



Theatre Aquarius- Live Canadian Theatre at its Finest

By Cheryl Ibbotson

It is almost time for Theatre Aquarius to once again provide Tradebank clients with the magic of live Canadian theatre. The Theatre's season runs from September to May and The Dofasco Centre for the Arts is open year-round for rentals such as ChamberWorks, Olden Age of Variety, Boris Brott Summer Music Festival and the Dance Centre.

Founded in 1973, it has been almost 35 years since Theatre Aquarius branded Hamilton with its mark of professional theatre with their production of Hadrian VII. Theatre Aquarius soon outgrew the Studio Theatre at Hamilton Place, creating the need for a new theatre. The theatre centre (now known as the Dofasco Centre for the Arts) became the new home in 1991. With a record-breaking 2005/2006 season, which celebrated Max Reimer's 10th as Artistic Director, the future looks even brighter as the 35th season approaches in two years.

The theatre finds the talent for performances by holding auditions for Equity (professional) actors in Toronto and Hamilton on a per show basis. What makes the theatre unique is that it produces more Canadian plays than any other of Ontario's "A" category not-for-profit producing theatres with an average of eight per season. The actors are the same ones seen at the Stratford Festival, Shaw Festival, CanStage, Stage West, across Canada and even on Broadway!

John Henry, who heads up Communications & Public Relations for the theatre says that the theatre is true to its roots. "Our mission is to bring primarily Canadian plays and perspectives to our regional audience and into the national repertoire. We reflect and define the Hamilton perspective and we shape and describe our unique regional characteristics. The Dofasco Centre for the Arts houses the fully-equipped 750-seat proscenium, main stage auditorium and the 128-seat Studio Theatre, which doubles as the rehearsal hall. All administration and production support is on-site, including administration offices, meeting rooms, dressing rooms, scenic workshop, and properties and wardrobe departments."

As well as producing plays and musicals Theatre Aquarius also contributes to the community with a Performing Arts Program (theatre school for ages eight and up), Brave New Works (play reading festival), and Directions in Education (school board liaison program). Theatre Aquarius boasts over 8,300 subscribers and 100,000 patrons attending Theatre Aquarius productions last season. The 2006/2007 season looks like it will be another smash season: On the main stage: *Glory Days!*, *Sexy Laundry*, *Amadeus*, *Blood Brothers*, *Looking*, in the Studio Theatre: *Lucien: Snow Birds*, *Susan Gilmour: The Lady Sings the Tunes*, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Mother of the Pride*, the holiday family musical *CATS*, the special presentation with the HPO *Wish Upon a Star*, the classic kids show *Treasure Island* and the community presentation *Vagina Monologues*.

For more information on tickets for the theatre and the upcoming season, please call your broker or call Cheryl at Tradebank's Canadian corporate office at 1-866-704-1121 Ext 30.