

OCE celebrates 10 years in Canmore

Posted 9 days ago

Over the summer, sometime in June, the Oh Canada Eh Dinner Show will hit 5,000 performances. Between its Niagara Falls birthplace and Canmore the show that brings Canadiana to new heights will also hit its 10th year in Canmore.

This year, in Canmore, Oh Canada Eh has been running since April 23, and with all its past behind it, the performers still note that no two shows are the same.

Along with an ever-changing audience playing a continuously supporting role, Cornerstone Theatre's veteran Joe Morris is Pierre, the French-Canadian trapper who is the common thread throughout the show. He's also the show host at the beginning and end of the show.

He's the main interlocuter. And he clearly relishes in it.

It might be due to his eight years of experience as a Canmore actor that he has learned to appreciate and play off the crowds that come in to see O Canada Eh.

"Everybody's got a different sense of humour, everybody's got a different level of drunkenness, you never run out of things to talk to the audience about, you never run out of ways to interact with the audience," Morris said. "The sad part is that you'll have a great interaction with the audience one show and you're like: 'Oh that's gold! That has to go in.' And it'll be weeks before the right stars align and that moment happens again. You just wait for those moments.

"It's magical. Especially in this show there really is no fourth wall. There's the stuff on the stage, and the stuff on the floor, and they are one and the same. That's one of the beauties of this show. If you can do a show like this, as a performer, everything else is gravy."

Kathy Zabrosky plays Anne of Green Gables. She said she's wanted to play Anne since she was a child and read the books. She owns land on Prince Edward Island and connects with the iconic figure of Canadiana.

Zabrosky said she's surprised a number of British visitors already who have remarked that the character was well-known to them, but not as representative of Canada.

"I think she embodies the Canadian spirit, the innocent Canadian spirit," she said. "There's something rustic about Canada in people's minds when they visit Canada from away, an optimism about Canadians, that we're kind and polite. And I think that Anne sort of embodies that and I think that's why people from all over gravitate towards that young spirit."

Zabrosky she said there's always a response when she appears on stage. It's a favourite moment for her in the show.

Ryan Nolin is the Mountie and though he's more the Dudley Do-Right type, he's proving a hit with the ladies at the show.

Strapping on the red serge he said he enjoys. And he enjoys hamming it up.

Nolin's a Calgary-based musician and he's enjoying the switch to theatre. And the quiet that comes with living

Stacey Joy Long is Rosemarie, and when she sings, When I'm Calling You, to her man in red, her physical role is rewarded.

Duff MacDonald is the fisherman. He said he's been taken aback by the audience's response to some songs that were clearly not originally recognized as being Canadian.

Put Your Head on My Shoulder's just a start.

"Music is my passion and I want people to know that this music is Canadian," he said.

Andrea Bailey is Klondike Kitty. She's a caricature. Yet as Bailey's quickly found out it can be safer to remain a caricature when playing a floozy. The unpredictability of a crowd can make things interesting, she said.

To be a part of the crowd, go to atthecorner.ca for details. The show runs through October.

Canmore Leader

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