



# THOUSAND ISLANDS PLAYHOUSE

## Romancing the River

By Lorraine Payette

What could possibly be better than to step out of your cottage onto the island, and get into the boat for a fantastic night on the town?

Temperatures are perfect as you glide over the river to tie up at the L-shaped dock at the Thousand Islands Playhouse in Gananoque. The sun glints off the water as you laugh and chat in anticipation of the perfect night out. Maybe you've come for the dazzling Moonlit Night, where glitz and glamour reign supreme, or for the annual Fish Fry Fundraiser (a chance to feast on some of the best fish in the Thousand Islands).

Think about a chance to show off that exquisite new gown and strut in your best suit, or maybe, something more casual like cut-off shorts, tees and sandals. If you prefer dinner elsewhere, there are several fine dining establishments within easy walking distance who would be happy to see you before you indulge in an evening of excellent live professional theatre. When the show is over, you slip back down to the boat and sail home, humming the songs, replaying your favourite lines in your head, and watching the moon on the nearly still and glassy surface.

"The dock provides such a unique experience for our audience, both before and after the show and during

intermission," says TI Playhouse Artistic Director Ashlie Corcoran. "We feel lucky to be creating high quality professional work in such a beautiful location."

Long a cultural hub for Gananoque, the Gananoque Canoe Club was originally built in 1909 before becoming TI Playhouse's Springer Theatre in 1985. For years it was the area's dance hall and then became Canada's Dockside Theatre. A heritage, one of a kind venue, the theatre and its renowned L-shaped dock inspire all kinds of visitors from far and wide to come into Gananoque and see all the glories it has to offer. The dock itself also provides public access to the river and seasonal docking for local boaters. Nowhere else in Canada is there anything like this.

But this beautiful dock was almost lost recently, when the town of Gananoque decided that it had to go. Ownership of the water-lot lease was overlooked when the 2014 Capital Facilities Agreement was signed between the Playhouse and the Town. A grey area developed over exactly who owned it and who was responsible for what. Since repairs and maintenance would cost from \$3-\$4 thousand, the Town felt removal was the best option.

However, the Playhouse refused to allow this to happen. Instead, they rose up to take on the job themselves. They set up a special account allowing all fees charged

for the season's slip rental to go toward repairs and maintenance, saving a feature that is beyond compare. Being a theatre with its own dock access is extremely unique and is not something you would find in a city like Toronto or anywhere else.

"The outpouring of support from the community has been overwhelming," says TIP's General Manager Brett Christopher. "Clearly, the dock is much more than a place to tie up a boat. It is a symbol of the Town's deep history and connection with the river."

Now that the summer season is upon us, get out and indulge. The Playhouse and its wonderful dock will be delighted to accommodate you. **LH**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** There is a great summer schedule to delight all lovers of the arts at the Playhouse.

Visit their website: [www.1000islandsplayhouse.com/2017-season/](http://www.1000islandsplayhouse.com/2017-season/) for list of shows, and dates, or stop by the box office at Firehall Theatre 185 South Street Gananoque, ON or call 613-382-7020 for upcoming shows and times. It is a true experience and delight to visit the Playhouse and its wonderful surroundings of the 1000 Islands. Make it a point during this special Canada 150 year to do so. **LH**