

The New Canadian Curling Club



Heartwarming Comedy Sweeping into the Drayton Festival Theatre this July

Monday, June 19, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Prepare to experience a hilarious and poignant comedy that celebrates the diverse tapestry of Canada this July in Drayton. A Chinese student, a Jamaican quick-serve manager, an Indian customer service representative, and a 17 year-old Syrian refugee walk into a curling club... What begins as an amusing setup soon evolves into a moving comedy about immigration, community, and national identity. Hurry hard to the **Drayton Festival Theatre** and catch *The New Canadian Curling Club*, playing for three weeks only from **July 13 to July 29**.

Inspired by the local refugee resettlement program, a small town organizes a Learn-to-Curl class to welcome newcomers. But when its organizer slips on the ice and breaks her hip, the rink's ice maker and former champion curler Stuart MacPhail is forced to step in as head coach. Trouble is, Stuart has some strong opinions about immigrants. What follows is an inspiring and hilarious story of a group of unlikely athletes who face off against local prejudice and claim their identity as "new Canadians".

"This is an incredibly relevant play right now, and we are proud to be presenting it as part of our season," says Alex Mustakas, Artistic Director and CEO of Drayton Entertainment. "*The New Canadian Curling Club* will make you laugh out loud, while also taking you on an emotional journey through some of the struggles that newcomers face, and questioning what it means to be a 'new Canadian.'"

Coaching the team is Director **Jane Spence**. Spence has directed productions at Theatre Orangeville, Red Sandcastle Theatre, Compass Theatre, is the Lighthouse Festival's first Artistic Associate, and will be directing two productions in their 2023 summer season. Joining her is Set Designer **Beckie Morris**, Costume Designer **Alex Amini**, Lighting Designer **Jeff JohnstonCollins**, Stage Manager **Grace Batten**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Rebecca Miller**.

A winning team of performers has been assembled for this production, all of whom are making their Drayton Entertainment debuts. **John Jarvis** is the sixth-generation Canadian curling coach Stuart MacPhail, who finds himself tasked with preparing this unlikely team for the local Bonspiel. Jarvis has appeared in numerous productions at Soulpepper, in *The Birds and the Bees* at the Thousand Islands Playhouse, and *Sly* in *Meet My Sister* at the Lighthouse Festival Theatre.

Chiamaka Glory is the bad-kneed, resilient and good-natured Charmaine Bailey, who emigrated from Jamaica eighteen years ago and now manages the local Tim Hortons. Glory is a Dora-

nominated actor, director, and playwright, who has performed at the Persephone Theatre and Neptune Theatre, and is known for her role as Adrianna Duff on CBC's TV series *Pretty Hard Cases*.

Norman Yeung is Mike Chang, a young man of Chinese-Canadian descent who must find a way to get along with Stuart, his potential future grandfather-in-law. Yeung appeared in *Hamlet* and *Death of the Kings Horseman* at the Stratford Festival, as well as at Canadian Stage and Theatre Calgary, and is an award-winning playwright.

Andrew Prashad is Anoojeet Singh, an employee of the local Tim Hortons who works hard to support his family and dreams of building a life in the small community. Prashad is an award-winning artist who has appeared in roles at Berkeley Rep Theatre, Young People's Theatre, the Shaw Festival and has performed on stages around the world as a featured artist in the 20th Anniversary World Tour of *Riverdance*.

Zaynna Khalife is Fatima Al-Sayed, the youngest member of the team who nervously awaits news from her missing brother as he struggles to join his family in Canada. Khalife is a recent graduate of the joint Sheridan College and University of Toronto Theatre and Drama Studies Specialist program, and she brings her identity as a Lebanese-Canadian artist to the role.

The New Canadian Curling Club is written by Mark Crawford. The play premiered at the Blythe Festival Theatre in June 2018, and has been presented at theatres across Canada. Crawford grew up on a farm in Glencoe, Ontario before studying theatre at the University of Toronto and Sheridan College. This production recently concluded a successful run at Theatre Orangeville where it ran from April 26 to May 14, 2023. After the run at Drayton Festival Theatre, the production will transfer to the Huron Country Playhouse's South Huron Stage and run from August 3 to August 20.

The New Canadian Curling Club is proudly sponsored by **Gibson Sound & Vision**. The Design Sponsors are **Wallenstein Feed and Supply**, and **Drayton Massage & Osteopathy**. The Media Sponsors are **CityNews 570**, **Country 106.7**, **CHYM FM**, **Magic 106.1**, **Guelph Mercury Tribune**, and **88.7 The River**. The 2023 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

The New Canadian Curling Club is on stage at the **Drayton Festival Theatre** from **July 13** through **July 29**. Regular performance tickets are \$55 for adults, \$34 for youth under 20 years of age. Tickets for select Discount Dates and groups of 20 or more are \$45, and small groups of 10-19 are \$50. HST is applicable to all ticket prices. Tickets may be purchased by calling the Box Office at **519-638-5555** or toll free at **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**, or online at draytonentertainment.com.

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