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FEATURED

Gilbert & Sullivan's *Patience* gets the LLO treatment

By Walter J. Lyng

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Photo: Courtesy LLO

The rehearsal process for this play has been ongoing since September 2015. “One of the things I’ve really focused on this sense of the team and emphasizing the community in community theatre,” says stage director James Fraser.

For their annual offering of a Gilbert & Sullivan production, the Lakeshore Light Opera (LLO) will present *Patience* on selected dates and times from March 4 to 12 at the Louise Chalmers Theatre, located at 501 St. John Blvd. in Pointe Claire. Recently, *The Suburban* spoke with this year’s stage director, James Fraser, to find out what is to be expected from this musical romp.

“It’s a comedy. Many of them are but this is one is particularly funny,” he says. “The characters and situations really allow for humour.”

The play centers around a character named Bunthorne, who is masquerading as a poet in order to win the heart of *Patience*, the beautiful village milkmaid. He succeeds in attracting the attentions of all the village ladies except *Patience*, who spurns him. The God-like Grosvenor then arrives on the scene, which causes all the women to swoon with desire with his superior poetry. Hilarity is supposed to ensue as Bunthorne continues on with his ruse and competes with Grosvenor.

“At the time it was written there was a political aspect to it,” says Fraser. “It speaks very much to fads and people blindly following the trends of fashion.”

Although Fraser has had a role in previous LLO productions, he says that his main priority this year was on directing.

“I really wanted to focus on the performances and the acting,” he says. “We’ve been doing a lot of workshops and character development. I also really tried to push the choreography in this year’s production. The cast has responded very positively. The main thing for me is that we all enjoyed ourselves during the production.”

Musical direction, meanwhile, was handled by Marian Siminski, who Fraser only has high praise for.

“The LLO is consistently excellent with the music,” he says. “This production has some very lovely music. Some of the songs are very gentle and beautiful.”



As per usual, proceeds from this year’s production will go to the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation. For over 25 years, the LLO has contributed donations to the foundation, totaling \$171,000. This money is used by the hospital to purchase equipment not covered by its budget or by provincial grants.

And just as the LLO itself maintains its commitment to the surrounding community, so too did Fraser strive for a sense of togetherness throughout the rehearsal process for this play, which has been ongoing since September 2015.

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For showtimes, tickets and more information, visit www.llo.org