



The Crier

Newsletter Spring 2009



Artistic Director
Ian Farthing as
Captain von Trapp in
The Sound of Music,
Toronto

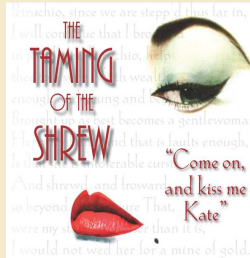
Welcome to our Spring edition of *The Crier*, our occasional newsletter keeping you informed about what's going on at the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival!

The plays are cast, the costumes designed and we're all eagerly awaiting the arrival of the actors to Prescott for the start of their rehearsals.

In this issue, we'll be introducing you to some of the actors who'll be joining us this summer and give you a taste of what's to come on our stage .

Tickets are on sale now - so give us a call and book yourselves a summer treat!

Ian Farthing



Our
2009
Season



11 July - 15 August
Tuesday - Saturday 7pm
Saturday matinee 2pm

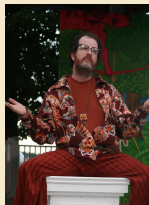
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Until her older sister can be married off, the beautiful Bianca cannot wed the man of her dreams. But Kate has a tempestuous reputation and is not to be trifled with, much less married off. Has the bold Petruchio met his match? Can he tame this particular shrew...?

Leading us on this journey through Shakespeare's archetypal battle of the sexes will be **Janet Irwin**, one of Ottawa's most respected directors whom we are thrilled to welcome to Prescott for the first time.

Politicians who lead a self-righteous campaign against sleaze always run the risk of falling themselves. Duke Angelo has condemned Claudio to death for fornication, but when the novice nun Isabella comes to plead for her brother's life, Duke Angelo is tempted into making an offer that is more scandalous than any of the worst excesses of the sinful city he leads.

Craig Walker is returning to the Festival, having successfully directed *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It* for us in previous years.



Festival favourite Michael MacDonald in last summer's production of *As You Like It*. Michael will be returning to Prescott for his 6th season with the Festival.

Photo: Lynne Chagnon

TICKET INFORMATION FOR 2009

Adults	\$22
Seniors (60+)	\$18
Students (Youth 13 and over; College and University Students)	\$16
Children (12 and under)	FREE
Sunday Series	\$10
Prescott Preview (July 10 and July 14)	\$10
<i>Special discount for Prescott Residents upon presentation of ID</i>	
SEASON PASS	\$80
<i>Great value! See the shows as many times as you like!</i>	

2009 Sunday Series

19 July, 2pm
Much Ado About Nothing
Presented by *A Company of Fools*

26 July, 2pm
The Merry Wives of Prescott
A reading of a new play by John Lazarus

2 August, 2pm
Revelers Showcase

10 August, 2pm
An Afternoon of Sonnets

Introducing our 2009 ensemble

The casting process for the 2009 season started just before Christmas when announcements of our auditions were posted across the country. From the hundreds of submissions that we received, Artistic Director Ian Farthing whittled the photos and resumes down to a shortlist of about 80 actors who were then invited to meet with him and our directors (Janet Irwin and Craig Walker) in Ottawa or Toronto at the end of January.

After seeing everyone, Ian sat down with the directors to assemble the casts that you will see on stage this summer. It's a tricky process, trying to make sure that we cast the best actors in the right roles, remembering that each actor has to be cross-cast in both plays. Sometimes one actor might be right for one play, but not for the other. The quality of the people that auditioned this year was extremely high, which made our decisions even more difficult. As in any job interview, we strive to find people who are going to be able to work well as part of a team - and we're also acutely aware of trying to find people who we think will enjoy living in Prescott for ten weeks in the summer!

"I think it's important to find a balance between seeing familiar actors on stage and bringing in fresh new talent to the company," said Farthing, who noted that half of the ensemble this year are returning actors and half are new faces. "In my experience, audiences enjoy seeing actors they know and love tackling new roles on our stage. But the infusion of energy that comes with mixing in different actors is fantastic. Actors who are experiencing the joys and excitement of Prescott for the first time bring a sense of vitality to the company, in addition to challenging the actors who have previously called this their summer home to raise their game artistically."

Returning actors in 2009 include Emma Hunter, Kris Joseph, Michael MacDonald, Alix Sideris, Lana Sugarman, Craig Walker and David Whiteley.

And here is a photo gallery of those who will be coming to Prescott for the first time this summer - before too long you'll be seeing them around town and we encourage you to say hello and give them a warm welcome!



Warren Bain

We're delighted that Warren is making his professional debut in Prescott this summer, having just completed 3 years of study at Ryerson Theatre School in Toronto.



Charlotte Gowdy

After training at the National Theatre School, Charlotte went on to work at the Shaw Festival and the Blyth Festival... and now the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival! She also brings a variety of musical talents with her to Prescott.



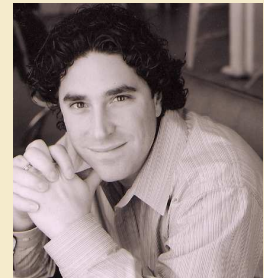
Brent Buchanan

This is the third year in a row that we've had one of the Hobbits from the musical *Lord of the Rings* joining us! Originally from Manitoba, Brent now lives in Toronto.



Doreen Taylor-Claxton

Those who were at our Valentine Fundraiser already know what a wonderful singer Doreen is. In addition to showing us her acting skills, she will also be our Musical Director this summer.



Marc Bondy

A graduate of the conservatory at Stratford, Marc has also appeared in seasons at Shakespeare's Globe and theatres across the country. He also runs his own business, Outlook Promotions and has a new baby daughter, Leia.



John Koensgen

John has appeared in over 40 productions at GTC and dozens at the NAC, most recently *Macbeth* and *Buried Child*. He also has local connections as a teacher at St. Lawrence College's Musical Theatre Program.



Greg Kramer

Based in Montreal, Greg's credits cover almost 30 years and over 100 productions. He's also written three published novels, plays a mean jazz piano and is an accomplished professional magician.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

News of some of your favourite actors who have been part of the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival...

Kris Joseph has had a busy 2009 - playing Father Flynn in a stage production of *Doubt* (Gladstone Theatre), *The Ark*, (NAC) and is currently rehearsing for *The Changeling* at the NAC,



Kris Joseph and Alix Sideris in last summer's production of *The Merchant of Venice*.

where he will be reunited on stage with **Alix Sideris**. Alix was recently nominated for best actress in the Rideau Awards for her performance in *The Empire Builders* and her movie *cubed* has been receiving very positive responses in film festivals around the world.



David Whiteley is currently concentrating on writing: his collective creation *A Leave of Absinthe* (co-written with fellow Festival alumnus David Hersh) was selected for development funding by the Magnetic North Theatre Festival! He is also completing a new comedy entitled *The Beer Tent*, and a revamp of his Ottawa Rideau Award-nominated play *What Goes Around...* under the new title *...Comes Around (What Goes Around... Redux)*. Come June, he will be performing both *The Beer Tent* and *... Comes Around* at the Ottawa Fringe Festival.

Amber Kunde (Reveler 2008) appeared in *The Homecoming* at South Grenville High School.

Libby Skala celebrated her first wedding anniversary during a 3-week run of her play *A Time to Dance* at Pacific Theatre in Vancouver. It won "Best Solo Performer" at the London Fringe Festival, and tours to the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC this June. Last summer's tour of *Lilia!* (previously seen as part of our Sunday Series in 2005) took her to England and Germany, followed by a role in the off-Broadway play *Refuge of Lies*.



Following the closure of *Dirty Dancing* in Toronto, **Tyler Murree** has now been cast in a lead role for the North American tour of *The Lion King*. You may also have seen him in a Zantac commercial on TV!

In September 2008 **Michael MacDonald** got to play a dad, of all things, in Canadian country music singer Tara Oram's video for the song *538 Stars*. The song is from her debut album *Chasing the Sun* and the video received a lot of airtime during the 2008 Christmas holiday season on CMT.



Michael as Puck in our 2007 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



Lana Sugarman recently played Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Scarborough Village Theatre. Earlier this year she performed in a production of *The Vagina Monologues* to raise money for the YWCA of Toronto.

NEW FOR 2009!

The St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival has teamed up with **CanadaHelps.org** to make it easier for our supporters to make their donation online.



For charities, CanadaHelps.org provides a cost effective alternative to setting up their own online donations facilities.

For donors, CanadaHelps.org simplifies the donating process, making it easy, quick and secure. On any pages where you share personal information or perform financial transactions, CanadaHelps.org encrypts your data using Secure Socket Layers (SSL), allowing you to send and receive information without the worry of having it intercepted.

Put simply, donors go online, make their donation securely and receive a tax receipt for each donation immediately by email.

Recognizing the benefits of online giving to both donors and charities, CanadaHelps launched its first website in 2000. Today, more than five years later, CanadaHelps facilitates over \$10 million in donations to Canadian charities annually.

If you would like to take advantage of this new facility, go to our website and click on the "Donate Now" image that you'll find on our home page. You'll be taken straight to the relevant page at

www.CanadaHelps.org

Thank you!



Shakespeare in the Bedroom...

Each year we rely on the kindness of Prescotttians who open up their homes to billet actors for the summer season. Do you have a basement suite, granny attic or spare bedroom in your home? If so, why not consider being one of our hosts next summer?

Some people are initially cautious about having a stranger living in their home for ten weeks, but any fears are usually quickly dispelled. Someone who was new to billeting last year was Sally Morell. "I prefer the actors to come and go as they please and so do I. My main stipulation is that they take care of themselves," which the actors really appreciate. Some space in the fridge and a place to lay their head at night and they'll be happy!

Another of our billetors last year was Laurie Powers, who found the experience gave her a whole new appreciation of what goes on behind the scenes: "I loved hearing them rehearsing and the opportunity to live vicariously through an actor. Watching her transform from a new person in town to this beautiful lady on stage was amazing."

If you want to find out more, or have a room you'd like to offer, please call us and we'd be delighted to answer any questions you may have!

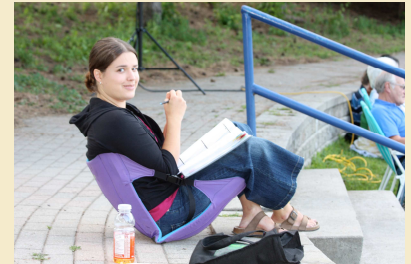


A Star Behind the Scenes

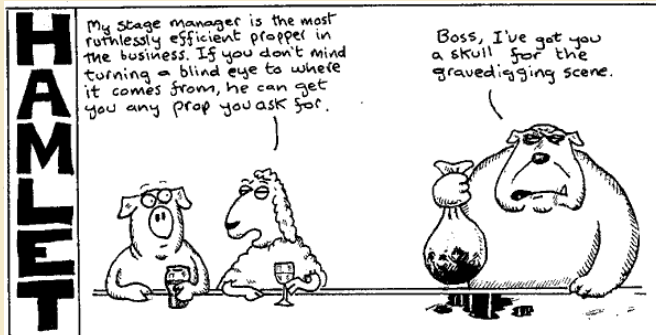
This summer will be Sarah Cutfield's fourth season working for the festival as our Stage Manager. A life in the theatre is a far cry from growing up on an acreage in Turner Valley, a picturesque setting in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. No one in her family was involved in the arts, so how did her interest in theatre grow into a desire to work as a Stage Manager? "I'd always loved performing in high school, doing community plays and playing dress-up with my sister", Sarah told us. When the time came for choosing university courses, she enrolled at Queen's with the intention of going into film but soon changed her mind: "There was something about the feeling of putting a show on, the energy, the atmosphere. I ended up switching my major to theatre after the first semester".

It was while she was at Queen's that she first worked with another festival regular, Craig Walker, who was one of her profs and who has since become a trusted colleague, mentor and friend. "Sarah is such a preternaturally skilled stage manager that people tend to forget that she also does other things very well. I've now done more than a dozen shows with Sarah---so many that I've actually lost count, although it's certainly more than I've collaborated on with any other person. In at least two of those she was an actor---and I can tell you that in the right role she's excellent---and she's made props for another four or five of those. And, of course, there's the fact that she always works well beyond the margins of whatever her job description happens to be for a particular show."

Many people in Prescott have seen Sarah sitting at the back of the amphitheatre night after night during the festival, but the role of the Stage Manager is still a mystery to them so we asked Sarah to explain a little of what her job actually entails. She is the organizational force behind the show - managing all aspects of what happens in rehearsals and on stage. The sort of things that might cover include drawing up the rehearsal schedule, creating or finding props for the plays as the ideas come up during rehearsal, or if anyone in the ensemble has any issues or problems, they will first go to the Stage Manager, who will then decide if it can be dealt with there and then, or if it needs to go up a level to the Artistic Director. If anyone is needed for publicity reasons, she is the one who will ensure that their absence from rehearsals can be accommodated. Likewise, she will help to schedule costume fittings for actors. She's the Mom backstage, keeping everyone on track, mediating (or more likely defusing) any potential conflict, putting band-aids on the boo-boos, both physical and emotional. If the play is a wheel and the actors and directors are spokes, Sarah would be the axle.



Like many of those who come to work in Prescott, Sarah has been charmed by the town that embraces the Shakespeare Festival. When asked what keeps her coming back, she gives an immediate response: "the strength of the artistry and the ensemble, the family atmosphere and the unbelievable outpouring of support from the entire community".



Sometimes there's a danger when you work in the theatre that it becomes all-encompassing and Sarah has found a great way to find a balance in her life by yoga. This May, she and fellow SLSF-er Lana Sugarman will be taking part in an training program to become yoga teachers - so don't be surprised if you see classes popping up in town this summer! Rather than have any huge life-goals, she's more than content to be able to earn a living doing what she loves, making theatre, traveling and helping people on their journeys through life.

Craig Walker sums Sarah up perfectly with this quote from the character of Shakespeare's Henry V:

"a bawcock and a heart of gold...I love the lovely bully."



Shakespeare in the movies

We know many of you like to watch movies of the plays we're putting on each summer, so we'd like to offer some suggestions for your viewing pleasure!



The Taming of the Shrew

There have been many reincarnations of this play on screen, including a very early talkie from 1929 with Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks! One of the best to see is the 1967 version directed by Franco Zeffirelli starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton - perhaps the sparring in the play echoed what was going on in their personal relationship at the time...?

Harder to find, but worth the search, is the 1980 BBC version starring the inimitable John Cleese strutting his Shakespeare stuff as Petruchio.

On a more fun note, the recent movie *10 Things I Hate About You* starring Julia Stiles and the late Heath Ledger is a contemporary adaptation of the story.

Measure for Measure

Not one of the best-known Shakespeare plays, so film adaptations are quite rare. However, the BBC version made in 1979 is a good bet, starring Tom Wilkinson and Corin Redgrave.

Wagner's opera *Das Liebesverbot* also used the play as the basis for its libretto.

Have a gazillion Air Miles?



Are you one of those people that has a gazillion Air Miles sitting around which you never use? Why not consider trading some of your Air Miles in to help us out this summer? For only 700 Air Miles you can get a \$100 VIA Rail gift card, which if donated to us, can be used to transport our actors to and from Prescott for the season. Call us to find out more!