

St. Albert Gazette

One-act plays gear up for festival opening

By: Anna Borowiecki

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St. Albert Theatre Arts Guild Entertainers (STAGE) actors Rita Jensen, left, Bob Locicero and Mary-Ann Iles will be premiering *Flesh and Blood* Oct. 1 at the Arden Theatre as part of the StArts Festival.

Preview

One-Act Play Festival

StArts Festival

Saturday, Oct. 1 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Arden Theatre

Free

If theatre is big on your radar, check out the annual One-Act Play Festival that's now in the final polishing stages before it hits the Arden Theatre Saturday, Oct. 1.

An integral part of StArts Fest, the play festival offers theatregoers six quick and diverse hits of drama and comedy. The playlets, all original works no longer than 15 minutes in length, are penned by local playwrights and offer a chance to see varying theatrical styles and visions.

This year's themes run the gamut from hoarding to elder abuse, war crimes, unexpected visitors, a quirky job interview and a road trip.

"They are all excellent and it's wonderful to see local talent step up to the plate with material from the outlandish and comedic to a slice of life. It's going to be very pleasing," says producer Kelly Aisenstat.

Once again St. Albert Theatre Arts Guild Entertainers (STAGE) are immersing themselves in sundry roles. Starring in the shorts are Rita Jensen, Bob Locicero, Mary-Ann Iles, Steve Palmer, Mark McGarrigle, Wendy Ross, Trevor Lawless, Kimberly Fedoruk and Rebecca Wulan.

The line-up includes Patricia Drapeau's *Cluttermania* directed by Stanley Haroun. The two-hander looks at a couple in the throes of decluttering their house. Sound familiar?

"It reflects issues a lot of people have and how we get emotionally attached to things. It's OK to throw out someone else's stuff but it's a different thing when it's our own," Aisenstat explains.

Also directed by Haroun and written by Drapeau is *Flesh and Blood*, an issue play where an elderly lady unloads on a neighbour about an alcoholic son living with her who cannot hold down a job.

"It's an example of what ends up being elder abuse. Lots of stuff happens and some of it is not pretty. This will help to raise awareness that there are agencies that can help," Aisenstat says.

Aisenstat is directing military playwright David Haas' *Frontmen*, a three-hander where two Second World War soldiers capture a Russian soldier. Staged as a radio drama complete with authentic sounds, "it lends itself to theatre of the mind."

Teresa McNally is directing a second Haas play, *Shining Way*, a three-hander about two door-to-door proselytizers who meet an unusual character.

"We've all had folks come to our door and it's funny to see how this guy handles it," Aisenstat says.

Director Courtney Clark tackles Hans Potter's comedic *One on One Interview*, a playlet about a young man applying for an entry-level office job.

And finally, Eric Outram's *Road Trip*, also directed by Clark, looks at a couple about to take a trip to the coast. Much to her husband's chagrin, the wife wants to take her first husband's ashes and scatter them. Last year the one-acts were booked in Progress Hall and people had to be turned away. This year, STAGE is scheduled to perform in the Arden with its larger seating capacity.

"We're excited to be in the Arden, Aisenstat says. "We're second up after the Mayor's Gala. It will be the first time STAGE is on the Arden."

"But there won't be any sets. We just want to keep it simple and focus on the writers. We want to focus on bringing the words to life."
