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For 21 years

GLT members love their entertaining

By MELISSA BELL



Mary Goebel and Ron Hunt are shown here rehearsing a scene from Georgetown Little Theatre's upcoming production of the Neil Simon play, "The Last of the Red Hot Lovers". Mary

Goebel and Vera Macdonald are the only founding members who remain active in GLT.

(Herald photo)

This is the first newspaper article I have ever written. Fortunately, I was asked to write about a group with which I am quite familiar. Unfortunately, my own personal experiences with this group prevent me from appearing objective and impartial; it is impossible for me to write objectively about a subject of which I feel such a part. I am sure, however, that most of my biases and opinions can be shared by the majority of the readers who support the Georgetown Little Theatre and realize its important role in the community's culture.

I joined the Georgetown Little Theatre three years ago. It was an evening late in August of '77 when a friend and I decided to sit in on a rehearsal of "The Mumberley Inheritance". Just to see what the whole thing was all about. What we saw was a group of people getting together to work hard to assemble a production to be enjoyed by many. Everyone seemed to be having a good time doing just that. (The friend to whom I refer is Susan McGowan. After two years with G.L.T. and a generous amount of experience under her belt, Susan has gone on to study her craft even further at the University of Guelph.)

Since that August night, I've known three years of being involved with one of the most successful organizations in Halton Hills. It hasn't all been cast parties and wine and cheese benefit nights, though while the rewards have been plentiful, it has also meant failed math tests from no studying on performance dates, changing in a six by six foot dressing room with nine other people and massive skin eruptions from wearing an inch of greasepaint for three consecutive nights.

MEMORABLE YEARS

But my three memorable years barely scratch the surface of Georgetown Little Theatre's elaborate history. Now into its twenty-second season, GLT has survived through dozens of plays and performances, hundreds of rehearsals and numerous locations for the legendary "green-room".

To many, the green-room is probably the most concrete conglomeration of acquired memories within the GLT. Its costumes consist of everything from Grecian togas to silver and chartreuse space-suits to big pink papier-mache pigs' heads. (Let's not even mention the costumes for a pineapple and a coconut!)

The "one" to come up with the idea for a little theatre in Georgetown was Mary Goebel, still a very active member. The organization was derived from a night-school group called "The Amateur Theatricals." Adds Mary, "The name was enough to make anyone sick!"

PARTICIPATION

The first production, a one-

act play called "The Mayor of Toronto", required overall participation from all the members. Besides acting, the same people had to construct their own sets, make their own posters and scrape up their own revenue.

In the past 21 years, Mary has held every executive position except treasurer. Mary especially liked "vice-president" because of the play reading.

"Dirty Work at the Crossroads," she states, "was probably the most fun ever. We performed it twice and I played the same part both times -- a prostitute who walks the streets of Terra Cotta, and who later reforms and becomes a nun!" Quite under-

'Last of the Red Hot Lovers' starts Thursday at Sacre Coeur Hall

standably, Mary recalls the memory with a laugh.

"I've made a tremendous number of friends ... and the parties!"

The GLT has performed at the high school, Howard Wrigglesworth Public School and currently at the Sacre Coeur Hall. Ron Hunt recalls when they used to rehearse in the old town hall.

"Then it burned down and we lost everything, absolutely everything..."

As far as plays go, the GLT has covered just about every type imaginable. Shakespeare, melodrama, pantomime and mystery plays have all been performed most admirably, and nobody can beat the Georgetown Little Theatre when it comes to comedy.

COMIC ROLES

The resident "Good-Time Girl", Marg Eggleton, has been a member for about eleven years. Her various comic roles with GLT have almost made her synonymous with humor. However, she says she is getting a little tired with always getting the "tart" roles -- Dottie in "The Mumberley Inheritance", Lottie, the bar-maid in "When We Are Married" and now a bitter, promiscuous Elaine Navazio in "Last of the Red Hot Lovers."

Marg shares the common desire of most actresses. "I want to do a really 'meaty' part -- something I can really get my teeth into!"

"Of course, I could go on and on... There are dozens of people in

GLT who I should mention because of their near-religious dedication and devotion. Without these people, the Georgetown Little Theatre would have been defunct long ago. Each individual easily merits a half page article all their own.

When an audience sees a play, it only really witnesses the actors in action. But without a director, a producer, sound crew, lighting crew, publicity managers, wardrobe mistresses and make-up artists, those actors would be standing on a bare stage with scripts in their hands. It takes so many people to make the GLT productions the successes that they are.

Why do these people do it? There is no money in it, the rehearsals use up at least nine hours a week, eight months out of the year and most of the members have full-time jobs and families to look after.

At rehearsal, where I'm writing this rather haphazardly between acts, I look around wondering just where this inner strength and never-say-die drive comes from that keeps the GLT on top. Marg throws me a comment just before she runs onstage.

"I derive a great deal of pleasure from making the audience laugh and have a good time. Knowing that I've contributed to their enjoyment makes me feel good." She adds, with a smile, "THAT'S where I get my kicks!"



VERA MACDONALD

These articles are the first in a series on the member groups of the Halton Hills Arts Council, their history and their activities.

Growing steadily

Nornic seeks community involvement

By PAUL DORSEY Herald Editor

Still busily pursuing its mandate to help lay the groundwork for an active and talented arts community in Halton Hills, the Nornic Studio for the Performing Arts launched its third season last month, one that will feature several innovations of special interest.

A Nov. 1 all-day workshop in stage management, to be conducted by theatrical director Thomas Schweitzer, has been arranged to share with local groups and individuals who will be using the new Halton Hills arts centre some

of the expertise in stagecraft Mr. Schweitzer has developed in his many years on the amateur and professional stages.

Already underway are drama studies and a course in jazz dance, both carried over from a successful first season last year. Also available this season for the first time is instruction in highland dancing.

Award winner Anne Simson joins the already impressive roster of Nornic Studio instructors this year to share her talents in highland dance with students of all ages. Affiliated with the British Dance Teachers' Association, she began junior, intermediate

and senior classes at the studio's home in the Knox Church basement recently. Classes takes place Tuesday evenings and cost \$50 for the full ten weeks.

Beginners' drama studies proved a popular course last season, offering young students a wide range of topics, all prerequisite to becoming a well-rounded onstage and backstage performer. Subjects again being covered include make-up, speech techniques, movement, improvisation, mime, crowd scenes, role playing, blocking, voice projection, characterizations and casting.

This year, students who attended beginners' classes

during last winter and spring move into second- and third-year instruction, which filters in such topics as choral music and much more technical knowledge.

All drama studies take place Saturdays at Knox Church. Level 1 juniors are those aged seven through nine years, who attend classes from 9 to 10 a.m. (registration fee \$50); intermediates are 10 to 12 years old and receive instruction between 10 and 11 a.m. (registration \$50); seniors are 13 to 16 years old and attend from 11 to noon (registration \$60).

In Level 2, classes again shift on the hour through the afternoon.

SIX INSTRUCTORS

Pooling resources to help students get the most out of the drama studies are six veteran instructors, all performers in their own right to varying extents.

Georgetown Little Theatre actress-director Vera Macdonald, who hosts the "Magazine" show on Halton Cable TV, returns to instruct in speech, one of the numerous theatrical virtues she developed through extensive studies of her own, most notably at Brock University.

Another Nornic favorite is Muggie Platel of Bramalea, who will again specialize in movement and mime instruction during Nornic's third season. An award-winning director, she studied ballet for several years.

Alan Wells will tap his great experience in the art of stage make-up to give students a glimpse of the professional techniques employed on stages throughout the world. His tips for students on backstage studies will also touch upon stage management, sound and theatre administration.

John Smedley, featured soloist in Nornic's "Musical Evening" this past weekend, has signed on with the studio as musical director. An Erin high school teacher and founder of the Erin Choral Society, Mr. Smedley claims extensive

stage experience in his native England.

Marg Eggleton is also making a return to the studio, where she'll guide students through instruction on creative movement. As Nornic pupils discovered last year, one simply does not "walk" about the stage; one moves with a definitive attitude. That's one of the areas Mrs. Eggleton will investigate with beginners this year and one she'll pursue further with intermediates.

The first semester of this year's jazz dance course got underway Sept. 13 and ends Nov. 29. The second semester begins Jan. 3.

Those entering this course choose between "performance studies", which are geared to actual stage work, or "examination studies", especially designed for teachers and those interested in the theory of dance. Performance studies cost \$40 per semester, while examination studies are \$60. Again, all jazz dance classes take place on Saturdays.

JAZZ EXPERT

Dawn Hale returns again this season as Nornic's jazz dance expert. Like Ms. Simson, she's associated with the British Dance Teachers and is currently pursuing her own fine arts degree in dance and theatre at York University. She already has received extensive training in jazz and ballet.

Rounding out the Nornic faculty is the studio's co-founder, Bev Nicholas, another GLT veteran. Mr. Nicholas continues to serve as the school's artistic director, deriving invaluable knowledge from his years spent onstage and backstage in Welsh theatres and, since immigrating, theatres in Bramalea and Georgetown.

Nornic's new season continues to define the vision Mr. Nicholas shared three years ago with Enid Williams (the studio's administrator and, as of last month, Mr. Nicholas'

new bride). Together, they formulated the concept of a professional training studio that, over a period of generations, would help local theatre to the same extent the British amateur stage has contributed extensively to professional theatre both in Britain and around the world. It is no coincidence that some of the world's finest actors are British and certainly no coincidence that Halton Hills' best stage talents are British expatriates. Amateur theatre in England, Wales and Scotland has done marvellous things for the profession, largely through the enormous public and civic support the minor theatres there receive.

Apart from the regular classes now in their third year, Nornic's strategy to bring this same popularity and support to the Ontario amateur stage includes the importing of top Canadian talents to perform here in Halton Hills. The critical success of "Dear Liar", Nornic's Shavian production at Knox Church which employed out-of-town actors, is to be followed up this year with a much more ambitious project, Thomas More's "Murder in the Cathedral".

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Nornic is carrying its community contribution one step further with the new season: its aforementioned workshop Nov. 1 on stage management promises to give most local theatre buffs their first glimpse of the methods employed backstage at a professional theatre.

And professional theatre, whether Halton Hills is ready for it or not, is now on our doorstep. With the new library-theatre complex scheduled to open less than a year from now, complete with elaborate stage devices and equipment, most local talents may be lost

once they step on the new stage.

Thomas Schweitzer's workshop runs all day Nov. 1, 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Its \$30 registration fee includes the cost of lunch and dinner. Already signed up are two officials from the Halton Hills public libraries and two from Georgetown District High School. With both these parties participating another season of their own at the new complex.



Bev Nicholas, shown here with an attentive group of students, is one of the founders of Nornic Studio for the Performing Arts. The concept behind Nornic Studio is that of a professional training studio which will help local theatre over a period of generations.



Nornic Studio not only provides instruction for young people in all aspects of the theatre, but it organizes musical and theatrical events as well. Last season, Nornic presented a production of "Dear Liar". This past weekend, John Smedley and Lyn Welton presented an evening of musical classics.