



Grinder's Grumblings

January 2007

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

Notes From the Director's Chair

Happy New Year!

This year promises to be the biggest ever for our company. We are now half-way through our Winter season at the Fergus Grand, with **All My Sins Remembered** currently in rehearsals. Sarah and I have been meeting frequently to plan marketing campaigns to promote our upcoming events, and we'll be kicking off our big summer sales effort very soon (see below). In addition we've also added events like **Future Stars**, and **The Constant Lover** (our touring 1-act play—see page 4), to give us even more opportunities to warm people's hearts this winter. And of course, starting in February we'll be heading into rehearsals for **Black Coffee** and the return of the Agatha Christie Revival Showcase, which is of course one of our biggest events of the season.

Our workshop series continues as well, with our January workshop focusing on lighting design, using the lighting for **All My Sins Remembered** as a practical illustration of the material. I've also included information in this month's issue about our February workshop on directing, as I know there has been a considerable amount of interest in that one. Please see page 3 for details on both.

As we embark on another year I'd like to take this opportunity to once again thank everyone who has helped us out over the past year. Your contributions both large and small have become the driving force behind this company's success. I hope we can continue to make some great theatre together in 2007.

Thanks again, everyone.

Eric

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Volunteers Needed for Summer Marketing Retreat Day

Sometime during the month of January Sarah and I will be organizing a day-long retreat to brainstorm ideas, create strategies and come up with the basics of a marketing plan for promoting the summer seasons at The Ennotville Library and The Belwood Hall. We need some members to help us out! We'll feed you lunch, and pick your brain about a wide variety of topics. No experience whatsoever in marketing is necessary, and we're really looking for as many fresh perspectives as we can get.

Interested in being involved? Call or e-mail me or Sarah.

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Final Report: Everywoman

It's over!

After a very, very wild ride, I'm happy to report that our 3rd show in the winter season has come to a close. It was, to say the least, a difficult show to produce, and more importantly, to sell. Starting off with a cast of 30 and ending up with a cast of 7 was by far the biggest challenge, as this took away most of our potential audience base.

On a more positive note, though, I am very grateful to the people who didn't quit. Their grace and determination in the face of long odds is something we all should applaud. In many cases, they were asked to take on responsibilities well beyond their young years, and for the most part they rose to the challenge, far more than should ever need be expected of people that age, and I thank them immensely for their patience, perseverance and dedication. You guys saved the day.

Progress Report: Future Stars

Our next production is coming along very well. We have assembled a cross-section of new and old Grinder talent, and this promises to be a wonderful opportunity for our younger members to shine. Come on out and see such talents as Mackenzie Mathews, a young woman who's been dancing since age 3. There's also the sister duo of Brittani and Stephanie Sellers on the Guitar, and virtuoso violinist Kyra McElistrum. That and many others, and oh yeah, Elvis.

There are some spaces still available, though, if you or someone you know is interested in being a part of this show. Just let me know who you are and what you do, and we'll get you on board.

The show is on Saturday, January 27th at 7pm. Tickets are \$10 each, and are available from any cast member, or by visiting the Fergus Grand Box Office or calling 519-787-1981. Come on out and support our young people, and it's safe to say you'll leave the theatre feeling great!

Progress Report: All My Sins

Rehearsals have just now begun for the 4th show in the Winter season. This small cast show is a real "tour de force," with short scenes rapidly changing to keep up with the out-of-control storyline that will keep you guessing until the very end. The cast has really stepped up and gotten into the spirit of the show, walking the fine line between camp humour, melodramatics and genuine thrills that this show demands. Since we don't have another newsletter until opening night I'm encouraging you now to get all your friends together and come on out to see this one. It's one of those shows that isn't going to appeal to everyone, (which is fine) but it is the kind of show I'm hoping people like you, the members, will get a kick out of.

We open February 1st, and run the 2nd and 3rd at 8pm. You know the number.

A Question

One of the events I am considering bringing to the Fergus Stage in the new year is a show entitled **The Vagina Monologues**. For those of you who are not familiar with this show it is a staged reading of several monologues about women's health and social issues. It has been staged all over the world for several years now. It is an all female cast, and is often performed by local celebrities, community leaders and politicians. The play can only be performed as a fundraiser for women's charities, so there's no chance of the company really making any money on this, but I thought it might simply be a good thing to do. I casually mentioned this to a person in town (who shall remain nameless), who, in no uncertain terms, linked the possibility of me bringing in this show as akin to committing company suicide. They argued that merely presenting a show with the word *Vagina* in the title would be so offensive to so many people in Centre Wellington that it would cement Grinder Productions as leftist, avant-garde, fringe group, and thus render us morally reprehensible to most of the people of Fergus and Elora.

Since that day I have been bothered by that conversation. I take any potential threats of a company Armageddon very seriously, but perhaps what bothers me more was the vehemence with which I was warned not to do this show, and the reasoning behind it. Do we live in a community where saying the word "vagina" is an act of civil disturbance, or was my friend an over-reacting member of an infinitesimal minority?

Now I am certainly not political, and I would never bring Grinder Productions into a political debate because that wouldn't be fair to you, the members, but I'd be interested to hear some of your opinions on this. Of course, I will keep anything anyone says in the strictest confidence, and I will take many factors into consideration before I make my decision about this or any other show, but I think that I'd like to hear some other perspectives, so please, send me your thoughts.

Update: Open Auditions

This is the top priority at Grinder Productions in the first week of the new year. We have secured the Fergus Grand Theatre for our auditions, and I would like to fill up every one-hour time slot from 10am to 5pm with sizeable groups of people. I am asking you if you would be so kind as to take the Audition information (see the back page) and pass it along to EVERYONE you know, because you never know where the next theatre person might be hiding. Please, post it at your work, your school, anywhere you can think of, send it along to any other theatre groups that you are a part of, and let's get the word out there about these auditions. These auditions are



This could be you!

“open,” which means anyone, regardless of age or level of experience, is welcome to come out. If you have already done a show with Grinder Productions you do not need to audition again, but you are welcome to if you wish because we will have as many of the 2007 summer season and 2007-2008 winter season directors present at the auditions as are in place by that time, and it would be a perfect chance for you to show off what you can do.

Call or e-mail me to book an audition time. Auditions to take place Saturday, January 13th.

January Workshop in Lighting Design

Before the dawn of the 20th century, when electricity was still in its infancy, theatrical lighting was concerned primarily with having enough light to see the actors. By the dawn of the 21st century lighting had become one of theatre's best tools for setting atmospheres and influencing moods, all the while still ensuring that the actors were still sufficiently lit. This workshop will cover the aesthetic considerations of lighting design, borrowing from the McCandless method and other sources to explain the use of form, line, colour, texture, etc in the creation of meaning in light onstage. It will consist of two parts, a pre-class reading and a practical demonstration of techniques on Sunday, January 28th, from 2pm to 5pm, as we set the lighting for *All My Sins Remembered*.

The cost of this workshop is \$20. Participants must pre-register by January 21st so that I can send the reading material far enough in advance. Class size will be limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. In April, as part of an extended series on technical workshops, I will be offering a course in the hanging, focusing and setting of lights, which will offer the training necessary to put the ideas demonstrated in this course into a practical application.

February Workshop in 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.

Audition Information - January 13th - Pass it Along!

Who can audition: Anyone! We are looking for people of all sizes, types, ages, levels of experience.

What is required of me if I am cast? If you are cast in a show we will expect you to attend all rehearsals and performances, learn your lines and character, and do what you can to assist with ticket sales and production tasks. When you come to the auditions you will be given a sheet with all the shows listed below along with their rehearsal and performance dates. PLEASE BRING YOUR CALENDAR WITH YOU so that you can see which shows you are available for, and indicate as such on the audition form.

Shows being cast:

Selected parts in shows in remainder of 2007 Winter Season at the Fergus Grand Theatre

Future Stars - a showcase for kids

Black Coffee - An Agatha Christie Murder Mystery

Picasso at the Lapin Agile - A comedy by Steve Martin

Dirty Work at the Crossroads - A "Gay Nineties" Melodrama

Shows at the Ennotville Summer Theatre

I Ought to be in Pictures - A comedy by Neil Simon

Talley's Folly - A romantic comedy by Lanford Wilson

Billy Bishop Goes to War - A Canadian musical by John Gray

Shows at the Belwood Hall

The Melville Boys - A comedy by Norm Foster

Noises Off - A Farce by Michael Frayn

The Constant Lover— A Romantic Comedy by St. John Hankin

We are going to tour this 1-act play to local seniors homes, schools, community events and anywhere else that will take us. Rehearsals and performances are during the day, so availability then is required. Rehearsals the week of February 4th -10th with our "tour" from February 11th to March 3rd. All shows in the greater Wellington county area.

ALL SHOWS BEYOND THIS POINT ARE IN PRELIMINARY PLANNING AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE!

2007 - 2008 Fall-Winter-Spring Season at the Fergus Grand Theatre

Cowgirls - A country musical

Frankenstein - Based on Mary Shelley's Gothic Novel

The Gifts of the Magi - Based on the short stories by O. Henry

At My Heart's Core - A satire by Robertson Davies

Verdict - An Agatha Christie Murder Mystery

The Diary of Anne Frank - The stage version of the classic book

Caught in the Villain's Web - Another "Gay Nineties" Melodrama

2007 - 2008 Season at Stage 4

Hangin' in the Balance - An original play by Eric Goudie

Eleemosynary - A comedy/drama by Lee Blessing

The Blue Room - A steamy free adaptation of Schnitzler's La Ronde by David Hare

School Shooting - An original thriller by Eric Goudie

Endgame - An absurdist drama by Samuel Beckett

No experience necessary! To book an audition please call Grinder Productions at 519-780-7593 or e-mail grinder@grinderproductions.org.