

Arts & Entertainment



Photo by BARRIE ERSKINE

Milton Players members rehearse for 'The Curious Savage'. From left are Leanne Dalgliesh, Joan Patch, Brian Cranford, Dan Patch, Veronica Hernandez and Sharon Beddoes.

Milton Players promise a whole lot of laughs

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

The Champion

What do you get when you take an elderly woman who's left a hefty inheritance and add to the mix some greedy stepchildren just waiting to get their hands on it?

Well, when the Milton Players Theatre Group tells the story, a whole lot of laughs.

The Players will take to the stage February 3, 4, 9, 10 and 11 at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, 500 Childs Dr., performing the drama 'The Curious Savage' by John Patrick.

"Mrs. Savage inherits the money from her husband's estate," explained director and longtime Players member Sue Cranford. "Her step kids have already gone through theirs, so they try to have her committed."

The step kids, she said, hope that by having her committed to a sanatorium, she'll abandon her generous altruism and dole out the money how they see fit.

The performance, set in the 1950s, certainly has its share of poignant moments, Ms Cranford said, as the audience cheers on Mrs. Savage and her newfound allies, the residents of 'The Cloisters'.

"The stepchildren end up looking more foolish than the members of the asylum because of their greed," Ms Cranford said.

This performance parts ways with the last several shows put on by The Players, which were British farces. This show, Ms Cranford said, is simply "a lovely comedy with a nice, sweet ending."

She added she only directs shows she's truly passionate about, explaining this one has been a "labour of love."

"I love knowing my finger has touched every piece of it."

With no sexual content or strong language, this is a performance sure to be enjoyed by everyone, she added.

The role of Ethel Savage is being played by Sharon Beddoes, who said she welcomed the challenge of playing an elderly woman.

"This role has by far been my most challenging to date," Ms Beddoes said. "While make-up and costume go a long way, adopting the mannerisms of someone aged 65 has taken some work on my part."

As someone who naturally speaks with her hands and body as well as her mouth, Ms Beddoes said she's had to rein that in a bit.

"I am very attached to the character of Mrs. Savage and it is very important to me that I do her justice," she said.

Production bigger than usual

The Curious Savage has a cast of 11 actors, which is notably larger than those of previous performances by The Players. It's been a welcome challenge, though, Ms Cranford said.

"They're all amazing," she said of the cast members. "Some are very experienced actors, some have only been on stage once or twice."

One of the largest obstacles to overcome in putting this together was getting enough people to do behind-the-scenes work, since some of the regulars for those jobs are starring in the produc-

tion, Ms Cranford said.

It took lots of roping in, calling on former Players members as well as the families of the actors, she said.

At this point in her life, Ms Cranford said she enjoys directing more than she does acting.

"Part of it is that when you're acting, you're responsible for one character. But when you're directing, you're responsible for the whole show."

The February 4 and 11 performances are dinner theatre shows featuring a homemade turkey dinner with all the trimmings and pie for dessert.

The bar opens at 6:30 p.m., dinner's served at 7 p.m. and curtain call is at 8:15 p.m. Dinner theatre tickets cost \$35 each and are available by calling (905) 875-0629.

The show only performances all start at 8 p.m., with doors opening at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$15 each and are available at Tielemans Interiors, 340 Main St. E. and Boutique 188, 188 Main St. E., or by calling (905) 875-0629.

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