



Dock photo by Stephen Wild



Top: 2 Pianos 4 Hands: Bryce Kulak and Max Roll. (photo supplied by 1000 Island Playhouse)
Above: Prairie Nurse: The cast of Prairie Nurse (2018). Photo by Joseph Michael. (photo supplied by 1000 Island Playhouse)



THOUSAND ISLANDS PLAYHOUSE *Serving Up* Another Season of Great Theatre

By Lorraine Payette

Summer just wouldn't be summer without the Thousand Islands Playhouse, and Brett Christopher, general manager and artistic director, is ready to serve up another fantastic season for everyone to enjoy.

"The Thousand Islands Playhouse is the largest creator of theatre productions from Montreal-Ottawa-Toronto," he said. "In 2016, after a challenging financial year, I was approached to work with the company. My role was to investigate the processes that had been in place for 35 years and to ensure that we were actively pursuing the stated vision of the charitable organization. The idea of playing an active role in helping this integral company take flight was too good to pass up. It has been challenging at times but also incredibly rewarding."

Established in 1982, the Playhouse originally produced 4-5 shows a year in the former Canoe Club building. Over time it expanded and was renamed the Springer Theatre. Then in 2003, they also acquired the armories building next door and turned it into the Firehall Theatre.

"The Playhouse is responsible for touting live theatre across a large swath of Eastern Ontario," said Christopher. "It does this not just through its productions but also through the touring

Young Company that works with 50+ schools each year. Our educational and engagement programming allows people of all ages to see what is involved in making plays, and our production facility helps countless groups increase the capacity and quality of the plays that they are creating. The fact that we spend the time and resources to make the plays in Gananoque (sets, costumes, rehearsals, and so much more) cannot be undersold. These plays are specifically chosen and purposely built for the people of this region by people of this region. This is a professional yet homegrown theatre."

This year's line-up was carefully handpicked by Ashlie Corcoran as her farewell selections before she returned to Vancouver. The Playhouse is aiming at your funny bone by bringing six comedies and a musical to their line-up.

On tap for the season are "2 Pianos 4 Hands", a comedic classical music duel (May 24 – June 16, Springer); "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story", a rock and roll musical (June 22 – July 21, Springer); "Harvest", hilarity that hits close to home (July 6-29, Firehall); "The Canadian", a world premiere farce (July 27 – August 13); "Midsummer (A Play With Songs)", a dysfunctional rom-com (August 10 – September 2); "Prairie Nurse", a culture-

clashing comedy (August 24 – September 15, Springer); and "Shirley Valentine", a comedy about finding yourself (September 21 – October 14, Springer).

"Over the course of the preceding year, the Artistic Director will spend days reading plays, visiting other theatres, reading blogs and reviews, and talking to other theatre directors to find out what's out there," said Christopher. "All of the plays are chosen with a thought of who traditionally attends our theatre and what they like, ideas that are being discussed in society, and our organizational capacity to realistically produce a specific work. It's a wonderful and complicated web that eventually gets unveiled at our season launch in late September for the following year.

"Tickets are selling very quickly for some of the productions and there were quite a few sellouts last season. I would suggest buying early to make sure people get the dates and seats that they want for a specific show." **LH**

To learn more about this season's shows, ticket packages and prices, or to buy tickets please go to <http://www.1000islandsplayhouse.com/>.