



KANATA THEATRE

PRESENTS

*A Bequest
To The
Nation
by Terence Rattigan*



EARL OF MARCH SCHOOL

**Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday
October 22 - 25, 1986**

8.00pm

**All seats reserved \$6.00 , \$5.00
Students, seniors (Weds, Thurs only) \$3.00
Box office telephone 592-1715**



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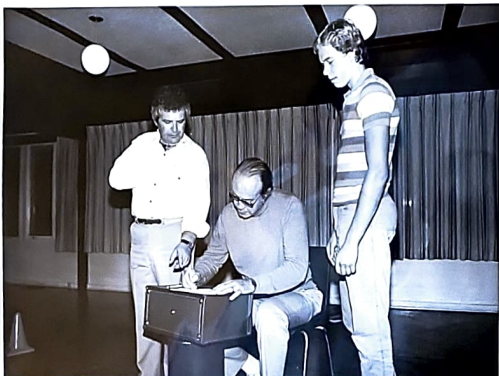


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Arts & Entertainment

New theatre season opens with Rattigan play

By Marc Faraj

Fifteen years ago, a handful of local residents decided to transform their love for the theatre into a tangible reality, and the Kanata Theatre was born.

Factories, Thornton was one of those original founders, and at age 67, he's still going strong as the director of *A Bequest to the Nation*, the company's first production of the 1986-87 season.

Based in a theatrical family, Thornton has been practicing

and honing his craft for more than 40 years after landing his first acting role in Montreal at the age of six. Although the majority of his efforts are now taken up directing the two productions, Thornton says, "I'm a little happier on stage. I enjoy directing but it's very stressful for me."

Although circumstances did not permit him to pursue a full-time career in the theatre, Thornton balanced a career in



A scene from Kanata Theatre's upcoming historical drama by Terence Rattigan, *A Bequest to the Nation*, in rehearsal. Neil Robertson (left) and Mary Mauger (right) are seen in costume.

the public service with the stage until he recently retired, allowing him to take on a whole range of activities.

"I get tremendous satisfaction from the theatre. I've acted and directed at every opportunity I've had."

A Bequest to the Nation is a play in which Thornton has great faith. Written by acclaimed British playwright Terence Rattigan, it details the last few months in the life of Lord Nelson and features a letter written by Lady Nelson as the central dramatic device.

"Rattigan is an excellent writer and an excellent craftsman of plays. He writes very good characters," says Thornton.

To adapt the work for the Kanata Theatre, Thornton was compelled to edit the original slightly due to length and the restrictions of the stage at the Earl of March high school. Many of the historical details of the play (circa 1805) were handled by Neil Robertson, who has considerable knowledge of that era's naval history and plays Lord Minto in the production.

For each production mounted by the Kanata Theatre, eight weeks are allotted for rehearsal, set design and construction and all the other details which go into presenting a play.

Thornton is quick to credit much of the pre-production work to the behind-the-scenes personnel who have labored long and hard to ensure that

everything is ready for opening night. Many of these people have been with the company for some time, but Thornton expects any suggestion that the Kanata Theatre is a closed shop.

"We're not a clique. We get some new blood every year. If people want to join and get active, they can," says Thornton, adding that prospective members must be at least 15 years old or be enrolled in grade 10.

Thornton says the Kanata Theatre mounts a "slight preponderance of comedies" each season, but he argues that comedy is what audiences prefer, which is reflected in the high number of repeat subscribers the company enjoys.

"We try to satisfy audience tastes... We always say we do three plays each season for the audience and one for ourselves."

The popularity of comedies was reinforced last year by record-breaking crowds for an all-comedy slate, with season subscribers nearing 1,200.

And while other regional theatrical companies have floundered, the Kanata Theatre has thrived year after year.

"We've paid our own way completely," says Thornton, adding that a capital reserve fund has been established for future plans and is being topped up by revenue from the company's popular face painting program.

The Kanata Theatre's three remaining plays this season are: *Key for Two* (January), *Waiting for the Parade* (February) and *Whodunnit* (May).

A BEQUEST
TO THE
NATION



Arts & Entertainment

Lack of space puts strain on local arts groups

By Debbie Lawes

Kanata boasts some impressive theatrical and musical talent, but due to a chronic lack of space devoted exclusively to the arts in the city, groups have been forced to rehearse and perform in second-rate facilities.

The Beaverbrook Community Centre is now the most recent rehearsal hall for the Kanata Symphony Orchestra, which the band's president describes as sorely inadequate.

Nancy Upper says the 60-member orchestra is unable to get rehearsal time at the Earl of March auditorium, which is where they will perform a major concert on Nov. 2. She says she's frustrated because this problem has happened too many times.

In response, Upper plans to lobby city council for an arts centre, but admits her efforts will probably be in vain.

"I lobbied for four years to get the children's art centre in Kanata," she says. "I'll probably take at least 10 years before we ever see an arts centre."

Upper blames the situation on a lack of money, a lack of coordination among Kanata's arts

groups, and a lack of interest by city council.

"The city doesn't give a damn," she says. "They just don't care about arts in this city."

Mayor Des Adam says he sympathizes with Upper's and other arts groups' concerns, but denies either he or city council are the villains in this problem.

Adam says the city recognizes a tremendous need for more space for cultural activities, but as the situation stands now he admits there's simply no money available.

"We have demands for eight million dollars worth of cultural and recreational facilities—all of which are worthwhile. But our operating budget is only about four million."

Adam adds the city will have to wait until it's grown before it can afford an auditorium for the performing arts.

Ron Maslin, president of the Kanata Theatre understands the city's dilemma so he says the Kanata Theatre is working on their own solution.

"We've been stashing away



The Kanata Symphony Orchestra makes the most of its last rehearsal in the Earl of March auditorium. This week the group will rehearse in the Beaverbrook Community Centre.

money in a capital reserve fund for seven years which we plan to put towards a facility for rehearsal, storage and workshop space," says Maslin.

The theatre has saved \$100,000 from its face painting activities over past summers which Maslin says should pay for a third of a new building.

Marcia Caple, director of the Kanata Ballet School, agrees there's a dire need in the city for rehearsal space, but says she should make the best of the performing space we already have. She said renovations should

run out of money so it was never completed."

The Kanata Symphony Orchestra will have to remove the first two rows of seats to make room for its Nov. 2 performance which it is presenting with the Kanata Ballet. Caple says the ballet school puts on three to four performances every year in the Earl of March auditorium.

"Ideally, I would love to see an arts centre in Kanata, but I don't know if we'll ever see it happen," says Caple. "The problem is it just takes so much money. Maybe if the arts groups are willing to raise a percentage of the cost themselves, it will happen faster."

Although Upper still plans to go ahead with her plans to lobby city hall, she agrees with Caple that building an arts centre in Kanata is probably only a pipe dream.

"After all, how can we expect to get an arts centre in this city, when as of yet, we can't even get an indoor swimming pool."



Kanata Theatre presents *A Bequest to the Nation* at the Earl of March auditorium. Oct. 22-25. From left to right: Mark Popovich, Barry Caiger, Keith Roney.

photo by Marcus Faraj

KANATA

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Mary Mauger and Neil Robertson in rehearsal for Kanata Theatre's upcoming production, *"Bequest to the Nation"*. Photo by Marcus Faraj.

Arts / entertainment

Rattigan gets solid treatment in play based on love and duty

By Barbara Cook

Journalist

The treatment of Thorneycroft's 1939 novel *A Request to the Nation* makes for interesting drama.

Thorneycroft's *A Request to the Nation* is the story which opened Wednesday at the Earl of March High School, capturing that painful choice in the hands.

It is not enough for Rattigan's protagonist to face the moral and political consequences of choosing to desert his wife and live but of conflict with the woman he loves the most then decide to place the demands of his country ahead of those of love.

Kanata Theatre has done a commendable job with Rattigan's challenging historical drama which is based on events in the lives of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

The production, directed by Laurence Thornton, needs to move along more quickly and there are still too many forgotten lines and missed cues.

And for a company that usually has a wealth of talented actors onstage, the supporting acting in this production — with the exception of Neil Robertson as the drily humorous Lord Minto and Rosemary Rutherford as the high-strung British maid — is surprisingly wooden.

But the impressive performance of the leading actors help make up for the lack of wit and polish in other areas and give the play the heart and spirit it deserves.

Theatre review

A Request to the Nation

Thorneycroft

Earl of March High School

Sept. 15

A Request to the Nation traces the months before Nelson's death at Trafalgar. Although it has been several years since he left his wife, Nelson is still facing opposition to his decision to abandon his devoted wife for the nation, the task Lady Hamilton.

But Nelson understands the power of his love. When he faces his final battle, his last wish is for his beloved country to accept and become this love.

The success of the play hinges on the character of Lady Hamilton. Although her performance could use a little more restraint, Mary Morgan has the necessary passion and imagination to make

Nelson's Hamilton more than just a foul-mouthed drunkard. Her scenes with Barry Collier, who gives a solid performance as Nelson, are quite convincing.

The other important scenes in this triangle are handled nicely by Liane Friedman, who gives a restrained, sympathetic performance as Lady Nelson.

A Request to the Nation

by Terence Rattigan

Directed by Laurence Thornton



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