

OF THE FIELDS

LATELY

MAR 28-31
1990
~

Page 12 • The Kanata Standard - Wednesday, March 14, 1990

ON THE TOWN

Recurring characters featured in Of the Fields Lately

Playwright David French has had a long fascination for two of his characters.

Jacob and Mary Mercer, the central figures in Kanata Theatre's next play, "Of the Fields, Lately", have been featured in not just one but four plays by French. Beginning with "Salt Water Moon" set in Newfoundland in 1926, and ending

with "Of the Fields, Lately", French has taken these two characters on a voyage from Newfoundland to Toronto and from youth to middle age.

The first of the four plays is "Leaving Home", set in the late 1950s. This play was one of the most successful Canadian plays produced before the early 1970s.

"Of the Fields, Lately" was the sequel. It won for French the prestigious Chalmers Award in 1973.

After a long absence from the Mercers, French has now written two "prequels": "Salt Water Moon" set in 1926 when the Mercers were in the first blush of youth and romance, and "Nineteen Forty-Nine" set appropriately



Bob Knight and James Russell in a scene from Kanata Theatre's forthcoming production "Of the Fields, Lately," by David French to be presented in Earl of March Theatre, March 28 to 31.

enough in the Newfoundland of the confederation debate in the year 1949.

The relationship of Jacob and Mary is central to each of the four plays. Kanata Theatre's production of "Of the Fields, Lately" is the first of these plays to be performed

by the company, although it has done one other David French play, the comedy "Jitters".

The production dates are March 28, 29, 30 and 31 in the Earl of March Theatre. Ticket information may be obtained by calling 592-1715.

Page 12 • The Kanata Standard - Wednesday, March 21, 1990

ON THE TOWN



kanata theatre

presents



**OF THE
FIELDS,
LATELY,
by
DAVID
FRENCH**

"Of the Fields, Lately," the second of David French's three plays about the Mercers, Newfoundland expatriates in Toronto, deals lovingly and humorously with the unending search for understanding between generations.

March 28 — 31, 1990

In the Earl of March Theatre
Curtain at 8:00 p.m.
Box Office — 592-1715
DON'T MISS IT!



Jim Russell, Sally Raney and Dewi Williams rehearse a scene from Kanata Theatre's upcoming production, Of the Fields Lately, which runs at the Earl of March auditorium Mar. 28-31. For more information, call 592-1715.

Photo By Marcus Fajrjaj



ON THE TOWN

Kanata Theatre makes donation

By Jim Holmes

Thanks to a grant from Kanata Theatre, the Carleton Board of Education has made a big improvement to the lighting of the Earl of March Theatre stage.

Kanata Theatre donated \$10,000 towards the cost of a new lighting system. The system was in operation January 8, just in time for the company's recent production of "And a Nightingale Sang". That play featured one of the most complex lighting plots in the company's 21 year history.

The donation covered about half the cost of the new system. The other half came from the CBE's maintenance and support budget. "Replacing the aging equipment was probably cheaper than repairing it," said CBE project officer, Dick Wells.

There were no strings attached to the Kanata Theatre contribution, said Kanata Theatre president, Bill Williams.

"Naturally," he said, "we hope our excellent relationship with the school continues and that we will enjoy the use of the theatre and its facilities in the future as we have in the past."

The new system is expected to meet the needs of Kanata Theatre, the school and community groups who will use the theatre for many years to come.

Although this is the largest

donation Kanata Theatre has made, it is not the first. The company has contributed in cash or kind in the past for such things as stage curtains, lights, platforms, stage ramps, stairs and other technical improvements. In addition it has supported many high school productions by the loan of sets and costumes and by the furnishing of advice and labor.

As lighting designer for "Nightingale", Williams was the first to use the new equipment and it functioned perfectly, he reported. The new computer-controlled technology means the new system provides for greater flexibility while being simpler and more cost effective

than the old one, he said.

For the technology minded, the new system can drive 48 lighting channels, compared to 30 for the old. The system has a computer controlled "Strand Action" control panel which can remember 100 settings as well as providing special effects such as light patterns which respond to recorded music. The previous system could manage only five settings at a time, and so its use for productions like "Nightingale" presented quite a challenge.

"This is a good joint venture," said CBE trustee Hal Hansen. "It's another example of fine co-operation between the Board and Kanata Theatre."

An A+ for this Kanata teacher

"If you love the subject you teach, that translates to the kids."

By Darlene Macdonald
Kanata Courier staff

"Why weren't there teachers like this when I was in school?" ran through my mind as I did this interview.

Perhaps there were, but I was just never lucky enough to run across one like Bob Lackey from St. Paul's High School.

This 38-year-old Glen Cairn resident approaches his work with the same zest, creativity and fun-loving philosophy he puts into the rest of his life.

Asked about his popularity with his students, he modestly shrugs and says, "It's probably more what I teach."

As a drama teacher, he provides an opportunity for young people to create, and that, he admits, is something they are not given a "great deal of freedom to do in other classes."

In his tenth year at St. Paul's, Lackey is anticipating a move to the new Catholic high school in Kanata in September.

"I'm looking forward to being a pioneer," he says with a grin.

The change comes at a good time for the spirited Kanatan.

Over the past few years, his timetable has been so chock full it has left little time for anything else, and he does not anticipate his fast-paced schedule will change even though his place of work is changing.

He now serves as chief negotiator for the Secondary School teachers of the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Because of the sensitive nature of his position, he chose not to discuss that part of his life for this interview.

Besides his courses, which have covered the entire academic gamut over the years, he also directs school plays. Last year's successful and popular *Anne of Green Gables* was the first full-scale musical for St. Paul's.

"It creates a real community spirit among the cast and crew doing one of these plays," he says, currently in the middle of this year's production of the comedy *Jitters*.

His admiration and respect for his students is obvious.

"I don't know whether it's their zeal or their enthusiasm of putting 100 per cent behind everything they do, but I find

they are inspirational and life-giving to me."

"And," he adds, "if you love the subject you teach, that translates to the kids. It's like a comedian performing; if the audience laughs, that gives the performer energy. The same goes in teaching and I love that feeling."

The tragic deaths of a couple of his students also deeply affected him. At one point he broke down, and used the incident to explain to his class that teachers "really do care about them even if it isn't stated openly."

"You really have to make yourself vulnerable at times, where they sense you're a human being and that you're not just someone doing a job."

And "just doing a job" has never been Lackey's philosophy of teaching. Not even the year he taught a Grade 2 class and spent a "great deal of time taking the kids to the bathroom."

"Invariably, 90 per cent of the time when someone comes up and asks 'can we do...', I say 'yes.' That's something they don't experience a lot."

He often thinks it would be ideal to have a course in which all teachers would submit difficult concepts to the drama teacher who in turn would coordinate productions.

These five or ten minute productions would incorporate the concepts and through the use of drama make the point, add variety to the class and keep the student's attention.

Whether a video or a live production, this use of drama could provide a useful learning tool.

"You can rest assured that those kids who see it are never going to forget that concept. I'm very comfortable with that. Some teachers aren't because they don't want to feel their classes are out of control. There is a lot of chaos but I call it creative chaos."

The key, according to Lackey, is not to fall into the trap of giving students ideas. Rather, he tries to point them in a direction and then "get out of it and let them go with it."

"From my perspective, I don't think parents sense what kind of issues teachers deal with

daily. In some cases, I think teachers have taken on the role of surrogate parents, someone kids feel they can talk to because, for whatever reason, they can't talk to a 'significant other' in their home."

Although teaching is his first love, it was not his first choice. Prior to taking a job with the school board, he and his wife Joy were on their way to Toronto where Lackey "was going to try and eke out an existence as an actor."

A newspaper advertisement changed his mind. He has participated in three plays through the Kanata Theatre troupe and says he would audition for more if his school commitments were not so time consuming.

"I feel I'm making good use of my experience by putting on plays for kids and by teaching drama. That ultimately is more beneficial for my psyche than actually performing."

The Lackey family transfer to Kanata came about as a result of his two-year old daughter's frequent romps across the bare floors of their Vanier apartment. When the superintendent

complained of the noise the youngster was making, Lackey decided it was time to move and chose Kanata.

That was eight years ago, and now Tricia is 9, brother Robbie is 7, and Jillian is 3.

Besides spending time with his children, Lackey enjoys participating at the Holy Redeemer Church in a musical capacity.

He regrets the limited time he has to do more in the area of community events and says it's the tradeoff for spending so many hours at school.

"I feel I'm doing something though, the importance of which will never diminish. I can't visualize being an administrator or anything because I love being in the classroom and teaching too much."

What about the future?

"I don't think in terms of dreams and aspirations," he responds. "As shallow as it sounds it's almost like a 'live for the day' type of attitude. Maybe that's why I get along with kids. I don't think a lot about the future...I just enjoy today."





















