



CAST

SHARKY
JEAN PIERRE
POPS
DUSTY
SARGE
DUD
SMYTHE
AMERICAN GI
CHAMBERLAIN
GRANDDAD
SUSAN
NURSE
YOUNG WIDOW
CHURCHILL
RADIO ANNOUNCER
ANDREWS SISTER

Mike Hammond
Jeff McNally
Lee Powell
Eric Schmidt
Ben Tolley
Geoff Williams
Jamie Andrew
Jamie Andrew
Ken Badham
Ken Badham
Jennifer Fryer
Jennifer Fryer
Christine Hollands
Lionel King
Lionel King
Lucille Lacelle

Melissa McCallum

Emily Vennor
Lucille Lacelle
Jamie Lemmex
Jamie Lemmex
Melissa McCallum
Nedra Nash
Nedra Nash
Marjorie Sewell
Emily Vennor

LADY ASTOR
SOLDIER'S SWEETHEART
PHOTOGRAPHER
FACTORY INSPECTOR
SALLY
FARMER'S WIFE
PUB PIANO PLAYER
GIRL IN SHELTER



You'll Get Used To It - The War Show by Peter Colley

Directed by Jim Holmes
Music Director: Lorraine Gorman





Kanata's You'll Get Used To It! a thoroughly entertaining delight

BY BRUCE DEACHMAN

*Orders came for sailing, somewhere
over there*

*All confined to barracks was more
than I could bear*

*I knew you were waiting in the street,
I heard your feet,*

*But could not meet my Lili of the
lamplight,*

My own Lili Marlene.

Terrible as they are, wars can produce some positive side-effects. Consider, for example, Hans Leip and Norbert Schmitde's *Lili Marlene*, a beautiful German ballad from the First World War, the lyrics of which were rewritten by Tommie Connor (of *I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus* fame) and sung by the Allies during the Second World War.

The song is one of countless wartime classics performed in Peter Colley's *You'll Get Used To It! — The War Show*, a musical that Kanata Theatre opened this week as its contribution to the 60th anniversary of VE Day.

Comprised of equal parts cabaret revue, sketch gags and compressed historical re-enactment, *You'll Get Used To It!* follows six Canadian soldiers — and their friends and families — through enlistment, boot camp and their six-year campaign through England, France, Italy, Holland and Germany. Funny at times, poignant at others, the play reflects on each soldier's joys and miseries, and the more general emotions that made up the Canadian war experience.

Colley wrote *You'll Get Used To It!* in the mid-1970s after a year of research and interviews with veterans, factory workers, wives and mothers. The result is an informative, intelligent and thor-

oughly entertaining piece that gobbles up more than two-and-a-half hours in the blink of an eye.

Director Jim Holmes's cast of 17, many taking on numerous roles, slides effortlessly from a rousing rendition of the Andrews Sisters' (played by Lucille Lacelle, Emily Vennor and Melissa McCallum) *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*, to one of the soldiers — Pops (Lee Powell) — tossing out a rimshot one-liner, to another — Dusty (Eric Schmidt in yet another skilled performance) — suffering a breakdown over bayoneting a 13-year-old German boy in a Nazi uniform, and back to a comedic military march-turned-square dance and an off-colour joke about how Italian women fight better than the men.

Colley's portrait is not a composite national one, but rather a large collection of individual vignettes. Yet Holmes avoids herky-jerkiness, deftly directing his cast from one scene to the next with an impressive fluidity.

No, the singing isn't all perfect, but most of it is very good. And the few wavers and flat notes served the unintended purpose of lending an authenticity to the play's characters: these, after all, were songs sung by soldiers on the fields and revellers in pubs, not by Luciano Pavarotti.

*Let's say goodbye with a smile, dear,
Just for a while, dear, we must part.
Don't let this parting upset you,
I'll not forget you, sweetheart.*

*We'll meet again, don't know where,
don't know when,*

*But I know we'll meet again, some
sunny day.*

You'll Get Used To It! — The War Show
continues at Kanata Theatre until June 4.
Tickets & times, 831-4435.



Arts & Entertainment

Kanata Theatre remembers Second World War with musical

JIM HOLMES

Kanata Theatre will mark the 60th anniversary of VE Day and the opening of the Canadian War Museum with a production of a play that recalls and celebrates Canada's role in the Second World War.

You'll Get Used To It – The War Show, is the product of many interviews by playwright Peter Colley of veterans, factory workers, housewives, war brides and others who lived through the period 1939 to 1945. It tells the story of this most dreadful of wars through the eyes of six Canadian enlisted men who served in many of the important theatres of conflict.

The playwright has said of his research into those years that two different views of the war emerged.

"From the Canadian perspective, our soldiers were struggling through Europe holding high the torch of democracy," Colley has said. "The soldiers, however, saw it rather differently. When they weren't actually fight-

ing, they seemed to be having the time of their lives – drinking, carousing, singing highly indecent songs and chasing after women.

"I don't believe that the passage of years had given a rosy hue to the whole proceedings, or that the beer and smoke of the Legion hall had dulled their recollections of the Normandy landings, Dieppe or the taking of Monte Casino. It was more that they preferred to remember the good times, the songs and the adventure. Only when pressed would they mention the moments of deep fear and horror that made up the more painful recollections of the war."

You'll Get Used To It – The War Show does not gloss over the moments of deep fear and horror, but it presents them as part of a whole. The music, the dance, the jokes, and the camaraderie all serve as a necessary distraction from the terror and uncertainty of the front.

Songs like White Cliffs of Dover, I'll Be Seeing

You, We'll Meet Again, and especially the plucky Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye (all of them featured in the show), with their themes of hope and optimism masked a fear, the overcoming of which called forth every available ounce of courage and resolve.

Nine men and seven women take the many roles of soldiers, officers, politicians, statesmen, wives, farmers, factory workers, and sweethearts whose courage and sacrifice got us through the war.

Colley is one of Canada's most successful playwrights. His gothic thriller I'll Be Back Before Midnight has been a staple of the Canadian stage for more than 25 years. It has been produced in 24 countries and has grossed more than \$10 million worldwide. His most recent play, When the Reaper Calls, opened in Germany last year. He has also written for television and film.

You'll Get Used To It – The War Show is directed by Jim Holmes, with musical direction by Lorraine



Kanata Theatre's final production of the season, The War Show, opens next week at the Ron Maslin Playhouse. Call the box office for tickets at 831-4435.

Gorman, and choreography by Linda Jamieson. It runs at the Ron Maslin Playhouse, 1 Ron Maslin Way, just off Terry Fox

Drive at Walter Baker Place, Tuesday to Saturday, May 24 to May 28 and May 30 to June 4. Curtain is at 8 p.m. sharp.

The box office number is 831 4435, and tickets are \$15. Visit www.kanatheatre.com for more information.

Wartime play teaches teen explosive truth about Granny

Actress Jamie Lemmex couldn't quite figure out why her play's plotline sounded so familiar, writes **ZEV SINGER.**

She auditioned for the play without knowing about the connection. Even when she won a part, she had yet to put two and two together. In fact, rehearsals were well under way before 15-year-old Jamie Lemmex realized the play in which she was acting told the story of her own great-grandmother.

The play, *You'll Get Used to It! The War Show*, scheduled to open later this month at the

Kanata Theatre, is a Canadian-written collection of stories and songs from the Second World War. At one point, in the middle of the second act, it recounts the story of a woman working in a munitions factory who loses most of her fingers in an explosion.

It sounded too familiar to the young actress, who went home with a question for her father: How did Granny lose her fingers? "It was one of the first read-throughs," says Jamie. "And I thought 'Wow, I wonder how common that is?'"

She wasn't sure if all the details in the play matched those of her great-grandmother's life because, growing up, she'd only heard part of the story.

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Play: Story spread via word of mouth

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"That Granny worked in a bomb factory during the war and she made a mistake and got her hands blown off. That was really all I knew."

Her father, Steve Lemmex, couldn't believe it when his daughter read to him from the script. "I said 'Holy smokes, that's got to be her.'"

The play, which was written in 1975 by Canadian playwright Peter Colley, has been produced in most parts of the country over the past three decades, but the family never heard about it.

When Jamie made the discovery, though, one thing still niggled: The play said the factory was in Oshawa, yet her great-grandmother's factory was in Ajax. She found out that Mr. Colley, who wrote the play in his 20s, is still around. She found his e-mail address and asked him what he remembered about it.

The playwright told her the original version of the script didn't say Oshawa — it said Ajax. He had collected a word-of-mouth version of the story at a Legion hall during his research, but in the initial rehearsals, a veteran told him the woman was still alive, so he changed that detail to avoid identifying her, lest she be pained by the story.

The woman, however, never knew about the play, until now. Emma Tonks, Jamie's great-grandmother, is still alive herself. She's 95 years old, and she's thrilled by the story.

"Glorious, glorious," she said yesterday from her Toronto home.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Tonks will find it too difficult to travel to Ottawa for the play. If not for a stroke six months ago, she would have been there when the play opens on May 24 for the first of 10 performances.

Mrs. Tonks still remembers the day in 1943 when a box of detonator caps she was inspecting exploded in her



'Glorious, glorious,' said Emma Tonks, 95, above, when she learned her great-granddaughter, Jamie Lemmex, is in a play that involves Mrs. Tonks' war history.

hands, set off by one faulty cap. "A stinker, we called them," she said. She lost all but part of her thumb on her left hand, and part of two fingers on her right. She learned to do just about everything with the remaining fingers.

Mrs. Tonks' family is pleased at the recognition of the price she paid in the war effort. A 1989 book titled *The War Years* by Ken Smith, which discusses Canadian munitions factories, makes a brief mention of the explosion without citing the woman's name. "Such incidents were not generally known or publicized," Mr. Smith wrote.

Yet, while the family is very excited by Jamie's appearance in the play, they have had to take with a grain of salt the fictionalized results that emerged after the true story went through the rumour mill on the way to the playwright.

The play tells the story as a cautionary tale, in which the explosion was caused because the woman was wearing jewelry — a no-no in the dangerous factory. The play also says the woman was cheating on her husband, an overseas soldier. When she flagrantly showed off her wedding and engagement rings, despite her infidelity,

and despite the danger of wearing metal inside the factory, the result was explosive.

"Well, as I said to the others, that's what happens to you if you play around while your husband's at war," says the section's narrator.

That's not the way it happened. In actuality, Mrs. Tonks said, her husband had left her before the war began, and when he enlisted in the army, he registered as unmarried so she would get no financial benefits. She says it's true that by the time of the accident she had begun to see another man, her supervisor at the factory. After the war, when her first husband finally agreed to a give her a divorce, she married that supervisor, a man named David Tonks. The two are still married, 59 years this coming September.

Mrs. Tonks admits to ignoring the rules about wearing jewelry, but says the explosion had nothing to do with the rings. After the explosion, her future husband sifted through the debris and found both of the rings.

Jamie will be wearing them during the performance.



Arts & Entertainment

Keeping it in the family as Kanata Theatre wraps up season

CLARE FLOCKTON

Kanata Theatre's final play of its 36th season, *You'll Get Used To It - The War Show*, is getting ready to hit the stage on May 24.

This play is written by one of Canada's most successful playwrights, Peter Colley. To add authenticity to this chilling tale, Colley took almost a year to research and complete the play. Many interviews were conducted with veterans, factory workers, housewives and war brides.

Colley writes about one particular inspector of a munitions plant where they tested fuses by running them through gauges to see if they were in working order. It was an extremely dangerous job because the fuses could spontaneously explode if they came in contact with any sort of metal. All workers were instructed to remove all of their jewellery and wear special shoes as a safety precaution in the plant.

The inspector remembers one woman in particular who was adamant about keeping her wedding rings

Final play of season to open May 24 at Ron Maslin Playhouse

on her finger since her husband was away at war. The inspector told her to take off her rings or else she will be blown all over "hell's half acre." No sooner had the inspector given the warning and left the booth, when she heard a loud explosion and the factory was filled with screams.

Most of the woman's fingers had been blown off of her hands and the diamonds from her wedding rings were lost due to the explosion.

This in itself is an amazing story, but what makes it truly incredible is that one of the cast members, Jamie Lemmex, unknowingly read this part of the script and thought to herself, "That sounds a lot like the story of my great grandmother."

Lemmex contacted Peter Colley immediately to ask him of the coincidence of this story. He admitted its authenticity. He came across the story in his research, and changed the location from Ajax, Ont. to Oshawa, Ont., since he knew that the lady in question was still living.

Lemmex's granny is indeed still living. She is 95 years old and recently moved from Ottawa to Toronto with her husband, Lemmex's great grandfather, who incidentally is the foreman from the munitions plant where she lost her fingers all those years ago.

Lemmex is in possession of her granny's rings and will be wearing them for the duration of her performances in *The War Show*.

This story has brought a

Jamie Lemmex appears in Kanata Theatre's production of *The War Show*, opening May 24.

personal element to all of the cast and crew. They are no longer reading words from a page, they are re-enacting the emotionally charged events of peoples lives.

You'll get Used To It - The War Show runs from May 24 until May 28, and May 31 until June 4 in the Ron Maslin Playhouse, located at 1 Ron Maslin Way at Terry Fox Drive.

Curtain is at 8 p.m. sharp and tickets are \$15 each.

Please call the box office at 831- 4435 or visit Kanata Theatre's website at www.kanatatheatre.com for more details.

Come to see the rings, stay to see that show.



ANN WILLIAMS PHOTO



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