

arts

The Art of Living

spots



Winter
2023

The Cast of Puss In Boots The Panto at
Hudson Village Theatre from
December 15 - January 7

arts hudson

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The Village Theatre Panto Is Back

by Kathryn Lamb

This magical annual family celebration that we are so lucky to enjoy each year will arrive at the Hudson village Theatre on December 15 and play until January 7. It has been 23 years since Heather Markgraf Lowe put on Hudson's first pantomime, a historic British tradition. And this year's production, *Puss-in-Boots*, written by Ben Crocker and directed by Steve Walters promises to delight us once again.

Preparations have been going on for more than 6 months. It is a huge commitment from a double cast of over 50 actors of all ages, as well as backstage workers, volunteers, painters, prop creators, seamstresses, and parents. And it is a labour of love as the proceeds go to benefit the Hudson Village Theatre.

I attended an early rehearsal and the energy was palpable. I watched animated discussions in the aisles, dance steps tried out, and director Steve Walters sitting on the floor

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Director Steve Walters will rely on his British background and his longtime residency in the Hudson area to present a Panto that is both authentic and relevant.

The Hudson Creative Hub Presents a Christmas Concert

Last year's Christmas concert was so popular that the Hudson Creative Hub has asked the same performers to return. The Ukrainian Quartet and the Vocalia Singers will be back at St. Thomas Church at 3:00 pm on December 10th.

"The Ukrainian Quartet" consists of four talented singers of Ukrainian origin. Yuriy Konevych, tenor, Anna Babka soprano, Vira Turko alto and Yourko Kulycky baritone. Their repertoire comprises Ukrainian choral baroque, traditional Byzantine hymns, Ukrainian chants, Ukrainian folk songs and Christmas carols.

"VOCALIA," under the direction of tenor Louis Langelier, include tenor Gabriel Langelier, soprano Annie Sanschagrín, mezzo-soprano Beatrice Stoklas, and soprano Johanne Desrosiers. The latter acts as the animator who will walk us through this musical journey. The singers are accompanied by concert pianist Jacques St. Jean, who has been with this group for several decades.

Hub board member Maurice Panchyshyn helped organize the concert and says, "The musical renditions of our two diverse groups of singers have extended to the audience much joy and pleasure. During this period of world strife, an escape into the world of renowned classics, be it Broadway, Opera or Italian love songs, offers a welcome and peaceful respite. This concert is not to be missed and will offer an experience of pure joy and an escape into yester-year."

Tickets online at the Hub website: hudsoncreativehub.org

Andrea Blanar Exhibits Her Work at the Hudson Creative Hub

by Bert Markgraf

Accomplished artist and Hudson resident Andrea Blanar creates unique works reminiscent of sacred iconic images. Her paintings of wetlands seen through frames, windows or other structures use a greenish sepia palette that underscores the marshes, water and reeds of her subjects.

She surrounds her painted works with elaborate frames, some three-dimensional structures and others painted. She says the frames and parts of the paintings are the barriers across which the images of wetlands are displayed. It is a technique that draws viewers in while at the same time they pause to admire details in the surrounding structures.

Andrea's way of painting derives organically and authentically from her experience of living in many different places as a child before spending most of her adult life in Canada. Born in Hungary, her family eventually came to Canada and she studied at McGill and Concordia.

From an insecure childhood, she found a spiritual haven when visiting the marshes of the Bay of Fundy. It was from there that she developed her

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Broadway Comes to Hudson courtesy of new ENCORE Musical Theatre group

All-volunteer organizers, cast and crew all set for March launch with "Curtains"

by James Parry

Lovers of live Broadway-style musicals rejoice! And a big round of applause for the newly-formed ENCORE Musical Theatre that will be staging its first ever production right here in its home town of Hudson in March 2024.

The brainchild of Sylvia Mauri and Karen Pearce, and an equally dedicated and multi-faceted team of volunteers currently working behind the scenes in advance of the launch, its aim is to give local show people opportunities to sing, dance and fulfill their creative ambitions while bringing quality musical theatre back to the area.

As to how it all came about? Explains Sylvia, "I have had various careers in my life but community theatre has always been a constant. As a lifelong actor/singer/

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MUSIC FOR JOY & PEACE



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Johanne Desrosiers, animatrice



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Yuriy Konevych, tenor
Yourko Kulycky, baritone



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Spot On for Seniors Looking to Have Fun and Make New Friends at Le SPOT

Twice a week get togethers at Stephen F. Shaar Community Centre in Hudson

by James Parry

Every Tuesday and Thursday for almost a year now, a fun-loving bunch of seniors - and many of them never having met before - have been getting together in the basement at the Stephen F. Shaar Community Centre in Hudson for a whole bunch of activities that make their day. And all because of Covid in a way!

For it was during the pandemic that Sylvia Mauri got to thinking about just how privileged she was in not having lost anyone dear to her when so many others were not so fortunate.

Explains Sylvia, "The need in the community for social interaction between seniors became apparent following two years of isolation and, inspired by programs in other towns and with a simplified program, I proposed a social centre for seniors to the Town of Hudson and received carte blanche to run it. And it has turned out better than I could have ever hoped."

Adds Sylvia, "I am so pleased and it is rewarding to see that people who did not know one another beforehand have become good friends. The camaraderie is simply

wonderful to see."

Known as Le SPOT for those over 55 and with free tea, coffee, juices, cakes and cookies served every time from 10 'til noon, it is the setting for card and board games, bingo, chat groups, cinema, birthday celebrations, craft activities, singalongs, bazaars, day outings and local guest speakers and musical groups on a regular basis.

Moreover, special events have included a performance by the Greenwood Kitchen Ceilidh, a St. Jean-Baptiste/Canada Day BBQ on the lawn, and a visit to an apple orchard and winery this past Fall. And upcoming events will include a Pyjama Christmas Breakfast with a 'Meanie Santa' gift exchange, a first anniversary celebratory Dinner Dance in January, and hopefully a visit to a sugar shack in the Spring.

And here's the best bit. There is no membership fee whatsoever. Just show up, join in the fun, and you will be more than welcome!

Helping to ensure that everything runs smoothly in every aspect of day-to-day operations are dedi-

cated volunteers comprising Mary Jeganathan, Sue Rikley, Patricia Paterson and Helen Beaulieu.

Says Sylvia, "Just as importantly, behind the scenes is a special person who has been there from Day 1, wholeheartedly believing in the project and me. Namely, Laura McCaffrey. I couldn't have embarked upon this venture without her help and so I owe her a huge thanks."

The same goes for Vaudreuil-Soulanges Liberal MP Peter Schiefke. Explains Sylvia, "Because of the success of this program, the Town received a grant from the federal government and Peter himself made the presentation when he spent a morning with us at Le SPOT. It just happened to be on Trivia day, he had a lot of fun playing with us, and his team won!"

This grant incidentally helps to cover much of the expense involved in special outings for which only a nominal fee is charged.

So it would seem that everyone is a winner at the non-profit Le SPOT!

Birthday boy Arthur Abbey in checkered shirt in front of Sylvia Mauri celebrated turning 94 years young with his friends at Le SPOT earlier this month.

Photograph by James Parry



Andrea Blanar, Artist Statement 2023 Hudson

Introduction: Creating private shrines is an ancient ritual shared across all religions and cultures. My works are devotional altars echoing the legacy of women before their home-altars. These shrines that man has created have changed very little over time in their intent and aesthetic treatment. One senses that all artists while creating are engaging in some communal worship, finding meaning in life, defining their identity or describing a personalized informal connection with a higher power. Contemporary artists continue to collect, create and reconstruct and record daily observances. In ritualistic re-enactments, we search for meaning in the objects of daily life, and then reduce them all to their simplest personal equations.

Ecclesiastical References: As a refugee child, my family's few possessions were devoid of any aesthetic objects. It was within the architecture of churches that I became aware that man could construct powerful objects, the sculptures in alcoves, the elaborately decorated columns, the altar pieces and stained glass windows all had a profound impact on me. Not surprising then, that it is within this ecclesiastical framework that I engage in a personal narrative that combines the sacred and the profane. The structure of my work reveals a Journey. By creating portals, windows and boxes, a step by step entry is induced into another realm where the artist and the spectator can reassess their relationship to the eternal order of Nature while situating oneself within the universal continuum of life.



The Origins of the the Home Shrine: Now in Canada, my grandmother had a cabinet-shrine that held a few of the salvaged fragments found after the Szombathely bombings. At every visit the fragments were gently taken out, the stories told and retold. In 1945, my family dug through the rubble of bombs searching for loved ones. As an artist, I often searched through demolition yards, saving damaged objects. These evocative objects were then carefully reconstructed into paintings and sculptures that continuously referred to our endangered wetlands.

The Wetlands-sacred sites. Thirty years ago, my encounter with the salt-water marshes near the Bay of Fundy was so transformative that I purchased a historic church near the Tantramar Marshes. For over 20 years this church became a summer studio and a spiritual haven. The vast spaces of these coastal marshlands and mudflats, unfettered by human concerns, reassuringly confirmed my insignificance within the order of nature. Paradoxically they empowered me, by situating me concretely within that order. These wetlands became for me the focal point in which all of life's experiences are reinterpreted. The wetlands are in themselves shrines, and in the process of creation I am compelled to reconnect with them.

INVITATION HUDSON CREATIVE HUB

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"Andrea Blanar usually sets up the pictorial spaces by imposing a structure that resembles a window or a portal overlooking her landscapes. This construction becomes a symbol of passage from one world to another, the entranceway to the inner temple, the border between sacred and profane..... the real link in this artist's approach can be found in the meaning of the sacred, and in the echoes it evokes in us".

Robert Bernier, Director, Editor « Revue-Parcours »

A Little Music in the Night II

Concert and talk back with soprano Claire de Sévigné and pianist Brian Jackson
by Clint Ward

Hudson-grown opera singer, Claire de Sévigné celebrated a visit home with a glorious concert on November 11. The Hudson Creative Hub welcomed a sold out audience for the two-act program of opera arias and songs honouring Remembrance Day.

With degrees in music from McGill and the University of Toronto and also as a graduate of the Zurich International Opera Studio, the Salzburg Young Singers Project and the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble, Claire has become an internationally renowned soprano with a full schedule in the foreseeable future.

Piano accompaniment was by Brian Jackson, a retired Maestro and master of piano and organ. With the talented Claire and Brian on stage it made the evening a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the audience.

Among the concert highlights, the first act concluded with a moving rendition of *O mio babbino caro* from Puccini's opera *Gianni Schicchi*. Without pausing, Claire segued immediately into *Little Girl Blue* from the Broadway Musical, *Jumbo* by Rogers and Hart. Both songs were about a young woman in distress. The first, asking her reluctant father for his support of her coming marriage and the second lamenting the loss of a career and love. Claire's emotional and musically perfect performance left a lasting impression.

The second act was a poignant dedication to remembrance, featuring a standout performance of the folk song, *Where Have all the Flowers Gone* by Pete Seeger. Accompanied by Brian's sparse piano, Claire's rendition brought tears to the eyes, underscoring the symbolism of poppies and the song's timeless message.

The following day the Hub's *In Conversation With* began at 2.00 pm featuring an insightful discussion with Claire, Brian and esteemed actress Sharry Flett who has enjoyed a long and creative role in Canadian Theatre.

The year 2024 will mark her 32nd season with the renowned *Shaw Festival*. During her earlier 3 years at the *Stratford Festival* she received the

Tyrone Guthrie Award. Her embarking on an artistic life began at McGill University, as did Claire's, and both started out with the desire to pursue opera. A further connection to the November 11 atmosphere was receiving a Best Actress Gemini nomination for the CBC film, *War Brides*.

The conversation delved into the intricacies of opera, theatre and music performance, exploring the diverse path each artist took in their careers. The audience engaged actively, asking questions in the intimate Hub setting, gaining insights into the challenges, humour and busy schedules of the three stage luminaries.



Claire de Sévigné



Talk back with Brian Jackson, Sharry Flett, Clint Ward and Claire de Sévigné



DE MA FAMILLE À LA VÔTRE,
FROM MY FAMILY TO YOURS,

Joyeuses Fêtes
Happy Holidays

PETER SCHIEFKE

député fédéral - Member of Parliament
Vaudreuil-Soulanges

Broadway Comes to Hudson

courtesy of new ENCORE Musical Theatre group
by James Parry

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dancer, I have a strong connection to musical theatre, and felt it was a loss to the community when the Hudson Music Club ceased to be. In speaking with people I know, I realized I wasn't the only one who felt this way and so I thought what can I do to bring musical theatre back to the community?"



Sylvia Mauri

Thrilled that musical theatre is making a long-awaited return to the area, Sylvia is most pleased to be active in the inception and organization of ENCORE. Upon retiring as a teacher of modern languages, drama and dance, she performed in a number of Hudson Music Club, Hudson Players, and Lakeshore Players productions. She now divides her time coordinating a programme of activities for a local seniors' social group and volunteering in the community. (See story on Le Spot on page 3).

Adds Sylvia, "So I thought, Hey! someone should start another group. While having lunch with Karen earlier this year, I discovered that she had previously been President of the Hudson Music Club. Eureka! After some insistent persuasion on my part, I managed to convince her that we could do it. She agreed, but wisely reminded me we would need a devoted and committed group for this venture, so we reached out to anyone interested in joining us. The feedback was extremely positive and, as a result, we now have a dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer organizing committee."

That committee, several members of which have a lot of experience on the Hudson theatrical scene, comprises the aforementioned Karen Pearce, acting President, Vice President Elizabeth Proulx, Treasurer Chris Gobeil, and Secretary Sylvia Mauri supported by members at large, Eileen McAleese, Candy Holder, Karen Delorme, Susan Corbett and Silvia Latour.

After its first production, ENCORE will have an AGM with elections and this committee will become an elected Board of Governors.

"And what is that first production?" you are surely asking. Answers Sylvia, "It is a very funny musical written by Kander and Ebb, the creators of Cabaret and Chicago. Unlike these two shows, however, CURTAINS is a very light and fun murder mystery musical. Our goal was always to pick an upbeat, toe-tapping production that would keep the audience laughing and have them leaving the theatre with a smile on their face. We looked at many options and felt this production ticked all our boxes!"

What's more, the production is up and running. Auditions have been held, the parts have been cast and rehearsals have been underway since mid-October under the guidance of Hudsonite Artistic Director Glen Robinson, Stage Manager Peter Garbacz, Musical Director Jen Baltuonis and Choreographer Maxime Deslauriers. The team also includes Assistant Musical Director Elizabeth Proulx, Set Designer Lea Durocher, Costumers Karen Pearce and Sylvia Mauri, and Props Manager Silvia Latour.

States Karen, "We are a group of musical theatre devotees and your neighbours who decided to round out the local theatre scene by creating Théâtre Musical ENCORE Musical Theatre which we want to share with as many people as possible and we welcome enthusiasts not only from Hudson, but from the surrounding environs as well. If you love musical theatre you are surely welcome here!"

Adds Karen, "That being said, ENCORE, which runs completely on volunteer power, is relying on donations, memberships and ticket sales to finance the project. Mounting any production is a costly initiative, and even more so when it comes to a musical theatre production. There is no question that additional fundraising, corporate sponsorships, and support from the community will be critical to the success of our venture."

Speaking of fundraising, CURTAINS will be performed at Hudson Village Theatre as a co-production and fundraiser for both Encore Musical Theatre and HVT, and organizers are extremely grateful to Executive Director Kalina Skulksa for her support and encouragement. Show dates are from March 7 to 17 and tickets will be on sale shortly through the HVT box office at (450) 458 5361.



Karen Pearce

Karen has been involved in amateur theatre since 1989 when she joined Beckett Players and hasn't looked back. She has worked with Lakeshore Light Opera, Lakeshore Players, Lyric Theatre and the Lyric Theatre Singers, St. George's High School, The Segal Centre, the WOWCATS, the Hudson Music Club (former President), the Hudson Village Theatre, and Hudson Players Club, in a number of capacities including performer, costumer, choreographer, artistic director, producer, and board member.

For anyone wishing to become a member or to find out more about this exciting new group, it has a website,

encoremusicaltheatre.ca

where there is a link to a membership form with several levels of membership available. People can submit their membership by e-transfer, or by cheque to PO Box 242, Hudson, J0P 1H0, or they can email encoremthudson@gmail.com for more information.

In closing, ENCORE is really desperately in need of a place where it can build its sets and any help from within the community would be greatly appreciated.

GALLERY +



Markgraf Silk Screen Serigraphies



Heather Lowe Hudson Landscapes

galleryplus.ca

The Village Theatre Panto Is Back

Puss in Boots by Ben Crocker, directed by Steve Walters
by Kathryn Lamb

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on a corner of the stage having a powwow with six of the junior cast members. Steve rises, calls for attention, and the rehearsal begins.

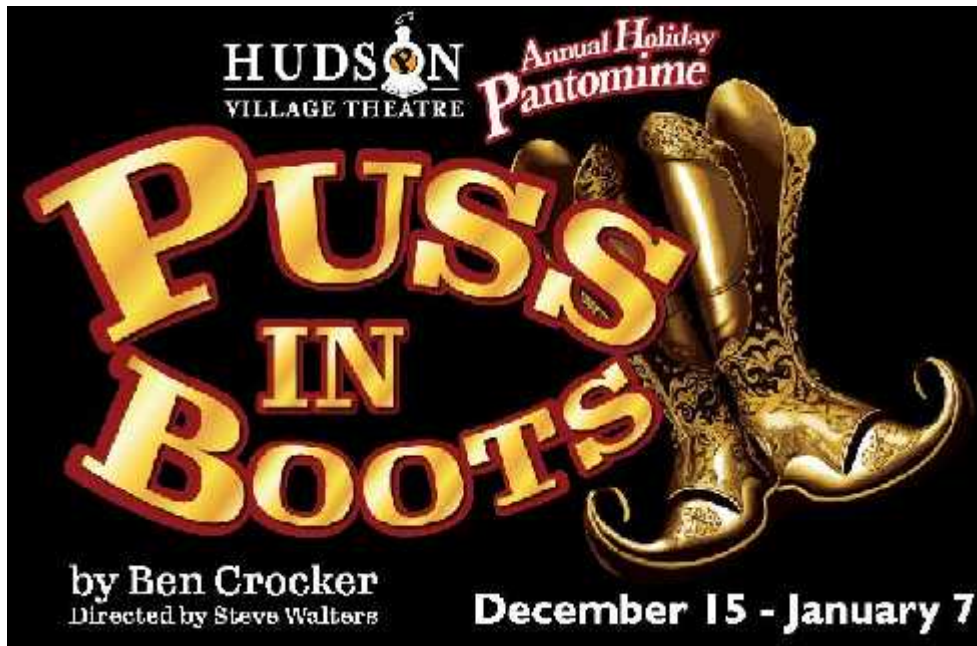
This scene begins in an unnamed village (feels British, but could be Hudson?) where a motley crew of locals with a lot of attitude are dancing to a catchy version of "Uptown Funk". The king and queen (King Wally the Once and Queen Wendy)

are visiting the town for a "Walkabout" with a possible ulterior motive. In this version of the *Puss-in-Boots* story, there is an ogre, a good and a bad fairy, a princess who wants to marry for love, and a couple of killer bunnies. Oh, and Jack, a poor but charming young man who is lucky to have inherited a Very Special Cat. But, of course, I am not allowed to divulge any more of the plot, or the bad fairy may punish me!

This *Puss-in-boots* has all the prerequisite "panto" components—star-crossed lovers, nasty villains, magic, audience participation, cross-dressing, and transformation... Just like everyday life! (I am of course, joking). But I do think that Panto gives us permission, for just a few hours, to participate in a kind of world where good triumphs over evil, and where even the youngest audience member can make a difference in the outcome by warning the good guy about the danger lurking behind him. Where else do we have that kind of power?

The production is energetic, fast moving and hilarious. The music choices are clever and a little wacky (in the best way), and the dance routines appear to be coming together well. The set, consisting of backdrops of painted "olios" has been created by the amazing J.C. Olivier, the costumes by Christine McCaffrey, the props by Julie Hébert, choreography by Karen Pearce, and stage management by Shelly Walters.

On the technical side, Andy Bowers is the technical director, Adam Walters the lighting designer, and Karen Walker the production manager. Clarence and Cripps, another British tradition, are once again sponsoring this year's production.



Tickets are already selling well, so plan your visit soon. There are both evening and matinee performances. Contact the box office at:

450 458 5361, or
hvtbox@villagetheatre.ca

or order online:
villagetheatre.ca

The Full Monty, by Simon Beaufoy, Directed by John Sheridan

produced by the Hudson Players Club at the Village Theatre October 19th to 29th

reviewed by Kathryn Lamb

The Hudson Players Club's highly anticipated production of the hit British stage play *The Full Monty*, which was so cruelly halted by COVID three years ago, has finally had its run at the theatre. Written by Simon Beaufoy, directed by John Sheridan and choreographed by Donna Stewart, this play was almost completely sold out.

Drama and humour combine in this story about a group of ordinary people, in this case, steelworkers from Sheffield, England in the 1970's, whose lives have been turned upside down by circumstances beyond their control. Strikes, mill closings and massive layoffs have torn apart families and depression and desperation are rampant. As the play opens, we hear a gritty-voiced radio broadcaster announcing additional lay-offs, and the unmistakable plummy tones of Margaret Thatcher trying to justify her policies.

Gaz (played by Don Fletcher) is a divorced steelworker who cannot make child support payments to his wife because he has lost his job. He adores his son Nathan (played alternately by Tyler Heely-Ray and Ryan McKenzie), but will lose access to him if he cannot come up with the money.

Gaz is not a conventional good guy. He is flawed and occasionally involves

his young son in some of his shadier schemes. But his devotion is clear, and Nathan loves his Dad.

Gaz's friends Dave (Tommy Furino) and Gerald (William Jackson) see their lives disintegrating, and the poignant Lomper (James Berryman) has contemplated suicide.

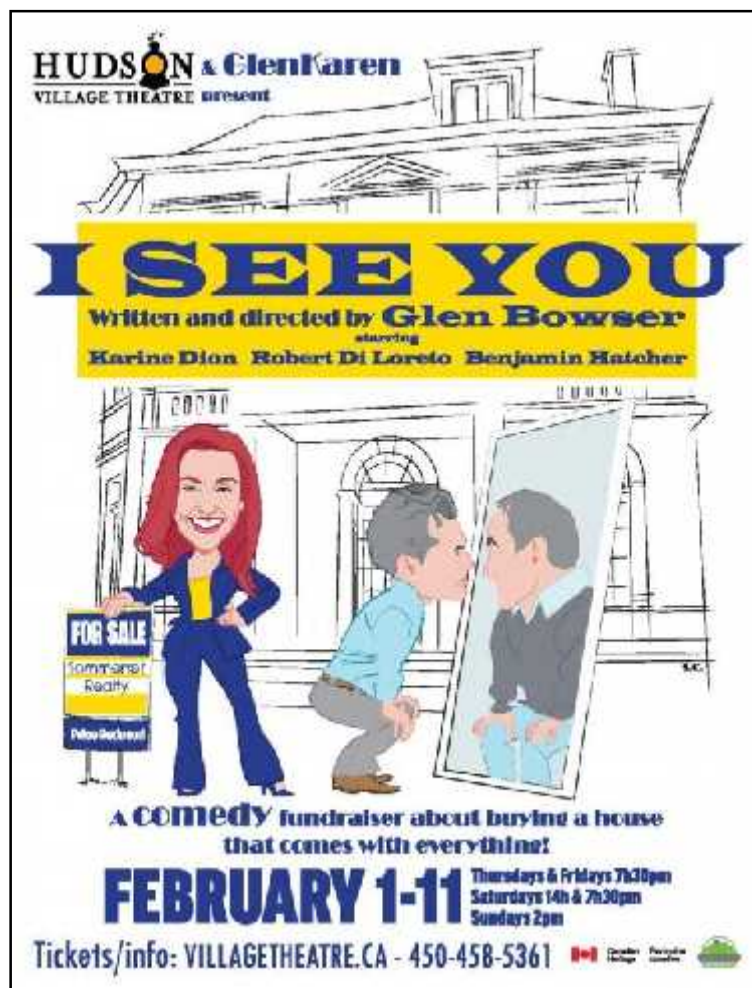
One evening, Gaz hears of a performance by the Chippendales, a troupe of male strippers, who perform to sellout crowds of wildly cheering female spectators in his local pub. Gaz has a brainwave. He comes up with a plan that is loaded with risk, yet guaranteed to create scenes of both hilarity and heartbreak.

The characters represent a range of ages, income, family situations, sexual orientation, and personal experience. But all are broken in some way. Unemployment has left them feeling useless and frustrated and most have troubled relationships. This plan may be their only hope. Together, they muddle along, get a coach, work out the steps, encounter obstacles, quit and come back. Each actor manages to create a character that we feel

for. And in the end, how good you are is less important than how much you are willing to give, and these guys, these heroes, are willing to give everything they've got

The Hudson Players Club is an impressive organization with a history of fine productions dating back to 1948. As well as actors, it boasts a talented pool of backstage designers. The darkened warehouse set designed by J.C.Olivier, with pale light streaming in through old transomed windows, and the evocative lighting effects of Adam Walters set us firmly into the grey days of industrial Britain in the 70's. The costume creations which added so much to the brilliance of this production (and which I dare not divulge!) were the work of Norma Murphy.

So, the action builds and we hold our breath, and the climax, when it comes brings the house down. It's a cliché to say you had to be there, but honestly,..... you had to be there!



Andrea Blanar Exhibits Her Work at the Hudson Creative Hub

by Bert Markgraf

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approach to painting the wetlands for which she is known.

Andrea recalls how she internalized images as a child and then transformed them into new shapes. She says, "When one is torn from ones homeland one belongs nowhere and compensates by becoming a citizen of the world. As many immigrants, I grew up feeling neither this nor that and became totally self reliant, creating a haven within myself. So the process of creating is linked to that experience of counteracting the sense that one does not belong. Retaining images becomes one's history."



She recalls sitting at an attic window as a child in Belgium and for days on end examining the lines and shapes of a distant rooftop chimney. She remembers scratching images into the mud when in the Dominican Republic. Later, at the age of nine, in Canada,

she covered the whole back wall of her classroom with coastal scenes of water and tropical vegetation. At home she drew images on any available blank paper space - in the margins of newspapers and in books. Art became a connection between her past and present lives.

As an adult she embarked on a successful career as an artist. She was a resource person and artistic jury member for Quebec's minister of Cultural Affairs. She helped organize travelling exhibitions and became a cultural advisor for Montreal.

At the same time, she exhibited her work regularly. In the 1970s she exhibited at the Noho Gallery in New York and at galleries across Canada. But it is in the 1980s that she first visited the wetlands of the Bay of Fundy and had an epiphany.

"In the wetlands there is a peaceful beauty and a sense of belonging. Now no matter where I go, I can always link to the closest wetland and find a comforting haven," she says. "The art then after this first contact with the marshes began immediately to present me with doors and windows through which I could enter and connect to these sacred places."

The Hub Exhibition runs until the end of February. The vernissage is on December 9th, 3:00 to 6:00 pm. More information about the artist at:

andreablanar.com

Comedy Fundraiser *I See You* at the Village Theatre

Glen Bowser wrote the play and directs

by Bert Markgraf

During a fifty-year career as a professional actor, long-time Hudson resident Glen Bowser has brought to life many characters. He has now written the play, *I See You*, to be presented at Village Theatre, with the aim of creating characters as a playwright and director.

Set in a small town, the play's cast includes real estate agent Maggie, who has been trying to sell a local mansion. Tom may want to buy it so he goes to have a look. The results are a fun examination of relationships and unusual situations producing wonderful comedy.



Glen has experienced actors Robert Di Loreto, Benjamin Hatcher and Karine Dion taking on the three roles in the play. Karen Cromar is co-producing with Village Theatre's Kalina Skulska, Karen Walker is stage manager and Adam Walters is the lighting designer.

Glen found that once he started writing the play, he couldn't wait to get back to it. He says he wanted to, "introduce you to some people I know very well, have them tell you their story, and let you have some fun with them." He thinks the audience is going to have as much fun watching this play as he had writing it.

I See You opens at the Village Theatre on Thursday, February 1st and runs Wednesdays through Sundays until February 11th. Tickets can be bought from the Village Theatre box office or online at

villagetheatre.ca



Three "Not to Be Missed" International Films

from the Hudson Film Society's Monday Night at the Movies

by Clint Ward

For the Hudson Film Society's, *Monday at the Movies*, three wonderful and interesting films will mark the end of this year and the first months of 2024.

First up is the film from the UK, ***Living*** featuring an Academy Award nomination performance by the ever popular Bill Nighy. As important is that the film is in actual fact a 'remake.' You might say a masterful remake of a masterpiece film from Japan.

In 1952 the famous Japanese director, Akiwa Kurosawa gave the world a film called ***Ikiru*** (To Live). It had three major themes, learning how to live, the disheartening inefficiency of bureaucracy and the plight of family life in Japan.

Rotten Tomatoes gave ***Ikiru*** a 98% rating based on 55 critics and noted that their consensus was, "***Ikiru*** is a well-acted and deeply moving humanist tale about a man facing his own mortality, one of legendary director Akira Kurosawa's most intimate films." ***Living*** was awarded 94%, from 222 reviews and the consensus was, "***Living*** sets a high bar for itself in setting out to remake a Kurosawa classic — and director Oliver Hermanus and star Bill Nighy clear it in triumphant fashion."



Living will be at the Village Theatre on December 18 at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm. For non-members of the Hudson Film Society, tickets are always available on the screening day.

The first film of the new year – is it 2024 already? – will be ***Driving Madeleine (Une belle course)***. "Would you mind if we took a quick detour?" - "It's not on the way, not even close" - "I know, but it'll take what? Ten minutes? What's ten minutes out of our lives? It's nothing."

A seemingly simple taxi ride across Paris evolves into a profound meditation on the realities of the driver, whose personal life is in shambles, and his fare, an elderly woman whose warmth belies her shocking past.

Charles (Dany Boon) the taxi driver is having a very bad day. Some pressing personal debts are due, he's in danger of losing his driver's licence to numerous traffic infractions, and his marriage is strained to the point of snapping.

Enter Madeleine (Line Renaud), an immaculately groomed 92-year-old woman, who informs Charles she is moving into a care home and would like to make some stops along the way, predicting that this might be her last car ride through the city.

Initially exasperated and grumbling, Charles is slowly lured in by her warm charm and directness, and fascinated by the stories she wants to tell. Their ride takes them through the momentous locations of her life and we discover that she has had a shocking and very dramatic journey indeed.



Their short friendship is sure to have a lasting impact as Madeleine listens to Charles confess his own worries, all of which she absorbs with candour and clarifying humour.

Boon, an actor best known for his comedic work, creates a dramatic portrait of a frustrated man facing a personal crisis of epic proportions. His darker, sharper edges allow Renaud (renowned for decades in France as a singer) to shine as the pure shimmering light that is Madeleine.

She reminds us that inside every seemingly benign elderly woman we might pass on the street is a warrior, a nurturer, and a spirited adventurer. ***Driving Madeleine*** had its North American Premiere at the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival and its U.S. Premiere at the 2023 Palm Springs International Film Festival.

Our chance to experience this taxi ride is at the Village Theatre, January 15, 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm.

Justine Triet's ***Anatomy of a Fall*** won the Palme d'Or at 2023 Cannes International Film Festival and that will be the *Monday at the Movies* film on February 19 at the usual times.

Triet is just the third woman director to win Cannes' top honour. (Jane Campion was the first-ever female Palme d'Or winner in 1993 with ***The Piano***). When Jane Fonda presented this year's top honour, she noted that when she first attended the Cannes festival, back in the 1970s, "There

were no women directors competing at that time, and it never even occurred to us that there was something wrong with that. We've come a long way."

German actress Sandra Hüller stars in the film as a German novelist who is put on trial for murder after her husband dies in suspicious circumstances.

In his review, *The Hollywood Reporter's* Jon Frosch called **Anatomy of a Fall** "a gripping and gratifyingly rich drama" and called lead actress Hüller "sensational."

A smart, solidly crafted procedural that's anchored in family drama, **Anatomy of a Fall** finds star Sandra Hüller and director/co-writer Justine Triet operating at peak power. For the past year, Sandra, her husband Samuel, and their eleven-year-old son Daniel have lived a secluded life in a remote town in the French Alps. When Samuel is found dead in the snow below their chalet, the police question whether he was murdered or committed suicide. Samuel's suspicious death is presumed murder, and Sandra becomes the main suspect. What follows is not just an



investigation into the circumstances of Samuel's death but an unsettling psychological journey into the depths of Sandra and Samuel's conflicted relationship.

Members of the Film Society viewed **Anatomy of a Fall** at this year's Toronto International Film Festival

and immediately requested it for our screen as soon as it was available. The film is long but the story and performers are so powerful that the time length was not noticed.

Get your memberships at the Film Society website:

[hudsonfilmsociety.ca](https://www.hudsonfilmsociety.ca)



Season's Greetings!

Helen Henshaw

Top 5% real estate sales in Quebec

Awards:







The Greatest Play in the History of the World by Ian Kershaw

Hudson Village Theatre Professional Season, Sept. 13-24

Directed by Dean Patrick Fleming, Reviewed by Kathryn Lamb

Entering the theatre, we see suspended a formation of dark blue beams converging on the centre of the stage. A line of plain brown cardboard boxes lines the front. There are sounds and mysterious images projected on the walls on each side of theatre. We hear voices from NASA announcing the launch of the 1977 Voyager probe into outer space looking for other signs of life in the cosmos. That perennial question - are we alone? The spaceship carries a golden record etched with examples of our greatest artistic and scientific achievements curated by the iconic astronomer Carl Sagan.

Our narrator enters. Her perfectly modulated voice, combined with precise gestures, gradually brings to life this world in front of us. It is 4:40 in the morning on Preston Street, normally a busy thoroughfare. But everything is silent.

While narrating, she arranges some of the boxes on beams and they are transformed into homes and apartments. A few lights come on. We are totally with her. Tom, a young man, lives at #28. He watches a girl in a David Bowie t shirt in a lit window across the street. Time passes. He checks his clock again. It is still 4:40. Something seriously strange is happening here.

This one-woman-play, a Canadian premiere, is written by British author Ian Kershaw, and directed by Hudson Village Theatre artistic director Dean Patrick Fleming. Amanda Kellock plays the lead (only) role, that of the narrator.

The individuals she talks about in her story are represented by shoes and slippers that are extracted from the brown cardboard boxes on the stage, and precisely placed in front of us. We meet Sara, the girl in the David Bowie t-shirt, and an elderly couple, the Forshaws, who live down the road.

Mr. Forshaw is a retired literature professor, and his wife is a beloved high school science teacher with "per aspera ad astra (through hardship to the stars) tattooed on

the inside of her forearm. The narrator carries the story from beginning to end, without a break. It is a tour de force.

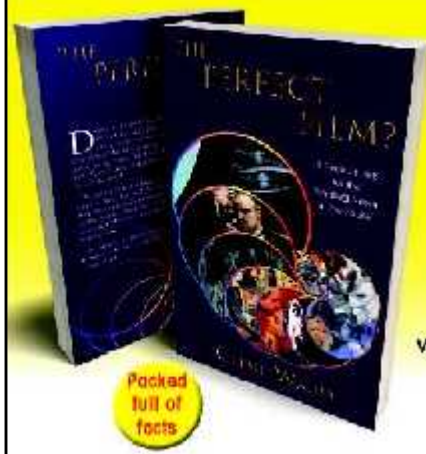
She creates an alternate world on Preston Street that weaves together space science, humanity, and eastern mysticism into a tale of love, hope and the importance of community. I found this play moving, if at times puzzling. And the question that we the audience are asked at the end of the play, is a profound one that has stayed with me.

A slate of ultra-talented designers (Peter Vatsis - set and lighting, Rob Denton - sound, Kevin Conforty - technical and video, Wil Schonfelder - assistant set and lighting, Sabrina Miller - costumes) collaborated to create this unique, imaginative, alternate world. Many of their ideas are specific to this Hudson production. Together, they created a world where the rules are a little different, where life on earth and life in space are connected, and where hope

and science jointly enrich life, instead of being at odds with each other.

I confess to having seen this play twice, loved it twice, and the audience gave it a standing ovation each time.





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Hudsonite All Set for World Tour with Legendary Sam Roberts Band

Keyboardist Eric Fares plays key role in recent release of new album

by James Parry

With seven best-selling albums as well as a legacy of hit singles on the airwaves to their credit, Canada's Sam Roberts Band is truly in a league of its own. Their legendary live show has seen them performing on stages around the world including in Australia, Japan, plus extensive tours of Canada, Europe, and the United States, and has brought them to festivals such as Bonnaroo in Tennessee, Austin City Limits in Texas, Lollapalooza in Chicago and alongside such giants as the Rolling Stones and AC/DC.

But was gobsmacked to discover that there is a strong Hudson connection to everything the band does, including the recent release to critical acclaim of their eighth full-length album *The Adventures of Ben Blank* and ahead of a world tour in February next year.

That connection being keyboardist Eric Fares who moved to Hudson almost exactly two years ago together with his wife, Taylor, and two young sons, Theo and Oliver, then aged three and just three months respectively.

Caught up with Eric earlier this month to learn more about this quietly-spoken proud family man, extremely low profile artist, and musician extraordinaire and what an enjoyable experience it was.

Said Eric, "My folks left Alexandria, Egypt, for Montreal in 1969. They had two boys at the Royal Vic in '72 and '75 (me) respectively and reared them as children of the new world in the suburb of Boisbriand at a time when you could still send your kids to English school. Piano lessons were part and parcel of growing up in my family but my father playing *La Cumparsita* on the basement piano was probably the most memorable part of our musical education."

And why the move to Hudson? Explained Eric, "We had outgrown our second floor shoebox apartment in N.D.G. and as soon as Taylor's work downtown allowed for working from home we set our

sights on Hudson. And we have never regretted it for one minute."

Added Eric, "Have to admit though that navigating the pandemic at the outset was surreal and stressful in many ways. But making the move here gave us a genuine sense of relief. For between the kind folks we've had the good fortune to call our neighbours and the forests and trails and the Ottawa River, not to mention the beauty of the town hidden behind the old horse fences and country cottages, it felt like we'd landed in a secret enclave that had somehow slipped out of time."

Eric also has nothing but praise for his friend and 'boss', singer, songwriter and guitarist Sam Roberts, bassist James Hall, guitarist David Nugent, and drummer Joshua Trager.

Said Eric, "With myself on keyboards, we have been playing together since the early and mid-2000s, but Sam, James, and I had played together in a couple of bands before that in high school and college. We'd perhaps matured out of the high school dream of headlining in Glastonbury but continued playing music as a labour of love, really, and Sam just kept writing great songs."

As for the tour? "We are all so very excited to be able to go on

the road again after having had to shelve the one we had planned after recording *All Of Us* in 2020. We'll be starting off at the Corona Theatre, now the Beanfield Theatre, on February 2nd in Montreal and ending in the U.K. and Spain in April."

However, always the family man, Eric added, "As exciting as it sounds, the really important thing for me is that it will leave plenty of time to spend time with our families in between legs."

For more info on the Sam Roberts Band, their new album *The Adventures of Ben Blank*, and the upcoming world tour, check out their website at:

samrobertsband.com

Ah, what an adventure. Ben Blank and all!



Eric Fares on the road and on the keyboard.

Arts Hudson Calendar of Events

December 2023 Events

Town of Hudson Community Centre, [hudson.quebec](https://www.hudson.quebec.ca)

Saturday December 2nd Breakfast with Santa 8:30 to 10:30 am
Saturday December 9th Coffee with the Mayor, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Hudson Creative Hub, hudsoncreativehub.org

Saturday December 2nd Italian Club market 11:00 am to 4 pm
Sunday December 3rd Opera and Bubbles Hansel and Gretel 2:00 to 4:00 pm
Saturday December 9th Hub Market 10:00am to 3:00 pm
December 10th Hub Christmas Concert Held at St Thomas Church 3:00 to 5:00 pm
Sunday December 31st Parliamo Italiano !:00 to 5:00 pm

Greenwood Centre for Living History, greenwoodcentre.org

Sunday December 3rd Old Fashioned Christmas 1:30 to 5:00 pm
Friday December 8th Greenwood Singers at St. James Church 7:00 to 9:00 pm
Sunday December 10th Old Fashioned Christmas 1:30 to 5:00 pm

Hudson Film Society, hudsonfilmsociety.ca

Monday December 18th, "Living"
Monday at the Movies. Become a member - see website for details

Village Theatre, villagetheatre.ca

Hudson Village Theatre Annual Pantomime, *Puss in Boots*

Friday, December 15 @ 7pm, Saturday, December 16 @ 2pm, Saturday, December 16 @ 7pm,
Sunday, December 17 @ 2pm, Friday December 22 @ 7pm, Saturday, December 23 @ 2pm,
Saturday, December 23 @ 7pm, Sunday, December 24 @ 11am, Tuesday, December 26 @ 2pm,
Tuesday, December 26 @ 7pm, Wednesday, December 27 @ 2pm, Wednesday, December 27 @ 7pm,
Thursday, December 28 @ 2pm, Thursday, December 28 @ 7pm, Friday, December 29 @ 7pm,
Saturday, December 30 @ 2pm, Saturday, December 30 @ 7pm, Sunday, December 31 @ 2pm,
Monday, January 1 @ 2pm, Thursday, January 4 @ 7pm, Friday, January 5 @ 7pm,
Saturday, January 6 @ 2pm, Saturday, January 6 @ 7pm, Sunday, January 7 @ 2pm

Cardinal Microbrewery Events, cardinalhudson.com

Live music every weekend, plus an ongoing program of comedy nights,
trivia and tasting events - see website for details

Chateau du Lac Events, chateaudulac.ca

Trivia Night every second Wednesday, live music Thursdays and Saturdays,
Fridays Ladies Night and Happy Hour Mondays through Fridays - see website for details

January 2024 Events

Village Theatre, villagetheatre.ca

Hudson Village Theatre Annual Pantomime, *Puss in Boots*

Monday, January 1 @ 2pm, Thursday, January 4 @ 7pm, Friday, January 5 @ 7pm,
Saturday, January 6 @ 2pm, Saturday, January 6 @ 7pm, Sunday, January 7 @ 2pm

Hudson Creative Hub, hudsoncreativehub.org

Month of January Andrea Blonar Paintings Exhibition
Saturday January 13th Hub Market 10:00 am to 15:00 pm
Sunday January 28th Parliamo Italiano !:00 to 5:00 pm

January 2024 Events, continued

Hudson Film Society, hudsonfilmsociety.ca

Monday January 15th *Driving Madeleine* 2:00 and 7:30 pm

Town of Hudson Community Centre Le Spot, hudson.quebec

Dinner-Dance with live band *Vintage Wine*, Cash Bar

Saturday January 27th, 6:00 pm

Hudson Chamber Music Series, hudsonchambermusic.ca

2024 Concerts to be announced

Cardinal Microbrewery Events, cardinalhudson.com

Live music every weekend, plus an ongoing program of comedy nights, trivia and tasting events - see website for details

Chateau du Lac Events, chateaudulac.ca

Trivia Night every second Wednesday, live music Thursdays and Saturdays, Fridays Ladies Night and Happy Hour Mondays through Fridays - see website for details

February 2024 Events

Village Theatre, villagetheatre.ca

Hudson Village Theatre Fundraiser Play *I See You*

Thursdays February 1 & 8, 7:30 pm; Fridays February 2 & 9, 7:30 pm;
Saturdays February 3 & 10, 2 pm & 7:30 pm; Sundays February 4 & 11, 2:00 pm

Hudson Creative Hub, hudsoncreativehub.org

Month of February Andrea Blonar Paintings Exhibition

Saturday February 10th Hub Market 10:00 am to 15:00 pm

Sunday February 25th Parliamo Italiano 1:00 to 5:00 pm

Hudson Film Society, hudsonfilmsociety.ca

Monday January 19th *Anatomy of a Fall* 2:00 and 7:30 pm

Cardinal Microbrewery Events, cardinalhudson.com

Live music every weekend, plus an ongoing program of comedy nights, trivia and tasting events - see website for details

Chateau du Lac Events, chateaudulac.ca

Trivia Night every second Wednesday, live music Thursdays and Saturdays, Fridays Ladies Night and Happy Hour Mondays through Fridays - see website for details

March 2024 Events

Village Theatre, villagetheatre.ca

Hudson Village Theatre Musical *Curtains* by Encore Musical Theatre

Thursdays March 7 & 14, 7:30 pm; Fridays March 8 & 15, 7:30 pm;
Saturday March 9, 2 pm & 7:30 pm; Sundays, March 10 & 17, 2:00 pm

Hudson Creative Hub, hudsoncreativehub.org

Saturday March 9th Hub Market 10:00 am to 15:00 pm

Sunday March 31st Parliamo Italiano 1:00 to 5:00 pm

Cardinal Microbrewery Events, cardinalhudson.com

Live music every weekend, plus an ongoing program of comedy nights, trivia and tasting events - see website for details

Chateau du Lac Events, chateaudulac.ca

Trivia Night every second Wednesday, live music Thursdays and Saturdays, Fridays Ladies Night and Happy Hour Mondays through Fridays - see website for details

Have an event you want to promote? Email bert@artshudson.org

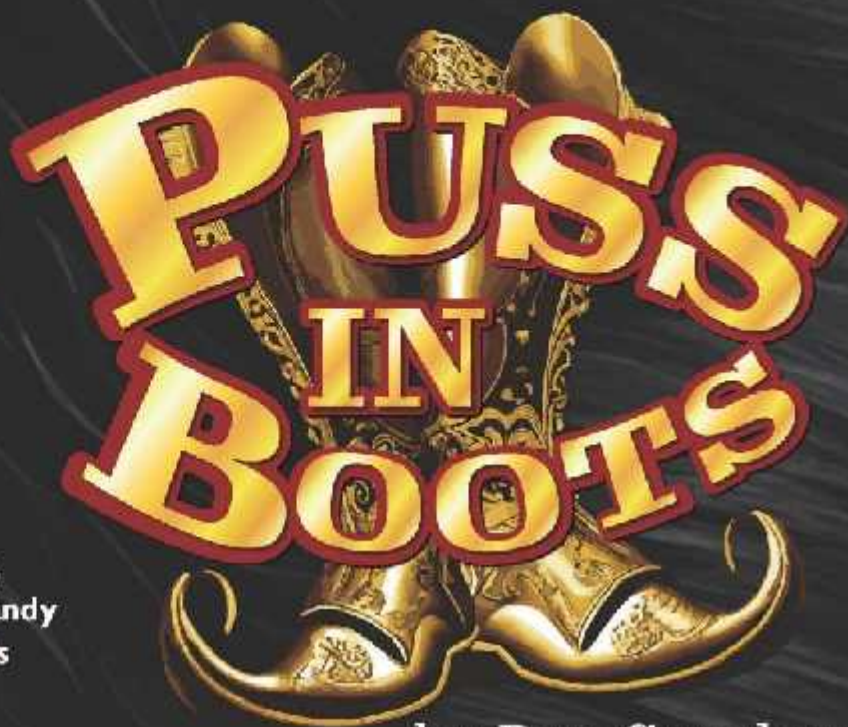
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VILLAGE THEATRE

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Pantomime

Join us for all the singing, dancing, silly jokes, goodies, baddies, and candy that Panto has to offer! *Puss In Boots* is guaranteed fun for everyone.



Canadian
Heritage



by Ben Crocker
Directed by Steve Walters



DECEMBER 15 - JANUARY 7

MATINÉES & EVENINGS

TICKETS & INFO VILLAGETHEATRE.CA - 450 458 5361