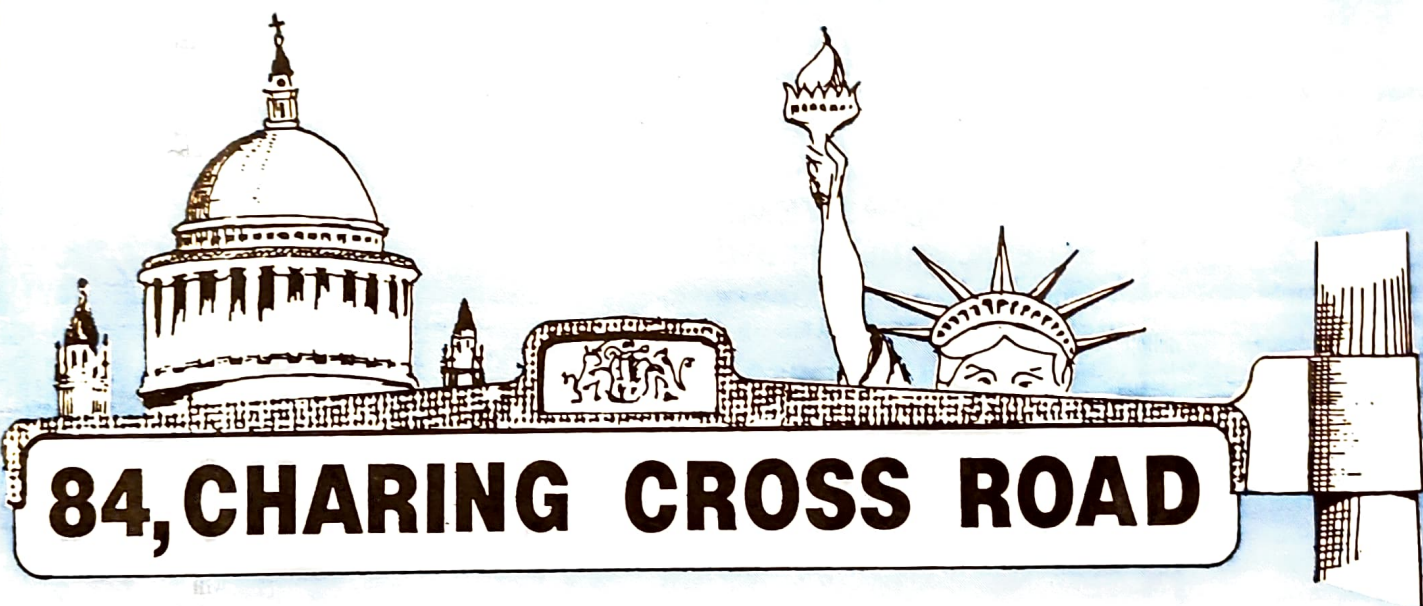


KANATA THEATRE



TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY SEASON PRESENTS



Adapted by James Roose-Evans, from the book by Helene Hanff

Directed by Dewi and Eufron Williams

EARL OF MARCH SCHOOL

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday

October 19-22, 1988

8.00pm

All seats reserved \$6.00, \$5.00

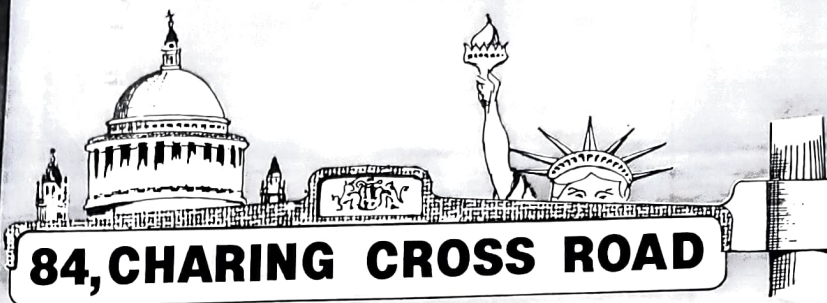
Students, seniors (Weds, Thurs only) \$3.00

**Box office telephone
592-1715**

Reserved tickets are available throughout the season

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Kanata Theatre: Curtain rises this week on 20th-anniversary season

By Barbara Crook
Citizen staff writer

It started with a newspaper ad, looking for people interested in getting together to read plays.

Twenty years later, Kanata Theatre is one of the region's most successful amateur theatre groups — a true community theatre that does more than just put on plays.

Although the group is in no danger of losing its amateur status, it has chosen the 20th-anniversary season to bring in a professional guest director for one of its productions.

"We have the advantage of being a defined community, and that's been reinforced by our parochial policy of restricting the membership to people who live in Kanata and staff and students at the Earl of March High School," says Jim Holmes, who is in charge of the play selection committee.

"We've avoided the problem of someone parachuting in to be the star of one play, and then never doing any other work. Everyone who's in the group puts in time backstage, in the 'non-glamorous' jobs."

Kanata Theatre was started in October, 1968, by Mary Mauger, who put an ad in the paper to find residents of the new community who were interested in getting together to read plays.

"An invitation to all ham actors," the ad read. "Please join us for our first meeting. This will probably be a play reading group initially, but who knows how it may develop?"

About a dozen people started meeting for readings at Mauger's house. The group put on its first production, the one-act plays *Lady Killers* and *Rise and Shine*, later that winter at Stephen Leacock School.

Kanata Theatre moved to full-length plays with the 1970 production of *Present Laughter*, and soon moved from Stephen Leacock to the 700-seat auditorium of the Earl of March High School on The Parkway.

"The breakthrough was the 1971 production of *The Crucible*," says president Annmarie Coppel.

"That was the first production at the Earl of March, and it had a very large cast. We didn't even know if we'd have lights for that one. They had to be rushed from Toronto at the last minute. And we got a terrible review in the *Citizen*. But we did it."

By the 1972-73 season, Kanata Theatre was producing four plays a season, a pace that continues today. It has more than 1,200 subscribers, two thirds of them from Kanata.

The group also puts on children's plays, helps students and staff with school productions at Earl of March, enters a float in Kanata's annual Mayfair parade and has raised thousands of dollars for local charities by doing clown makeup for children at fairs and parades.

Although Kanata Theatre has a reputation for concentrating on English farces ("Probably because we do them so well," says Holmes), the repertoire in the past two decades has included everything from Anouilh, Stoppard and Ibsen



Above: Cast of Kanata Theatre rehearses for production of *84 Charing Cross Road* which opens Wednesday. Right: Set designer Paul Gardner adds finishing touches.

to Shakespeare, Molière and Coward.

"It was actually our eighth season before we did an English bedroom farce, and we have only done five of them — although we have done a lot of English comedy," says Holmes.

But says Holmes: "When I think of plays that have made us unique, I think of plays that the Ottawa area would not have seen without us," such as *The Real Inspector Hound*, *After Magritte* and *Enter a Free Man* by Tom Stoppard, *Hunting Stuart* by Robertson Davies and *Quiet in the Land* by Anne Chislett.

"When I discovered Kanata Theatre, I was surprised at how accessible it was," says Coppel, who has been active in the group for 19 years.

"Our kids have grown up with Kanata Theatre, and with the children's and family plays. Now a lot of them have started acting in the productions."

Since the mid-1970s, Kanata Theatre

has had an active training and development program, bringing in theatre professionals to offer workshops in such areas as voice, acting and directing. With financial support from Theatre Ontario and the City of Kanata, that program is being expanded this year to include the services of professional director Sandy MacDonald as guest director for the January production of *On the Razzle* by Tom Stoppard.

"Sandy gave us an acting workshop a year ago, and we were very impressed with him. We were amazed at what came out of the workshop," says training committee member Dorothy Beak.

"We'd discussed having a guest director several years ago, but the time wasn't right. This time, it was ideal."

"We're regarding it as a training program, as much as a production. It has a cast of 20, plus a large number of backstage workers. So we figure that most of



the group will learn something over the six or seven weeks that Sandy is here."

The Kanata Theatre season opens Wednesday with a 20th birthday cake and a production of *84 Charing Cross Road*, James Roose-Evans' adaptation of Helene Hanff's story of a New York writer's 20-year correspondence with the staff of a rare book store in London.

On the Razzle is scheduled for Jan. 18-21, followed by Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance*, March 1-4. During the March production, models of previous sets will be on display in the Earl of March lobby.

The season closes May 10-13 with a British pub and a production of *Pardon Me, Prime Minister* by Edward Taylor and John Graham.

All productions are at 8 p.m. at the Earl of March. For information or tickets, call the Kanata Theatre Box Office, 592-1715.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Kanata Theatre cast members polish their lines for the opening production of *84 Charing Cross Road*, which plays at the Earl of March High School from this Wednesday to Saturday at 8 p.m. The play kicks off Kanata Theatre's 20th season and the group has many activities planned to celebrate the milestone.

Kanata Theatre launches 20th season

Kanata Theatre celebrates its 20th season with birthday cakes and a wine and cheese party.

84 Charing Cross Road opens at the Earl of March High School on Oct. 19 (at 22 nights) at 8 p.m. A delightful and concise play, it spans 20 years and takes us through a love story of letters between New York and London.

Opening night is party time. Audience members are invited to join the members of the production and theatre members for wine and cheese after the performance. Each night a special guest will cut a birthday cake and audiences are warmly invited to stay after the play closes to celebrate Kanata Theatre's 20th birthday.

No don't miss this chance. Tickets are available from Box Office 592-1715 or at the Door.

Kanata stamps its mark on letter-writing play

By Barbara Crook

Times staff writer

84 Charing Cross Road is a charming tribute to the lost art of letter writing.

In an age in which few of us can muster the energy or creativity to write a decent thank-you note, Helene Hanff's evocative memoir of her 20-year correspondence with the staff of a rare book store in London is an oasis of carefully-chosen words and thoughts.

And the fact that Hanff never meets her correspondents face to face makes their vivid and descriptive exchanges of letters all the more impressive.

Kanata Theatre opened its 20th-anniversary season Wednesday with a competent production of

Theatre review

84 Charing Cross Road
Kanata Theatre
Earl of March High School
4 The Parkway, Kanata
Oct. 19-22, 8 p.m.

James Rose-Evans's challenging stage version of Hanff's book.

Directors Dewi and Eulron Williams and a generally strong cast have successfully avoided many of the pitfalls of Hanff's static script, which relies entirely on monologues and readings of letters to advance the plot.

Without the luxury of conventional dialogue, the performers manage to create many touching and believable moments in their relationships.

84 Charing Cross Road recounts New York writer Hanff's extensive correspondence with the staff of Marks & Co. Booksellers, whose London address is the title of the play.

The letters between Hanff (Gwendy Tolley) and Frank Doel (Barry Calger) begin in 1949 as simple orders and responses. But the almighty relationship soon involves other members of the staff (good performances by Sally Raney, Margaret Jardine and Betty Francis) and extends to care packages, gifts and invitations for Hanff to visit London — invitations she is always too busy or too broke to accept.

The well-structured first act, in which the excitement over Hanff's generosity spreads through the ra-



Actress Gwendy Tolley rehearses for this weekend's Kanata Theatre production of *84 Charing Cross Road*.

Kanata Theatre inaugurates 20th season with comedy

BY SALLY RANEY

Kanata Theatre opens its twentieth season with birthday cakes and celebration *Twenty Four Charing Cross Road*.

opens at Earl of March High School this week. The play is being performed at 8 PM from Oct. 19 to 22.

This charming play will delight audiences with its gentle humour and sensitive dialogue. Set in New York and England — the story spans twenty years.

As an opening to the birthday season, the audience at each performance is invited to join members of the production and theatre members at the close of the play, to enjoy the cutting of birthday cake and relax with cake and coffee in the foyer of the auditorium.

Special guests will cut a birthday cake and the party will begin.

Don't miss a chance to join in — come to a play and then celebrate a birthday.

















