

Front of the Line: Newsletter



500th Show



Metro Theatre takes great pleasure in presenting our 500th show in this our 54th Season of great entertainment ~ **SENSE and SENSIBILITY** by Jane Austen, adapted by Jon Jury and directed by Joan Bryans on stage

October 29 through November 19, 2016.

Special Events planned for the 500th Show celebration:

- Opening Night Gala Performance (Invitation only) with catering from **Drew Cook Works**, door prizes and draws
- Director's Talk with Cast Chat at no additional charge on Friday, November 4th after the show
- Closing Night – Memory Reel celebrating all 500 Metro Theatre shows after the final performance.

Please go through your photo albums for pictures of any of the 500 of the Metro Shows both backstage and on stage. We would love to work them into our Memory Reel. Scanned and digital copies can be emailed to media@metrotheatre.com



Pray do not be alarmed gentle readers when I tell you Jane Austen's delicate comedy of manners **SENSE & SENSIBILITY** is a whirlwind of delicious gossip. The play follows voices bearing conflicting truths and falsehoods about love affairs and scandals, independent incomes and inherited real estate. Such gossip is the architect of Austen's late 18th century society .

Primary subjects of those rumors are the female members of the family - financially destitute and socially vulnerable after their father's sudden death. Elinor, is the eldest and most practical of the lot - SENSE - while the younger more impetuous Marianne, is the determined romantic - SENSIBILITY. Like most Austen heroines, Marianne and Elinor Dashwood have excellent breeding and little money, so marrying well is the goal.

Then there are the uncertain suitors of Elinor and Marianne: the endearingly awkward, diffident Edward Ferras; smooth talking, destined to break hearts, roguish John Willoughby; and the stiff upper lip, too old to interest and too smitten to stay away, Colonel Brandon. Before the story's end, hearts will be pledged and broken in various combinations.

The characters lives are never entirely their own. The talk of their friends, relatives and even people they have never met, propels would-be-lovers into blunders, blindness, and revelations. SENSE and SENSIBILITY asks "*When reputation is everything, how do you follow your heart?*"

Tickets are \$24 Adult or \$21 Senior/Student <http://tickets.metrotheatre.com>

Box Office 604 266 7191 - Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Metro Theatre – How we got here...



The Metropolitan Co-operative Theatre Society was founded in 1962 helped by a \$5,000 grant from the City Council to turn a derelict movie house into a live theatre.

Eleven companies, among which White Rock Players, Vagabond Players, North Vancouver Community Players and West Vancouver Theatre Guild, which still exist today, combined to present Metro's inaugural season. It was not until September of 1964, however, that they were able to move into the present location where an open house and black tie gala heralded the opening night of White Rock Players' production of **Dark of the Moon**. It was reviewed by James Barber, the Sun theatre critic, as "a good play, well executed and one that sets a standard for Metro that is worthy of their investment."

In its first few years, Metro seemed set for success. Although, the co-operative idea did not survive, Metro became an independent production company. During the early seventies, there was an exponential growth in Vancouver's professional theatre. As long as Metro had its grant, they were able to compete reasonably well, using a combination of professional and non-professional performers, directors and designers. Actors such as Robert Clothier and Anthony Holland lent their experience while young performers like Brent Carver and Ruth Nichol honed their craft. Similarly, Metro was a training ground for young technicians, like Rob Moser, employed full time in the movie industry and Les Erskine, formerly of the movie business, now our very own GM and TD.

Sadly, in 1977, the BC Cultural Fund decided to withdraw Metro's grant, on the grounds that there were more professional training facilities available(

like Studio 58) and a grim struggle to stay ahead of the creditors began; so much so that in the summer of 1977, there was doubt Metro would be able to mount another season. At this point the President, David Reynolds, called a Board meeting to discuss the possible closure of the theatre. Fortunately for all concerned, Johnny Duncan, then president of Dunbar Musical Society, stuck his neck out, offering that, if the operation of the theatre was turned over to him for one year, he would mount a season at virtually no cost to Metro. Supported by a group of staunch volunteers like Gerry Amos, Margaret Cullinan, Eleanor Heath, Sean Ullmann and Peggy Delisle and backed by president, David Reynolds, Metro mounted a season of 5 productions, allowing other theatre companies to also take part. Joining him were people that came to be associated for many years with Metro`s success, the most influential being Jerry and Leslie White, Lillian McKittrick, Pat Waldron, Tom Shorthouse, Gordon Fairclough, Rosemary Heselton, Gwen Crowe, Hazel Cambrin, and Roy and Laura Burslem.

That season was a great success with every production gaining a good following and the picture began to look a lot brighter. Johnny Duncan was elected president, a capacity he continued to serve in for the next 7 years.

During this time, prompted by Gordon Fairclough and John Crittenden, Metro acquired the Oak Street Scene Shop where rehearsals take place and sets are built. In 1985, this dynamic duo was also responsible for starting the British-style Christmas pantomime with **Babes in the Magic Wood**, a co-production with Delta Players. What an auspicious beginning that was! From 1989 to 1997, the pantos were written and directed by Ellie King, who dubbed herself "Panto Queen." When she ended her "reign", Johnny took over, writing and directing every panto (with a few breaks for other directors) until he was succeeded in 2014 by Catherine Morrison who wrote and directed her first one, **Aladdin** and is now working on her third, **Robin Hood and Marion**.

Financial difficulties once again came to the fore in the 2012/13 season as we saw our number of season ticket holders decline and the ability to keep the theatre afloat seemed in doubt. This time another saviour came to the rescue - Les Erskine, our TD, who took on the role of General Manager and by dint of hard work and financial acumen turned things around once again. Production costs have been pared, a new computer programme installed in the box office, allowing patrons to buy tickets online, equipment has been upgraded and the theatre now fills its "dark" periods with rentals for everything from pre-school graduations to movie shoots. All this, together with dedicated staff and generous donations from our loyal patrons, is helping to keep Metro going for what we hope will be many years to come.

None of this would be possible without the contributions of our many sterling volunteers who have contributed over 1.2 MILLION hours of their time to mount productions and keep our public entertained. It is to them that we truly owe over a half a century of great entertainment!

IN THE WINGS

Our Christmas Pantomime – a tradition FOR OVER 25 YEARS!



ROBIN HOOD and MARION

written and directed by **Catherine Morrison**

This is a show about fights : Food fights ! Medieval longsword fights! Wrestling ! Fart gun attacks ! Men fighting men ! A man (dressed as a woman) fighting another man (dressed as a woman) with spatulas (this causes little bodily harm) Women fighting men ! Minions fighting Sheriffs. Something for everyone.

Robin Hood and MARION is the slightly altered story of Robin Hood and his band of Outlaws in Sherwood Forest; including Little John, Friar Tuck , Alan Adale, and Will Scarlett.

Lady Marion and her ladies of the court are a vital part of the tale. We meet them in the castle before they flee to the comparative safety of Sherwood . Lady Marion is being pressured to marry the Sheriff of Nottingham - say it isn't so!