

The Grinder Standard

The monthly newsletter for the Members, Sponsors, Media Partners, Cultural Allies, Patrons and Friends of Grinder Productions and its affiliated companies

January 2010



“As a general rule, never give an actor a gun...”

Happy New Years from Grinder Productions!

It's another year and another fresh start for us all. We're very excited about what we have coming up for you in the next twelve months, and we're pleased to announce our 2010 summer season of plays in this month's newsletter. Please spread the word about our shows (and our auditions) to everyone you know!

Eric and Julie
Creative and Executive Co-Directors
Grinder Productions

We're always looking for new ways to communicate with our members, partners, patrons and friends here at Grinder, in addition to the newsletter. Here are some links to a sampling of some of the other Grinder resources available on the web!

Special Features on our website:

[Hopeless Romantics](#)

[Past Productions](#)

[Photo Archive](#)

[The Grinder Blog](#)

[Grinder on Facebook](#)

[The bookstore at Lulu](#)

[Helium.com](#)

[Follow us on Twitter!](#)

And of course, we'd always love to hear from you, so don't hesitate to get in touch with us!

By Phone:

519-780-7593

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@grinderproductions.org

The 2010 Summer Season

It is with great pleasure that we introduce to you the plays, concerts and special events that make up our 2010 summer season in Ennotville and Belwood. As you can see, this year is by far our most ambitious yet! Please see page 4 of this newsletter for audition information, as pass it on to all your friends. All shows and dates subject to change.

Ennotville Main Stage:

Chaucer Uncensored *June 24th – July 3rd*

Godiva's Children *July 8th – 17th*

Roughing It *July 22nd – 31st*

Wild Angels *August 5th – 14th*

The River Rats *August 19th – 28th*

Ennotville Children's Series:

June 26th: Canada Play

July 3rd: 3 Little Pigs

July 10th: Rapunzel

July 17th: Robin Hood

July 24th: How to be Cool

July 31st: Hansel and Gretel

August 7th: Rumpelstiltskin

August 14th: The Cosmos Kids

August 21st: Jack and the Beanstalk

August 28th: Girls and Boys

Ennotville "Mostly Music" Lunchtime Series:

June 26th: The Heart of Eden

July 3rd: Hitchin' at the Junction

July 10th: Love Notes

July 17th: Laughing Out Loud

July 24th: The Girls of Grinder

July 31st: Legends of Eleysium

August 7th: Philemon and Baucis

August 14th: The Duke of Gordon's Daughter

August 21st: Where Corn Don't Grow

August 28th: Steppin' Up

Ennotville After Hours (viewer discretion is advised):

Muzzle Blast Redux *July 9th and 10th*

Hangin' in the Balance *July 23rd and 24th*

Lost and Found *August 6th and 7th*

Living *August 20th and 21st*

Belwood

Cymbeline, by William Shakespeare *July 8th – 10th*

Mrs. Warren's Profession, by George Bernard Shaw *July 29th – 31st*

The 18 Carat Boob, by Lillian Mortimer *August 19th – 21st*

Visit www.grinderproductions.org soon for full descriptions of each show!

Website Updates

Our overhaul of the Grinder Productions website is continuing nicely. After some initial difficulties I'm pleased to announce that the photo galleries are back up and running, albeit with a lot fewer photos than I would like. It's not so much the number of pictures, as the number of shows that we can represent. If you've got any production photos from a show that hasn't been included in this update please feel free to send them to me (or even just the link) and I'll include them in the next round of updates. Ah, the memories....

You'll also be interested to no that the "Toolboxes" section is coming along as well. My goal is to build one page per week of this, so that by the middle of February we have at least something for every production area. Again, your thoughts and feedback are welcomed – do you know of any resources out there that we should be linking to, referencing or including on the site? My goal with the Toolboxes is to provide members quite literally with the tools they need to act, direct, design, produce and make technical magic happen here at Grinder, and if it helps out others then all the better. As such the more input we get the better it will be!

The Grinder Productions Blog

While this newsletter is a great source of information about what's going on at Grinder it only comes out once a month. If you want more up-to-date information (and if you're interested in auditions and acting opportunities you should be) then the best place to get it is on our blog, Grinder's Grumblings.

The blog is updated almost daily with fresh information, and there's an easy way to quickly read new posts as they are written. It's called an RSS feed – Really Simple Syndication, and it's simply a tool that alerts you to a new content being posted, on our blog or anyone else's.

Just go to our blog, <http://grindersgrumblings.blogspot.com> and click on "Subscribe to: [Posts \(Atom\)](#)." Then just follow the instructions that are specific to your browser (I'm on Firefox and it puts my feeds into the bookmarks section – I then make check under the "View" command that the bookmarks are checked to appear in my sidebar).

Every day when there's a new post it will show up as waiting to be read.

RSS feeds are available for almost everything, not just blogs, but they're especially handy for news sites. Most websites you visit will have an RSS for something – use it to keep informed about all your favourite things, not just life here at Grinder Productions!

The Workbook

One of the things that we're doing to try and bring greater cohesion and professional – quality production to Grinder is through a manual called "The Production Workbook." The workbook and its accompanying forms will be available on the website for free and will be offered to every director to help organize their show from start to finish.

This is the first incarnation of the workbook – it will undergo revisions after this season, so please feel free to read it over, and let us know what you think. The more we can do to make our shows richer, stronger and of better quality across the board the more success we'll have! The Workbook can be found on the "Toolboxes" page of the website.

2010 Auditions Preparation Information

The auditions for our 2010 season will take place on Saturday, March 27th at the Ennotville Library. There will be several different auditions throughout the day, so please take a moment to look at each of the categories below to see which type of audition you are best suited for.

Children's Auditions: 9am – 12pm (1 hour sessions)

Kids between the ages of 8 and 14 are invited to come and show us their stuff. No experience or preparation is necessary, just wear loose, comfortable clothing and be prepared to have some fun! Through games, improv and other exercises we'll find the best part for you, and get you involved in one of our Saturday morning shows this summer!

Open Reading: 1pm – 5pm (1 hour sessions)

Anyone aged 15 and over is invited to come on out and read. No preparation or previous experience is necessary. You'll be able to audition for any show in our summer season, and both current and new Grinder members are encouraged to come out to this relaxed, no pressure open call.

Specialists: 6pm – 9pm (15 minutes/person)

If you sing, dance or are an actor looking for a professional-caliber audition this one is for you. Give us a song, a dance, or a comedic monologue (either contemporary or classical). You'll be auditioning for all shows in the summer season, but especially for roles as featured performers in the "Mostly Music Lunch" series.

Late Nights: 9pm – 10pm (TBA)

If you're looking for something a little more cutting edge then you may be a candidate for one of our late-night shows. You must be 18 years or older and not have a problem with coarse language and mature subject matter. Auditions can be either cold read or prepared monologue, as desired.

A full description of the roles available and the audition sign-up form will be included in the February newsletter. Got this second-hand and not on our e-mail list? E-mail grinder@grinderproductions.org and we'll add today!

Standby, Mackenzie – Chapter 1 (*the first in a 12-part series*)

"Pipe comin' in!"

Mackenzie was in the dressing room finishing her costume preset when LLG's trademark innuendo reverberated through the theatre. By now the joke had gotten so old that she barely rolled her eyes – in fact she thought it a bit odd that LLG still even thought it was funny.

Just then a loud crash and the sound of shattering glassware rang out on stage. Mackenzie ran down the dressing room stairs and out on deck.

“Pipe’s in.”

Juan stood before her with a piece of aircraft cable in his hand. A large metal pipe lay across the heavy oak table that Mackenzie had just finished pre-setting, with the broken remnants of a 6-plate dinner setting scattered about the set. Little Cheese burst through the auditorium doors, with Marlene and Trudy following close behind.

“What the – oh \$*&@!” cried Steven.

“Is everyone okay?” asked Marlene.

“What the *%^#! were you doing!” asked Steven, not waiting for an answer from either of them.

“I was just finishing my dressing room preset when I heard a crash,” Mackenzie quickly offered, hoping to defuse any rage Steven might be building up towards here.

Juan sheepishly raised his hand.

“I was preppin’ the cyc pipe for the turnover. I think I saddled a dead horse when I was doing the rigging.”

A long line of expletives came out of Steven’s mouth.

“Juan you’re not supposed to be doing any rigging! What have I told you about rigging – a little knowledge is a dangerous thing! You’re only to be working with stuff that can kill actors under my supervision! And Mackenzie, you should have known better than to do your preset while Juan was working on deck. A freakin’ gel frame would be enough to break one of those glasses.”

“But I waited as long as I could,” Mackenzie protested. “We’re almost at the half now.”

Steven glanced down at his watch and let out another string of profanity, just as the stage door opened and the cast hurried back in from dinner. The two actors stopped their infatuated giggling from their budding showmance when they saw the stage.

“Oh that’s not good,” said Devin.

“Uh - I’m going to go to my dressing room now,” said Cynthia.

Before they could move the house doors opened and a gaggle of ushers sashayed in, gossiping and laughing as they moved to the large stack of programs that needed stuffed with promotional flyers. Though they were too pre-occupied with the House Manager’s latest joke to take much notice, their guffawing snapped Steven back to reality.

“Okay, I’ll take this up with Big Cheese later. Juan, get that pipe out of here and then start cleaning up the deck. Sweep, vacuum, mop, scrub, lick it with your *&^#@!ing tongue, just make sure that there’s no pieces of broken anything on it – we have actors in barefoot. Mackenzie you go out to the props shop and get another set of dishes – don’t worry if they don’t match, just make sure we have something for everyone. I’ll bring the main rag in and we can open the house. I’ll go give the cast the half.”

“What happened to Marvin?” Mackenzie asked. Marvin was the stage manager – gay as a three-dollar-bill and a crusty, well-seasoned veteran of the theatre.”

“He quit,” said Marlene. “Nervous Breakdown. Now we’d all better get to work.”

And with no more explanation than that everyone did get to work.

Mackenzie ran to the props shop and quickly began filling a box with dishes, wine glasses and cutlery. She searched in vain for a floral centrepiece, finally settling for Hurricane lantern with a ceramic base that she thought might match the colour of the tablecloth.

What an insane three weeks it had been. The message was waiting for Mackenzie when she got home from writing her last-ever high-school exam: the Summer Theatre in town was looking for an Assistant Stage Manager for their first show. They had gotten her name from the Player’s Guild – would she be interested in getting some professional experience? Mackenzie wasn’t really looking for professional experience – after all she had only worked on about a half a dozen plays between school and the Guild – but she was looking for a summer job, and what better summer job could there be than working in a theatre?

When everyone else but her got a pay check at the end of her first week Mackenzie realized that she’d signed up for a summer of volunteering, or more specifically being “volun-told” that she didn’t know the first thing about theatre. But still Mackenzie wasn’t a quitter, and she knew enough about theatre that abandoning any show, amateur or professional, was one of the worst things you could do, so she had stuck it out for the entire run of the play, which in about twenty minutes would be going up for its final performance.

Mackenzie ran back through the stage door with her box of props in hand. She could hear the sounds of the pre-show music in the auditorium, mixed with the low-murmur of a Saturday night crowd that was just beginning to filter in. Loud guffaws from the coterie of ushers punctuated the noise.

The scene onstage was still one of chaos, with Juan, Marlene and Trudy all scouring the floor, carpet and furniture for any remnants of broken dinnerware, and Steven lying underneath the table, where a large and dangerous-looking crack had formed.

Mackenzie got to work setting the table, almost enjoying the rare chance to watch the others frantically working, too busy to critique her efforts or carry on their conversations in “theatre-speak” a language they knew full well she couldn’t understand them.

Juan, the House Tech, was better known around the theatre as LLG – the Latin Love God. It was a self-styled title that he’d come up with on his own, but it did suit him up to a point, if you counted one-nighters with inebriated college friends of the cast as “love.” He certainly looked Latino, and he certainly acted Latino, more Che Guevara than Ricky Martin. Between his political views, his mild-chocolate complexion and his disarming charisma Mackenzie couldn’t blame the three girls he’d been with in the past three weeks for being fooled. But after three weeks of seeing Juan’s true self – selfish, vain and just a little too creepy by half – she wasn’t about to let herself become conquest number four.

Marlene brushed past her with a dustpan full of broken china. She was the company’s General Manager, though she spent most of her time slaving away in the box office taking orders. She was one of those skinny old ladies with skin like boot leather that you wouldn’t dare cross in a million years. Right behind her, as always, was Trudy, the Marketing Manager. Trudy spent as much time in the box office as Marlene, but somehow just never seemed to handle the pressures of the job quite as well. Where Marlene would just step out for a smoke every 90 minutes or so Trudy was given to biting the skin off her lip, so much so that it would flake and bleed. To cover it up she was always liberally smattering on the lip balm, and Mackenzie often thought she smelled like a fruit stand.

Another epithet erupted from under the table as Steven rammed the drill bit into his finger. Steven was the Technical Director for the theatre, and the one who was ultimately in charge of getting this show up on time. Unlike LLG, Steven’s nick-name – Little Cheese – wasn’t one of his own choosing, and it was only ever used behind his back. He was little – just over five feet in height, and easily “cheesed,” or made angry. He was a career techie who’d already seen and done it all by the age of 25. He’d been a roadie for Our Lady Peace. He’d been a truss-spot op at the Oscars. He helped build the set for Titanic and he’d designed, built, lit, or been a grunt on more shows in the past ten years than most people do in a life-time. Somehow, though, all that experience hadn’t translated into a lot of skill, at least not enough to fix a broken table without resulting in swear words and a few drops of blood.

Despite the drama at the half everything was ready and the show did go up on schedule at 8pm, with Steven calling the show cold from Marvin’s prompt book. Everything went reasonably well, all things considered, and any closing night antics anyone had planned were quickly and mercifully forgotten. At intermission Mackenzie was able to finish her preset in record time, and had just completed double checking it when Steven showed up backstage.

“Big Cheese wants to see you outside,” he said.

The Big Cheese. Frank. Frank was the Artistic Director and the undisputed head of the company. Marlene might have got stuck with all the dirty work but it was Frank who called the shots. Like Steven no one dared call Frank “Big Cheese” to his face. In addition to being quite sensitive about his ongoing weight problems Frank could be an absolute monster at times, and anyone who got on his bad side wasn’t going to last long – either in the company or on the planet. Mackenzie had made a point of staying out of his way as much as she could for the last few weeks. Tonight, after the strike, when she was planning to tell Steven and Marlene that she wasn’t interested in helping out with the next show, she was really, really, really hoping that Frank would be out partying with the cast.

“Hi Macky,” Frank said, surprisingly affable. “How’s the show going?”

“Good,” she replied, unsure if Frank was aware of the pre-show excitement.

“I guess you heard about Marvin.”

“Yeah – that’s too bad. Marvin was so nice.”

“Yeah, he was, wasn’t he? I really wish we could have had him all summer. Now I know you have to get back before the second half starts, but I need to ask you a question: are you interested in making a little money and working for us for the rest of the summer?”

Mackenzie’s heart skipped a beat. “You want to offer me a job?”

“Yeah – we need a stage manager for the next show. I can clear it with the union. We’ll pay you union rates – works out to about a grand a week.”

“A grand a week?”

“Hey – actors and directors starve and struggle. Stage Managers get rich and drive BMW’s. If you’re interested I need to know by the end of the show.”