notice if someone has their phone out.”

“So, don’t do that,” Moir interjected with a laugh.

“I’m completely oblivious to anything like that but I do notice the crowd as a collective,” Turner continued. “I do notice where they are gasping, where they are laughing. I never see faces myself in the audience.”

Looking Glass Theatre has been in the works for about three years and Moir and Turner agreed they have high hopes for it.

“There’s a great audience market in the Southeast,” Moir said.

And while some fantastic community theatre exists, he said right now for professional theatre people have to drive to Winnipeg or wait for MTC to come out once a year.

While this production marks the first for the professional theatre, the first full season is planned for 2024 featuring four or five shows that will be a mix of comedy, mystery, classics, new pieces and musicals.

“All of our actors are Southeast Manitoba actors, and they’re just doing a phenomenal job,” Turner said.

“I think the community is going to be really proud of what they see.”

The theatre company itself will be based on the actor-manager model, common before the 1920s. Essentially it will feature a regular company of actors who will put on each of the shows.

“We really think audiences are going to be blown away by what they see,” Moir said.

The long term goal is to create an established theatre space in Steinbach, something that seats up to 200 people.

“We really think that’s something that Steinbach needs,” he said. “I was really disappointed it wasn’t included in the new community centre but it also provided an opportunity for us

to hopefully work towards that.”

Moir said he hopes to see more people try theatre.

“Theatre has always been for normal everyday people,” he said. “Theatre should be available, it should be affordable, it should be fun and that’s what we’re striving for.”

See No Evil will run in Steinbach for six performances over two weekends, May 19-20 and May 26-27, at the Steinbach Regional Secondary School Theatre, presented in association with the Steinbach Arts Council. Advance tickets are available at Steinbach Arts Council or at the door by cash payment only.

It will also travel to Morden June 9 and 10 to be performed at the Kenmor Theatre.



Jura Mollraith is back with *The Carillon* for another summer.

Intern returns for three-peat

by JURA MCILRAITH

Jura Mollraith has returned for a third year of reporting with the editorial team at *The Carillon*.

After completing her first year in Red River College Polytechnic’s Creative Communications program, Jura is excited to be back in Steinbach for the summer. During the course, her love of reporting has solidified.

Since her high school internship in 2021

and summer position in 2022, Jura is coming back ready to tell the stories that matter to those in the Southeast. She’s gained a lot of experience in the past year writing freelance pieces for *The Clipper* and taking on the role of news editor for her school’s newspaper.

To her, journalism is more than a job. It’s a way to connect with her community and learn about perspectives that are unlike her own. When she has spare time, you can find Jura reading outside, jamming on electric bass or rewatching *The Lord of the Rings*.



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