

# Seussical spotlights hoofers, hooters and hot musicians

■ *Dance moves, music take shape for play*

BY MARIE FOREMAN  
TIMES CONTRIBUTOR

If the cast and crew of *Seussical the Musical* are half as enthusiastic as the people leading them, audience members are in for a good time.

"I think it's going to be a lot of fun," said music director Celia Penman during last Sunday's rehearsal. She was bouncing along to the music, pointing out her favourite parts, when she wasn't singing along.

"(The lyrics are) very singable, and you find yourself singing them anywhere, and all the time."

Of course, there are always a few obstacles when putting on a show.

"(The music) changes times and key signatures extremely quickly," she said. "There's no stopping between songs - no breaks like (in) a typical musical.

"It's like a modern opera."

Rather than operatic wailing and a full orchestra, Penman has four musicians and a cast of 50 to perform *Seussical's* Broadway-type tunes. The band is drummer Ben Corner, bass player Joe Fatica, pianist Hellen Klassen and Charlotte Loeppky on keyboards.

"The challenges in this (play) are the large cast, the fact that we don't have a lot of time to rehearse and we have to put together singing, dancing and staging," Penman said. "It's a challenge for everyone to be in the right place at the right time."

She doesn't have to tell that to choreographer Regan Domes.

"It's crazy - nobody stands around for very long," Domes said.

And the actors aren't dancing about in a wide-open, empty ballroom. Additions built onto the stage make it more like one large staircase.

"I love that there are so many levels - you can engage the audience so much," Domes said. "(We) can move all those bright costumes all over the stage - it's very interactive."

In coming up with the show's movements, Domes kept the play's characters foremost in her mind.

"Knowing a little bit about the personalities really helps," she said. "(Take) the Sour Kangaroo. She's sassy, so she has to (dance) sassy."

Domes also had to remember most of her cast members are fairly new to dancing.

"There was some, but there wasn't a lot of dance experience," she said. "The moves are definitely simple."

"In the beginning, writing and then teaching (the moves) probably (took) 30 hours a week. I'm really enjoying this time, now, when I can sit back and see it come together."

"You know in the end it's going to look really good, you just have to be patient."

Dinner theatre tickets are available for Nov. 22 to 24 and Nov. 29 to 30 - call Penman at 652-7913. She also has tickets for the lunch matinee Nov. 24. Regular tickets are available at Pekisko Men's Clothing at 652-2252. There will be a regular matinee Nov. 25, and regular evening theatre Dec. 1. All performances are at the Highwood Memorial Centre.



Photo by Marie Foreman

Music director Celia Penman (right) looks over the score from *Seussical the Musical*, while keyboardist Charlotte Loeppky smiles and waits for the band to strike up, during Sunday's rehearsal.

H.R. Times Nov 9/07



"Seussical the Musical" includes such characters as Bird Girl Jennifer Livesey-Moore (left), Who Ruth Gough and Gertrude, played by Alyshia Hobday. The rehearsal on Nov. 4 was the first chance the Windmill Theatre Players' cast had to view all of the play's costumes. The musical runs at the end of November at the Highwood Memorial Centre in High River.

PHOTO BY MARIE FOREMAN, HIGH RIVER TIMES

Regional - Nov 14/07











Photo by Jessica Patterson

Miranda Scott plays Jojo (right) and Mallory McCredie plays the Cat in the Hat in the Windmill Theatre Players' production of *Seussical the Musical*. The play opens in November in High River.

## Musical takes audience on Seussical trip

BY JESSICA PATTERSON  
TIMES REPORTER

High River will be overrun with characters from more than 18 Dr. Seuss books when *Seussical the Musical* opens in November.

"*Seussical* is very much family entertainment," said director Steve Penman of Windmill Theatre Players. "It's a musical show based on the works of Dr. Seuss."

The play, which has a cast of 51, ranging from nine to 73 years old, is based mainly around the books *Horton Hears A Who* and *Horton Hatches an Egg*.

The main character, Horton, is an elephant.

High Riverite John Wiest plays Horton, a character he said is a shy, determined type.

"He's a brave and independent thinker who otherwise doesn't draw much attention to himself, but manages to find himself in an extraordinary circumstance," Wiest said.

Horton finds a planet of people only he can hear, the Whos, on a speck of dust. No one else in the Jungle of Nool, where he lives, believes they exist, and so Horton finds himself alienated.

"They think he's a nut," Wiest said.

Wiest, a choir director by day, has always enjoyed watching musical theatre and always wanted to try it.

"I decided, with my family's blessing, to go for the lead, because I felt it was such a compelling role and I had the vocals to handle it," Wiest said.

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The High River man has already found enjoyment in the play.

"It's definitely a lot of fun," Wiest said. "The best part would probably be meeting a whole bunch of different people."

But it's also proved a bit of a challenge for Wiest.

"There's definitely a challenge in incorporating my purely musical skills into a play setting," he said. "Having to memorize songs and scripts and coming up with ways to deliver that."

The person who runs the show within the show is the Cat in the Hat. The Cat is the narrator, but also plays

other characters, too.

For triple threat Mallory McCredie, who plays the Cat in the Hat, the role came easily.

"I like it, being able to play an outgoing part," she said. "There's more you can do with it."

McCredie, 18, has been with Windmill for 11 years. While she has

played cats in other plays, the Cat in the Hat is, by far, the most playful.

"The Cat in the Hat, she is mischievous," McCredie said. "She gets people into trouble while she narrates the show. The Cat likes popping up everywhere, being unsuspecting."

*Seussical the Musical* opens Nov. 22 at the Memorial Centre.

## Musical shows off High River's many talents

ent. by the Foothills Girls Choir — led by Kaly and John.

re's It's always a treat to hear the youthful and exuberant voices of the girls and their special guests.

who This weekend, along with the Santa Claus parade, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offers its nativity exhibit, At the Manger, for its ninth year.

e's In addition to more than 300 crèches on display, spectators will be able to hear the Highwood high school choir, Riverwind and The Friendship Centre Glee Club, to name a few musical performers. There is no admission charge — just bring friends



Koltun's Kitchen  
Bernie Koltun

and enjoy the display.

So, get out there and taste the flavour of Christmas through the songs and activities of High River.

Mark your calendar so you don't miss a thing.

### TURTLE BARS

1 1/4 c. flour  
1/4 c. sugar  
1/2 c. butter

Cut butter into sugar and flour to form soft dough. Press into an 8-inch square or 9x12 pan, depending on how thick you wish the bars to be. Bake at 350 for 20 to 30 minutes until golden brown.

Cook and stir the following over low heat until sugar dissolves:

1 - 300 ml can sweetened condensed milk.

1/2 c. sugar.  
1/2 c. butter.  
2 T. corn syrup.

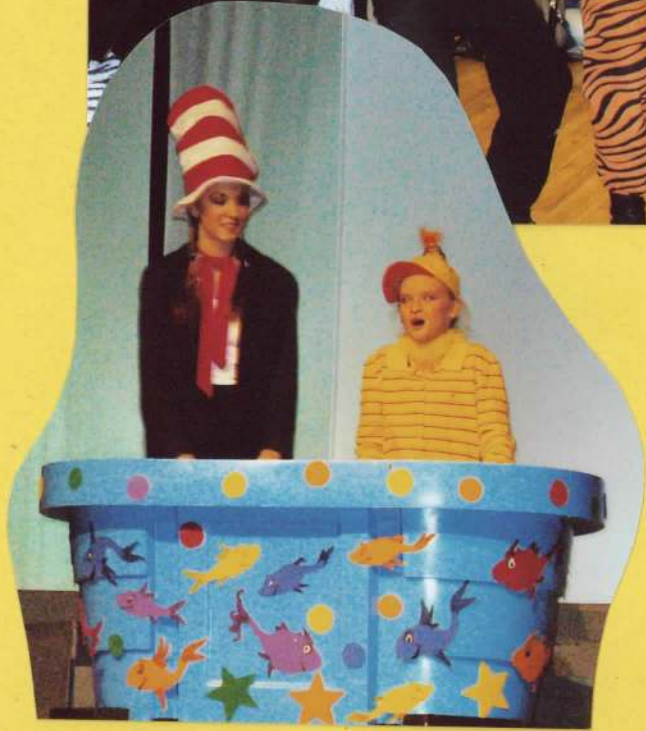
Then, bring the mixture to a boil over medium low heat for 6 to 8 minutes or until the mixture thickens and turns to caramel. Stir always. Pour over base.

Sprinkle the following over the hot caramel:

2/3 c. chocolate chips.

Cover pan with cookie sheet. Wait a few minutes until chips are soft. Then, spread the chocolate to make the topping.









Windmill Theatre Players present

# cookies and plays

An evening of One Act Plays and  
delicious and delectable cookies!

Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008

High River Centennial Library







Photo by Evan Careen

**SLEEP ON IT** — Windmill Theatre presented *The Footsteps of Doves*, a Robert Anderson production, last week at the High River library. From left are Herb Haekel, Eric Baxter and Rhea Simpson.

*H.R. Times - Mar 7/08*

Alberta Drama Festival Association  
 Foothills Regional  
 One Act Play Festival  
 March 15, 2008  
 7:00 pm  
 Session 3  
 \$12  
 Foothills Centennial Centre, 204 Community Way, Okotoks  
 adfa  
 Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Windmill Theatre had an evening of one-act plays March 1 at the High River library. Yvonne Hopkins (left) and Eric Baxter perform in *The Footsteps of Doves*, a Robert Anderson production.

PHOTO BY EVAN CAREEN,  
 HIGH RIVER TIMES  
*March 12/08*



# Okotoks to host One Act Play Festival

By Tamara Neely  
STAFF REPORTER

This weekend actors and directors from across the foothills will bring their love of theatre to the Foothills Centennial Centre.

On Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening, four theatre troupes will be performing a total of nine one-act plays as part of the annual Foothills Regional One Act Play Festival.

Truth be told, the actors, directors and teams of volunteers have already reaped a lot of their reward out of the process before the audience even finds their seats.

Eight days before the performance of the play Ruby of Elsinore, director Sue

Gothard was brimming over with excitement about the upcoming performance.

"I love being involved, seeing the germ of an idea come to fruition, and also the fact that when you start you don't know who the cast will be until after the auditions - people bring their own personalities to (the play) and it's fascinating the way it changes," said Gothard.

There are four theatre troupes participating this year: the Dewdney Players Group Theatre, who are hosting the festival this year, and Gypsy Cabaret Theatre Society both based in Okotoks, the Bragg Arts Theatre Society based in Bragg Creek and the High River's Windmill Theatre Players.

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Jocelyn Hoover and Kyle Guenard star in the Alberta High School of Fine Arts' Mainstage production of the musical *The Music Man*, April 9 to 19.  
*photo by Michelle Lindstrom*



Shannon Franks, as Ruby touches up Chris Robson, as Hamlet's ghost in rehearsal for the Dewdney Players One Act Festival.  
*photo by Blair Braitenbach*

## One Act Play Festival Schedule

There are nine plays in the Foothills Regional One Act Play Festival. Below is a schedule to plan your weekend:

**Friday, March 14 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

- After the Matinee, Dewdney Players Group Theatre
- The Footsteps of Doves, Windmill Theatre Players
- Who's Hamlet? Dewdney Players Group Theatre

**Saturday, March 15 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

- Relative Strangers, Windmill Theatre Players
- Ruby of Elsinore, Dewdney Players Group Theatre
- Scared Stiff, Bragg Arts Theatre Society.

**Saturday, March 15 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

- Babel Rap, Gypsy Cabaret Theatre Society
- Heart in the Ground, Dewdney Players Group Theatre
- An Informative 12 Step Guide on How to Mate, Windmill Theatre Players

**Sunday, March 16 starting at 7 p.m.**

The Dewdney Players and Gypsy Cabaret will perform all five of the festival plays. Food bank donations will be accepted in lieu of admission fee.

The Western Wheel - March 12/08

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## Play festival, continued from page 31

Gothard, a member of the Dewdney Players, said this is their fourth year in a row participating in the festival, and they are presenting four plays, each with a different director.

Okotoks resident Dale Fea, for example, has jumped in this year to direct her first play, *After the Matinee*. Fea's production will be performed at the Friday sitting.

If there are other members of the community who have a penchant for writing or performing and would like to get involved with theatre, Gothard encourages people to come forward.

There are many opportunities to get involved with the theatre groups or the festival, from ticket sales at the front-of-house to auditioning for upcoming roles on centre stage to props and set design behind the scenes.

Volunteering requires a commitment of time, and Gothard acknowledged that directing a play requires dedicating a lot of time, but the rewards of the experience warrant the time spent.

"I love it," said Gothard. "It's very, very, very busy, but it's an absolute joy. We have



Alysha Bertrand as Ophelia practices with Oliver Bulpitt as Hamlet.  
*photo by Blair Braitenbach*

a lot of fun."

The nine plays will be performed over three sittings, which will be Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 for one sitting or \$25 to attend all three.

The Foothills Centennial Centre is located at 204 Community Way.

On Sunday at 7 p.m. there

will be a special sitting at the Rotary Performing Arts Centre and Dewdney Players and Gypsy Cabaret will present all five festival plays. Admission is a donation to the food bank. Guests are welcome to pick and choose which plays they would like to catch, if staying for all five isn't feasible.

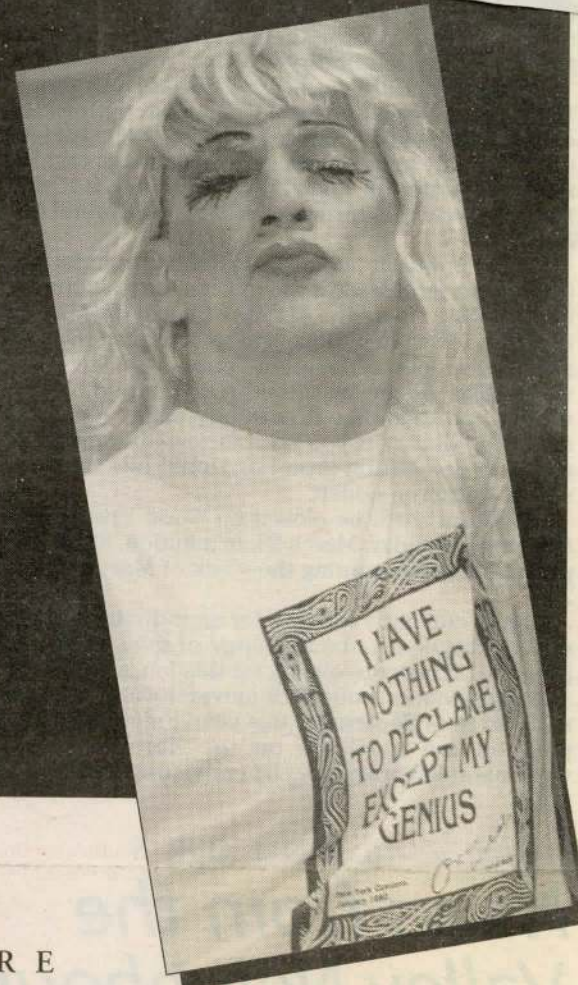
For more information, call Sue or Reg Gothard at (403) 938-3072.





Chris Robson, top, plays a father hanging onto the role of Hamlet in *Who's Hamlet*. Reg Gothard, right, blows a dreamy kiss backstage. Gothard played the Dame in *After the Matinee*. Both gentlemen are Dewdney Players.

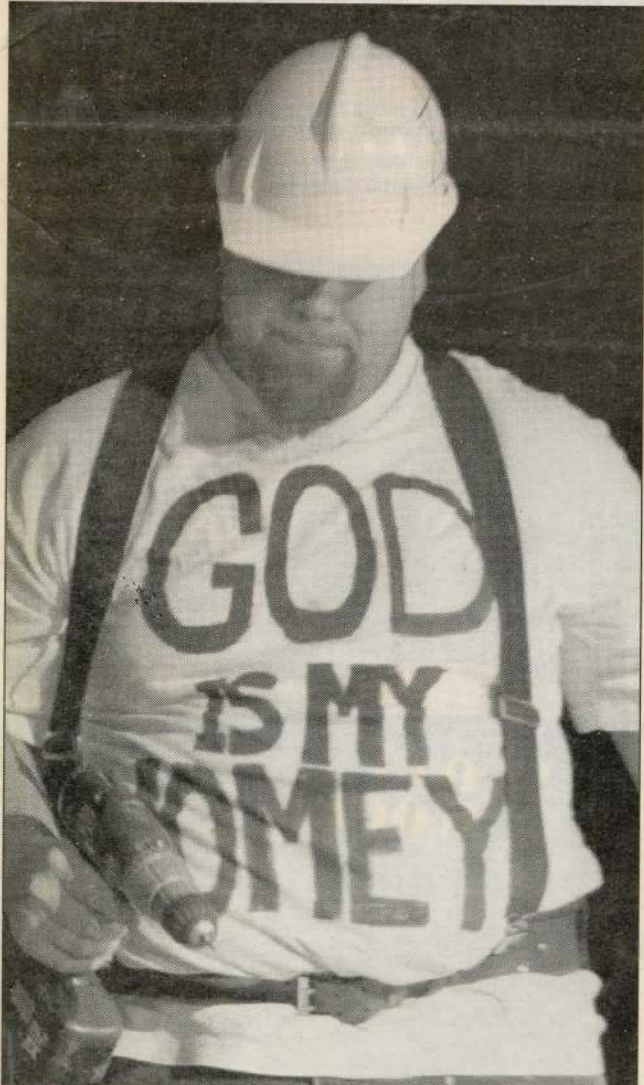
photos by Tamara Neely



**TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW**  
 Dewdney Players set to host one act festival  
 • See Scene page 31



Vol. 33 No. 32 \$1.00 incl. GST



### Host Dewdney Players collect four awards

By Tamara Neely  
 STAFF REPORTER

Okotoks-based theatre companies raked in awards at this year's Foothills One Act Play Festival.

The festival took place on Friday and Saturday at the Foothills Centennial Centre, with four theatre companies participating. A theatre instructor from Saskatchewan was invited to adjudicate the event, choosing best director, actor, actress, play and runner-ups.

The Okotoks-based companies had good odds; of the nine plays in the festival, the Dewdney Players, who hosted the event, had four plays in the festival and Gypsy Cabaret Theatre Society had one.

Dewdney Players mem-

bers' production *Heart in the Ground* won four of the eight awards, *Gypsy Cabaret* won three and the *Windmill Players* based in High River won one.

Dale Fea, in her directorial debut – since university, that is – won best director; Paul Rancourt won best actor; his co-star Florence Maione won runner-up best actress; and *Heart in the Ground*, which Fea called a tear-jerker, won runner-up best play.

The *Gypsy Cabaret* won best play for their two-person show *Babel Rap*, with director and actor Derek Losoncy winning runner-up best director and his co-star Matt Molyneux winning runner-up best actor.

Carla Schmidt, who is a member of the *Wyndmill Players*, won best actress for her performance in *Relative Strangers*, a production that she also directed.

The Dewdney Players and the *Gypsy Cabaret* performed their productions for a special sitting at the newly-opened

Rotary Performing Arts Centre on Sunday, performing for the love of theatre – and for donations to the food bank.

*"At first I thought, 'My God, I'm not sure I can handle this.'"*

-- Dale Fea  
 Dewdney Players' director

Fea, who lives in Okotoks, was surprised to land best director. She wasn't even expecting to direct *Heart in the Ground*. She said she chose a nice, uplifting 10-minute play called *After the Matinee*, which she also directed for the festival.

Directing *Heart in the Ground* came accidentally as a favour to lead actress Maione.

"It's an extremely emotional play," said Fea, who initially was comfortable signing up to direct the light-hearted *Af-*

ter the *Matinee*. "At first I thought, My God, I'm not sure I can handle this."

The two-person show features the emotional control of leads Rancourt and Maione, who, said Fea, are very good, very experienced actors who get in touch with their emotions.

"And working with Paul (Rancourt) and Florence (Maione) is a delight," said Fea.

Fea also praised Annette Kavalinas for creating "amazing" costumes and husband and wife team Barb Cook and Doug Howard, who were instrumental in the smooth operation.

"Barb keeps us informed and in order, and Doug, when we need things built, he does it," she said.

Being behind the scenes, they don't get acknowledgement often enough. Though, she said, the list of people who were key to pulling off the festival with success goes on and on.

## T H E A T R E

# One act plays a hit for Okotoks