



## *Charming Romantic Comedy a Love Letter to Farming On Stage Next at the Drayton Festival Theatre*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The return of summer theatre continues as country wit meets city bluster in the fast-paced romantic comedy *Buying The Farm* coming soon to the **Drayton Festival Theatre**. This entertaining look at the charms and challenges of maintaining the family farm is on stage from **June 29 to July 16** at the historic venue in Mapleton Township.

*Buying The Farm* follows aging bachelor Magnus Bjornson, a farmer who finds himself with mounting debt, some health concerns, and suburban neighbourhoods intruding on his land from every direction. Just as Magnus is considering retirement, young real estate agent Brad arrives, determined to make a sale. It seems like a done deal until Magnus' great-niece Esme steps in, and is unwavering in her resolve to keep the family farm afloat.

“*Buying The Farm* is relatable, heartfelt, and above all else, very funny,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “The production is packed with so many wonderful moments of levity, balanced by flashes of insight and tenderness which speak to the plight of the independent farmer. It’s the perfect summer comedy.”

This charming Canadian story is brought to life by esteemed director **Lee MacDougall**. A veteran actor, MacDougall appeared in the original Broadway company of *Come From Away*, and has been on almost all of the professional stages in Canada including seasons at the Stratford and Shaw Festivals and many productions with Drayton Entertainment. His directorial credits include *All Shook Up* for Drayton Entertainment, *Rope’s End* for the Blyth Festival, *Glory Days* for Theatre Aquarius, and *The Producers* at Stage West Calgary, which was nominated for a Betty Mitchell Award for Best Production. MacDougall has also directed several of his own plays, most notably *High Life* and *Who Has Seen the Wind* for the Stratford Festival, and *The Ginkgo Tree* for Theatre Aquarius.

MacDougall will be joined by Set Designer **Meaghan Carpentier**, Costume Designer **Nicole Del Cul**, Lighting Designer **Lyle Franklin**, Stage Manager **Laurel Oneil**, and Apprentice Stage Manager **Stephanie Dilnot**.

Seasoned performer **Terry Barna** takes on the role of Magnus Bjornson, the cantankerous but loveable old farmer who is ready to give up the family farm. Barna has appeared in a number of Drayton Entertainment productions including *12 Angry Men*, *The Birds & The Bees*, *The Odd Couple*, *The Love List*, and the recent digital series *Backstage Pass*. Audiences may remember Barna from his two years co-hosting daytime on Rogers TV, CTV's *Stock & Awe*, or two seasons of CityTV's *Meet the Family*, for which he received a Canadian Comedy Award nomination.

The stellar cast also includes **Kelly Van der Burg** as Esme Van Fossen, Magnus' quick-tempered niece from the city determined to save the family farm. Van der Burg will make her Drayton Entertainment debut in this production. She has played leading roles in theatre, film and TV including *Renovations for Six* (Theatre Aquarius), *Decoys* (CBC Gem), *Belle On Wheels* (Real One Entertainment), *Murdoch Mysteries* (Shaftsbury), and *Inn For Christmas* (Lifetime).

**Alex Furber** is Brad Deacon, the young real estate agent hoping to lock down a major sale. Furber has appeared in several Drayton Entertainment productions including *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *You'll Get Used To It ... The War Show*, and *A Few Good Men*, among others. He has also played roles in many other theatre productions across Canada like Robert Ross in *The Wars* (The Grand), *My Night With Reg* (Studio 180/Mirvish), Gilbert in *Anne & Gilbert* (NAC), *Red* (STC), Cliff in *Cabaret* (RMTC), and Albert Narracott in *War Horse* (Mirvish).

*Buying The Farm* is written by award-winning TV writer **Shelley Hoffman** (*The Red Green Show*, *Max & Ruby*, *Iggy Arbuckle*) and accomplished actor **Stephen Sparks** (Disney's *Newsies* for Drayton Entertainment). This is their first stage play written together, inspired by Spark's youth on his family farm.

*Buying The Farm* is proudly sponsored by **Wallenstein Feed & Supply and Gibson Sound & Vision**. The Media Sponsors are **CKNX 920, 101.7 The One, Cool 94.5, Magic 106.1, CJOY 1460 Guelph** and the **Guelph Mercury Tribune**. The Design Sponsor is **Drayton Massage and Osteopathy**. The 2022 Season Media Sponsor is CTV.

*Buying The Farm* is on stage at the **Drayton Festival Theatre** from **June 29 to July 16**. In order to accommodate patrons of all comfort levels, performances are offered at various capacity limits and with differing vaccination requirements; some performances are full capacity with no vaccination requirement, some performances are limited capacity with no vaccination requirement, and some performances are limited capacity with vaccinations required. Patrons should choose the performance that best suits their comfort level.

Regular performance tickets are \$53 for adults, \$32 for youth under 20 years of age and \$43 for groups of 20 or more and select Discount Dates. 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 instantly at [www.draytonentertainment.com](http://www.draytonentertainment.com).

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