



The Rise of Cambridge's Preston Rivulettes Women's Hockey Team Comes to Life on Stage at the Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge

Thursday, April 25, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – She shoots! She scores! A local legacy comes to life on stage as a new Canadian play chronicles the impressive rise of Cambridge's Preston Rivulettes Women's Hockey Team. Drayton Entertainment is proud to present **GLORY** on stage at the **Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge** from **May 15 to June 8**.

GLORY is written by Canadian playwright Tracey Power who saw a historical photo of the Preston Rivulettes women's hockey team in a coffee table book and was inspired to find out more about them and tell the story of how they became one of the most successful hockey teams in Canadian history. The production is created by Western Canada Theatre.

Set in the 1930s, this exciting stage production follows two sets of sisters – Hilda & Nellie Ranscombe and Helen & Marm Schmuck – who set out to show the nation that Canada's favourite pastime isn't just for men. After playing together on the Preston Rivulettes summer softball team, the four women seek out a winter sport to play; they form Preston's first women's hockey team under the same name – the Rivulettes.

The four friends face a number of personal and professional obstacles as they work to make a name for themselves in the world of hockey – a world that seems content to keep them on the bench. At first, only Hilda knows how to play the game, Nellie can't skate, and they are all struggling to make ends meet during the Great Depression. Herb Fach, the grumpy manager of Preston's Lowther Street Arena is their only option for a coach ... and he initially says no because "girls don't play hockey." Herb comes around, the ladies figure out how to play the game, and astonishingly, they win the Ladies Ontario Hockey League championship in their first season. With bumps along the way, the team rises to earn one championship after another ultimately building an impressive winning streak that is the stuff of legends. Along with their on-ice triumphs, the story also revolves around their personal lives, their relationship with Coach Fach, and their struggles as women fighting to be recognized in a male-dominated sport.

"*GLORY* is not just a sports story – it's a story of a country, of a time in our history, of determination and of passion. Passion for what you want in your life and passion for beating the odds," says playwright Tracey Power. "This incredible piece of our history is far too relevant because women are still fighting for equality and recognition both on and off the ice today. The Rivulettes inspired me to write this play, and we hope to entertain and inspire, all who come and watch it."

When Power was crafting *GLORY*, staging the hockey games was a particular challenge since ice skating on stage is not practical. Using music inspired by the jazz age, she has choreographed clever swing dance moves to convey the physical exertion and kinetic energy of the games. The result is an innovative play with dance that captures all the thrills, exhilaration, and tension of a great hockey game.

The success of the Preston Rivulettes remains unparalleled in Canadian sports history. The team played an estimated 350 games between 1930 and 1940, losing only two – a 95% winning average. In 1963, the Preston Rivulettes were finally recognized by Canada's Hockey Hall of Fame. In 1996, the team was inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame. Captain Hilda Ranscombe, who is considered by many to be the best female hockey player in Canadian history, would later be inducted as an individual player in 2015. In 1997, the Preston Rivulettes were inducted as a team into the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame, with Hilda Ranscombe inducted as an individual player the same year.

"It's really exciting for us to present *GLORY* – not only is it an important local story, it's an important Canadian story that highlights the immense role these women had in pioneering a path for women in hockey across the nation," says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. "I think audiences are going to leave the theatre filled with pride for the passion, power, and perseverance of the Preston Rivulettes."

The production is directed by **James MacDonald**, with playwright **Tracey Power** as the choreographer. They are joined by Set and Lighting Designer **Narda McCarroll**, Costume Designer **Cindy Wiebe** and Sound Designer **Steve Charles**.

A remarkable cast of talented performers has been assembled for this production – all of whom will make their debuts with Drayton Entertainment.

Vancouver actress **Kate Dion-Richard** plays Helen Schmuck, a woman torn between her love of the game and finding the love of her life. Dion-Richard is a hockey fan having grown up idolizing her distant cousin Montreal Canadiens' icon Maurice "The Rocket" Richard. In addition to her stage work, Dion-Richard has appeared on-screen in several hit TV shows including *Once Upon A Time*, *Death Note*, *Psych*, and *Untold Stories of the ER*, among others.

Katie Ryerson plays famed player Hilda Ranscombe, the Rivulettes fearless captain who is considered the heart and soul of the team because of her excellent skills and leadership on and off the ice. A Calgary native, Ryerson has appeared in various productions across Canada, including *Sense and Sensibility* at the Citadel Theatre, and *Miracle on 34th street* at Upper Canada Playhouse.

Advah Soudack takes on the role of funny and feisty Margaret “Marm” Schmuck, Helen’s outspoken sister who is struggling with her heritage and the impending threat of World War II. Also hailing from Vancouver, Soudack is an accomplished singer, actor, and voice-over artist who has worked on cartoons like *Planet Hulk* and *My Little Pony*.

Morgan Yamada plays goalie Nellie Ranscombe, Hilda’s smart sister who has been accepted to University but is unable to attend due to family financial constraints. Although she is passionate about the game, Nellie struggles with her skills on the ice – she is more driven by her affection for her friends and her close relationship with Helen in particular. Yamada is an Edmonton-based actor who has previously appeared in *Peter and the Starcatcher* for the Citadel Theatre, among many other productions.

Veteran actor **Andrew Wheeler** is the Rivulettes curmudgeonly coach Herbert Fach. A seasoned theatre performer, Wheeler has appeared in countless plays and musicals across the country, in everything from *Hamlet* to *Mamma Mia!*. He has also appeared in hundreds of TV shows and movies, including *The X Files* and *MacGyver*.

GLORY is on stage from **May 15 to June 8** at the Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge. After its initial run in Cambridge, the production will go on to play three other Drayton Entertainment venues this summer: June 12 to June 22 at the Huron Country Playhouse II in Grand Bend, June 26 to July 6 at the King's Wharf Theatre in Penetanguishene, and July 10 to July 20 at the Drayton Festival Theatre.

Regular performance tickets are \$48 for adults, \$29 for youth under 20 years of age and \$39 for groups of 20 or more and select Discount Dates. HST is applicable to all ticket prices.

The 2019 Season is proudly sponsored by **John and Terry Hamilton**. **GLORY** is proudly sponsored by **Sketchley Cleaners** and **Tiny Cakes**. The Media Sponsors are **KX 94.7 FM** and **The Cambridge Times**. The Design Sponsors are **Homewood Suites by Hilton** and **The Chaplin Family YMCA**. The Western Canada Theatre Tour Sponsor is **Blundstone**. The Youth Theatre Education Sponsor is **TD Bank**. The 2019 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

Celebrate this amazing Canadian story about a couple of girls who proved that a woman's place is on home ice. Tickets may be purchased in person at any Drayton Entertainment Box Office, online at www.draytonentertainment.com/glory or by calling the Box Office toll-free at **1-855-DRAYTON (372-9866)**.

- 30 -

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