



Gallery 7 Theatre & Performing Arts Society

P.O. Box 825, Abbotsford B.C. V2T 7A2

Ticket Reservations – House of James: 604-852-3701

Administration: 604-504-5940

info@gallery7theatre.com

www.gallery7theatre.com

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Media Contact: Ken Hildebrandt

604-504-5940

info@gallery7theatre.com

Please also include in January & February calendar listings.

The Boys Next Door a Charming yet Funny Play

Gallery 7 Theatre & Performing Arts is pleased to be presenting its second show of the 2007/2008 theatre season, *The Boys Next Door* by Tom Griffin. A charming comedy-drama that explores the complex nuances of human interaction through the simple, black and white life experience of a group of mentally handicapped men, *The Boys Next Door* promises to be an inspirational and compelling theatre experience for Fraser Valley Audiences, filled with laughter and perhaps even a few tears.

The story follows the life of Norman, Lucien, Arnold and Barry, four mentally challenged men who live out their existence under the watchful and caring eye of a burned out social worker named Jack. Though confined by their physical reality, they reach out in spirit and find laughter, love and a sense of meaningful purpose for their lives.

Norman, who takes great pride in the massive bundle of keys that hangs from his waist, fights the temptation to eat the left-over pastries from the donut shop he works in. Lucien, who has a child-like level of comprehension, attempts to understand books of a complex nature while Arnold, who works part time at a local movie theatre, hyperactively and compulsively moves through the day. Barry, a rather intelligent man living with schizophrenia, masquerades as a golf pro, giving private lessons to his unsuspecting clients.

Meanwhile, Jack, the well-intentioned and caring support worker for this eclectic group of men, has reached the end of his emotional rope and struggles with the need to move on with his own life without destroying the lives of those who have come to depend on him.

Through a series of scenes and vignettes, the play explores the experience of these men with a sensitive and sometimes gritty truthfulness, giving audiences a unique insight into an existence that would otherwise appear to be incomplete.

Production director Shelley Picard, who makes her directorial debut at Gallery 7 Theatre, indicates that *The Boys Next Door* is a play about discovering yourself by knowing how you who you are and how you fit into this world. "The playwright has captured the essence of these men who live in a world that is purely black and white. There is no grey in their world," she says. "They are a shining example of a lesson we could all learn about living life simply and honestly."

Picard has appeared in several Gallery 7 productions in recent months including *The Hobbit*, *Lost in Yonkers* and *Steel Magnolias*. She has also directed several shows at other theatres including *Alone Together* and *The Restroom at Rosenblooms*. For her, what makes this play particularly special is that the characters are so real and represent us all in the purest of terms. "I love the fact that we can bring their story to life with integrity. I have loved the opportunity to explore the human condition," she says.

Picard is working with a talented group of both veteran and new performers at Gallery 7. Returning after his energetic performance as Bilbo Baggins in last year's hit production of *The Hobbit* is Eldon Letkeman, who plays Barry Klemper. He is joined by Andrew Potts, who plays Arnold, and newcomer Derek Ward-Hall,

who plays Norman. Jordan Duffels, who also makes his Gallery 7 Theatre debut with this production, plays Lucien. Andrew Tkach takes on the role of Barry Klemper's abusive father, Mr. Klemper, while Pat Braun, who last appeared in *Lost in Yonkers* at Gallery 7, plays the role of Norman's love interest, Sheila. The caring, yet drained social worker, Jack, is played by Jay Danziger and playing multiple roles in the production are Adam Hensen and Michelle Potts.

Set and costume design for *The Boys Next Door* are by husband & wife team, Derek and Alisa Peleshytyk, while lighting design is by Lora-Lynne Frewing. Make-up design is by Gail Ruginis, the production photographer is Duncan Turner of DLT Photographic and the stage manager is Stacey Lewery.

The Boys Next Door will run January 18 & 19, 24 – 26 & 31 – February 1, 2008 @ 7:30 PM with additional discounted matinees on January 19 & 26 @ 2:00 PM at the MEI Secondary School Theatre, 4081 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford. Tickets are \$15.00 Adults, \$13.50 Students & Seniors, \$12.50 children and groups of 10 or more, and \$11.00 for discounted matinees. They can be purchased at the House of James, 2743 Emerson Street, Abbotsford, or by calling 604-852-3701. For more information about Gallery 7 Theatre and the rest of the 2007/2008 theatre season, please visit the company's website at www.gallery7theatre.com.