



# Grinder's Grumblings

February 2007

The newsletter for Grinder Productions members, media contacts, patrons and friends

## Notes From the Director's Chair

### Features This Month

Time flies when you're having fun. It flies even faster when you're busy, and busy is certainly how I'd characterize the month of January at Grinder Productions. It seems like we've been running non-stop all month, with the auditions, Future Stars, All My Sins Remembered, the Lighting workshop, Black Coffee, and the summer shows all coming together at the coldest possible time of the year.

Fortunately, things are starting to settle down a little bit in February. We've started rehearsals this past Sunday for Black Coffee, our 2nd annual Agatha Christie Revival Showcase. As this is, by far the largest, most complex show we'll put on this season, Sarah and I have made it a priority to ask every company member to contribute in some small way to this show, so I'm confident that with so many people pitching in no one will be worked too hard, and the more people we have, the more fun it will be.

Also coming up this month is our Directing Workshop, which I am personally looking forward to quite a bit, not only because I enjoy directing, but also because I am eager to get more and more people involved in this aspect of the company, so please don't hesitate to call me if you're interested in this workshop.

FYI, this will be the last newsletter that I will be personally creating for you (though I will continue to write the article in this space). I think it's time for Sarah to take over the bulk of company communications (seeing as writing is what she does for a living—it oughtn't to be much of a stretch).

Got the winter blahs? Come on out and help anytime—there's lots to do!  
Eric

## Auditions Report: Welcome to new members

The weather wasn't too bad this past January 13th as Grinder Productions welcomed over 30 new members to the fold with our annual open auditions. We had people ranging from children to seniors, the vast majority of whom I had never had the pleasure to meet or see onstage before. Like last year, I was very impressed by what I saw, and by the Monday morning after the auditions my mind was already racing towards a bunch of new ideas these people had given me (see later in this newsletter for one of those ideas).

So to all of you who joined us on that day, welcome to Grinder Productions. I hope this is the beginning of a long and happy journey for us all.

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## Final Report: Future Stars

The weather warmed up for one day on Saturday, January 27th, just in time for our first (but certainly not last!) showcase of the best and brightest of Grinder Productions youngest stars. While we didn't get quite as many people onstage or in the audience as I had originally hoped, the laughter, applause and cheering of the people who were there was more than enough to convince me of the success of this show, and I'm happy to report that we did okay at the box office as well.

Make no mistake, there is a wealth of talented young people at Grinder Productions and in the greater Centre Wellington community. From actors to singers to dancers to musicians the evening was lively, exciting and refreshing, and bodes well for the future of our company.

Congratulations to all the participants and take note—more opportunities to show the world what you can do are just around the corner!

## Final Report: All My Sins Remembered

What a ride! Our 4th show of the season closed on a cold and blustery February 3rd (hence the reason for the delay in getting this letter out) and with the weather closing all the roads out of town the cast party didn't wind down until breakfast!

All in all, this was a very, very fun show to work on, and it did much better than I had dared to hope. Thanks to the cast and crew for all their efforts on this one, and I'll be sure to let you know if this script ever gets picked up by another theatre for production.

Contrary to what I had expected, this show did all right at the box office as well. Thanks to everyone who supported this show, talked it up, and got people excited about it. That really makes a difference.

## Progress Report: Black Coffee

Our Agatha Christie Revival Showcase is back again for its second season with the start of rehearsals for Black Coffee. The large and enthusiastic cast has really hit it off at the read-through, and Sarah is pulling the production people together this week and next.

We are looking for your help with this production. I would like everyone to do something to help us out with Black Coffee. Even if you can give us a couple of hours, in any discipline, that would be a big help in ensuring the success of this show. Sarah has been calling around to everyone already, but if she's missed you, call or e-mail her!

First up will be the set construction this Saturday at 10am at the rehearsal space. All hands are welcome!

## Programming Change: Ennotville Summer Theatre

Apparently we're not good enough for them!

In yet another case of Canadian playwrights making sure they don't get their plays produced the agent for John Gray has informed me that there is no possible chance for us to do Billy Bishop Goes to War with an actor who isn't a member of the Canadian Actor's Equity Association, no matter what the mitigating circumstances—the play is just too valuable to risk it in the hands of amateurs.

I hope you all understand my sarcasm on this issue, and will put up with my ranting and raving about the notion that just because someone is paid to act it makes them a better actor than someone who is not. Trust me, I've worked on both sides of the industry for years, and while some places may have some trends, in the grand scheme of things there is NO significant correlation between actors who are paid being better than actors who are not.

In any event, we now have a hole in our Ennotville Season, and one that will have to be filled with another show, and you can be sure I'll be avoiding the minefield of Canadian plays this time around. Maybe we'll do A.R. Gurney's *Lover Letters*, or Kevin Wade's *Key Exchange*, or perhaps even Mamet's *Oleanna*. More details to follow in the March newsletter, and any suggestions are welcome (just don't suggest anything that can't be played on a 10' x 12' stage). Hopefully by then I'll be able to give you just the show details, minus all my ranting and raving.

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## February Workshop: Directing

Directing is often considered theatre's biggest, toughest, most important job, and sometimes it is, but good directors quickly learn that their role is as much that of servant as that of leader, and the focus of this course will be about how to achieve positive results when walking that fine line between the one in control and the one who's letting creativity happen. Any description beyond that is too long for this article, but suffice to say that at the end of this course successful participants will be ready to direct a show

with Grinder Productions.

The course will be offered over two weeks, Monday and Wednesday nights from 7pm to 10, February 12th, 14th, 19th and 21st. Yes, you'll have to give up Valentine's Day for this course. That's the first lesson. Directors have to make sacrifices. Cost will be \$50 per participant. Class size is limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. All materials to be provided.

## Ladies... this one's for you: Girl Power

It always seems to be the same old story in theatre. There are lots and lots of roles—for men. I once heard it said (very sarcastically, I might add) that there's ten roles for every guy and ten women for every role.

It's time something was done about this. That's why Grinder Productions will present Girl Power, an evening of entertainment produced, promoted and presented exclusively by the female members of Grinder Productions. There are so many women in this company whose talents are being under-utilized that there is actually enough talent to warrant two completely separate events. We have booked March 30th and 31st at the Fergus Grand Theatre for these shows.

These events are open to any women and girls in Grinder Productions (and anyone else who would like to become a member) who aren't currently cast in a conflicting show. More details will follow in the March newsletter, but for now start thinking about what you might be able to do for this event, and let us know if you want to be a part of it and either myself or Sarah will add you to the list.



### All My Sins Remembered

Cast from left to right: Becky Branton, Brad Rooke, Shayne Monaghan, Julie Kennedy and Sandy Lai. Absent: Jennifer Gordon, Dane Morgan, Mattie Smith.

Thanks for the great show, guys!  
Spit and fiddle forever.