

ENTERTAINMENT

This weekend, there's *Murder's in the Heir* at Acton High School

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Special to The IFP

Murder's in the Heir. Thankfully the wit in this year's play at Acton High School is not isolated to its name. This year Acton is presenting an interactive murder-mystery-comedy, with the emphasis on the comedy. With more than its fair share of silly clichés blended with surprising and creative twists, *Murder's In the Heir* will have your sides splitting.

Murder's in the Heir, directed by Jennifer Ross, is a mystery with a twist—the ending has not yet been decided; in fact, the audience has to vote for the most likely murderer to decide how the play will end.

And, since the play isn't quite finished, there are some other loose ends. The stage crew is an example. The play opens with an on-stage stage crew who are just not quite ready. In fact, they are caught, quite literally, clowning around.

Director Ross has enlisted the aid of actor Brad Borbridge to train the students to perform as traditional clowns, miming their fascination with every little thing that crosses their paths and their displeasure at their lot. They will have the audience laughing before the "play" begins.

Ross chose this play because she wanted a comedy, to contrast last year's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and she wanted a large ensemble cast. *Murder's In The Heir*, by Billy St. John, has a cast of

19 Acton High School students, with another dozen or so involved in the production. For many of the students, from Grades 9-12, this is their first production. It certainly doesn't show on stage!

The action revolves around a gathering at Starkweather Mansion where the patriarch is murdered and practically everyone in the house is suspect: the stiff and formal butler, the crude handyman who can't keep his hands to himself, the smooth playboy great-nephew, the pill-popping niece, the bitter cook and housekeeper. The list goes on through a curtain call of mystery clichés, much like a game of Clue only to be broken by the Davises, an unlikely duo of twin detectives who stumble over the clues and each other to solve the crime.

Ross normally likes to work with a sparse set, often just a box or two, but *Murder's In the Heir* has a big set with lots of sound and lighting techniques to keep things interesting. Many members of the staff, particularly Kezia Motluk and Terry Roesch, have volunteered time to design, construct and furnish the set.

The cast has been working on the play since early February, with a heavy rehearsal schedule to prepare for this weekend's performances April 26, 27, and 28. The play is being staged in the cafeteria with lots of seating, so tickets will be available at the door, but you are encouraged to get tickets ahead of time at the high school.



Rufus (Matt LoTurco) reacts to some news during the Acton High School production of *Murder's in the Heir*. Taylor Bulstrode (lower left) and Bruno Seiler (centre) also star. This "interactive murder-mystery-comedy, with the emphasis on the comedy" will be performed on April 26-28. Tickets will be available at the door, but also available in advance at the high school.
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