



Live Theatre Is Back on Four Local Stages

Drayton Entertainment Announces 2022 Season with multiple performance capacity options

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Open the doors and cue the stage lights! Drayton Entertainment will finally welcome audiences back to all of its theatres across the province this year including four local venues – the **Drayton Festival Theatre** in Drayton, **Hamilton Family Theatre** in Cambridge, **St. Jacobs Country Playhouse** and **Schoolhouse Theatre** in St. Jacobs. The not-for-profit charitable arts organization’s stages will be alive with memorable music, entertaining stories, joyful laughter, heartfelt applause, and maybe even a few tears as audiences, artists, volunteers, musicians, backstage crew, and more celebrate the return of live theatre with 15 productions on stage during the 2022 Season, which will run from **May 25 to December 31**.

“It’s exciting and emotional at the same time because we’ve waited so long for the return of live entertainment,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “That said, full recovery will be a multi-year effort, so this season looks a little different. There are one or two fewer shows as we cautiously resume operations, but the top-quality entertainment experience and customer service audiences have come to expect remain the same.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Drayton Entertainment has made health and safety a top priority. The charitable arts organization was one of the first theatres across the country to close its doors in March of 2020 to prevent the spread of coronavirus. That commitment continues as the company carefully enacts its reopening strategy. Although the Government of Ontario has lifted restrictions for theatres, allowing for 100% capacity, Drayton Entertainment recognizes that patrons have different degrees of comfort. With the aim of making the return to live theatre as easy as possible for everyone, the award-winning theatre organization will offer show schedules with varying capacities and protocols that gradually change as the season progresses. From May through July, audiences can choose from performances at 100% capacity with no proof of vaccination required, limited capacity (33% reduced) with no proof of vaccination required, and limited capacity (33% reduced) with proof of vaccination required. From August through December, audiences can choose from performances at 100% capacity with no proof of vaccination required and limited capacity (33% reduced) with no proof of vaccination required. The Drayton

Entertainment Duty of Care adheres to local and provincial health guidelines and is subject to change in response to current conditions throughout the season.

Drayton Festival Theatre

After spending the pandemic tending to our national security, Constable F. Inkster is funnier than ever in *Sorry, I'm Canadian Too 2!* Armed with some new political material, gifted comedian Neil Aitchison takes the stage as his beloved alter ego and provides hilarious insights on everything that is uniquely Canadian. In between side-splitting topical rants, relive the magic of the Great Canadian Songbook: gems like "Alberta Bound," "Fox On The Run," "Black Fly," "Song of the Mira," "I'se the B'ye," "Sonny's Dream," "Farewell to Nova Scotia," and many, many more. With its charming blend of music, humour, and political satire, this distinctly Canadian production will be on stage from **June 1 to June 18** in Drayton.

Country wit meets city bluster in the rural romantic comedy *Buying The Farm* on stage from **June 29 to July 16** in Drayton. An aging bachelor farmer finds himself with mounting debt, some health concerns, and suburban neighbourhoods encroaching from every direction when a young real estate agent arrives at the farm determined to succeed where others have failed. It might be a done deal, except that the farmer's great-niece is unwavering in her resolve that this family farm is NOT FOR SALE. A love note to farming, this multi-generational comedy about high hopes, last stands, skunks, and love among the chickens is an insightful look at the plight of rural Canada.

The season ends on a high note in Drayton with *Good Ol' Country Gospel* on stage from **August 11 to August 28**. Featuring glorious arrangements and heavenly voices, this inspirational musical tribute shines a new light on spiritual favourites like "Amazing Grace," "Peace in the Valley," "How Great Thou Art," "When The Saints Go Marching In," "I Saw the Light," and many more.

Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge

Fiddler on the Loose brings its musical prowess to Cambridge this spring to open the season at the **Hamilton Family Theatre**. Anchored by fiddler and showman **Jesse Grandmont**, this gregarious musical variety show features over 60 songs running the gamut of genres including "Dust in The Wind," "Devil Went Down to Georgia," "Footloose," "Tennessee Waltz," "Orange Blossom Special," and more. *Fiddler on the Loose* is on stage from **June 1 to June 18**.

Part relationship comedy and part poignant drama, the touching play *On Golden Pond* is on stage next from **July 20 to August 6** in Cambridge. Ethel and Norman Thayer return to their summer home on Golden Pond for the 48th year for some much-needed rest and relaxation. But their delightful summer routine is thrown for a loop when their daughter Chelsea visits for her dad's 80th birthday, bringing her boyfriend Bill and his teenage son in tow. *On Golden Pond* is a universal story about life, love, and the importance of family and forgiveness.

Audiences are in need of a few good laughs and they're bound to get them with the outrageous British farce *It Runs in the Family* on stage **August 11 to August 28** in Cambridge. A renowned neurologist's indiscreet past catches up with him at the most inopportune time, forcing the doctor to do anything (and

everything!) to save his precious reputation. Frantic, funny, and completely outrageous, this rib-tickling farce proves once and for all that laughter truly is the best medicine.

Good Ol' Country Gospel will also bring its soul-stirring ballads and high-energy songs of praise to Cambridge in the fall. This uplifting celebration is on stage from **October 27 to November 12** at the Hamilton Family Theatre.

The hills will be alive with ***The Sound of Music*** as Rodgers and Hammerstein's treasured musical comes to Cambridge for the holiday season. Featuring the memorable songs "My Favourite Things," "Do Re Mi," "Edelweiss," "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," "Sixteen Going on Seventeen," and the glorious title song, this family favourite follows aspiring nun Maria as she leaves the convent to govern the seven mischievous children of Captain von Trapp. Renowned as one of the most popular musicals of all time, ***The Sound of Music*** will entertain all generations – kids and grandparents alike – from **November 24 to December 24** in Cambridge.

St. Jacobs Country Playhouse

The popular mega-musical ***Mamma Mia!*** will kick off the season at St. Jacobs Country Playhouse running for four weeks only from **June 15 to July 9**. The Broadway blockbuster based on the songs of Swedish supergroup ABBA has entertained million fans around the world and spawned two major movies. In addition to the iconic title song, the infectious score features ABBA's hits "Dancing Queen," "The Winner Takes It All," "Lay All Your Love on Me," "Money, Money, Money," "Knowing Me, Knowing You," "SOS," "Take a Chance on Me," and more.

Next, ***The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*** brings southern fried humour to St. Jacobs. Five women who met years ago on their college swim team set aside a long weekend every summer to reminisce and reconnect. Free from husbands, kids and jobs, they meet at the same beach cottage on North Carolina's Outer Banks to catch up, laugh, and offer advice on everything from men, sex, and marriage, to parenting, divorce, and aging. Part *Steel Magnolias* and part *Designing Women* with just a hint of *Golden Girls*, this fresh and funny friendship comedy is on stage from **July 27 to August 13** in St. Jacobs.

Winner of the Academy Award® for Best Picture and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, ***Driving Miss Daisy*** is one of the most iconic American stories of the late twentieth century. In mid-century Atlanta, an elderly Jewish widow named Daisy is determined to maintain her independence. But when she crashes her car and is deemed unfit to drive, her son insists on hiring a chauffeur – an African-American driver named Hoke. Over the course of 25 years, the unlikely pair share amusing adventures and develop a profound, life-altering friendship that transcends all of the societal boundaries placed between them. This beloved story about overcoming prejudices, accepting change, and the transformative power of friendship is on stage from **October 6 to October 22** at St. Jacobs Country Playhouse.

In addition to musicals and comedies, Drayton Entertainment has been steadily adding acclaimed dramas to its wide array of programming. In the vein of powerful past productions like *A Few Good Men*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *Twelve Angry Men*, comes an explosive new drama that examines a nation's racial divide through the eyes of parents whose worst fear hangs in the balance. In ***American Son***, an estranged interracial couple desperately look for information about their missing teenage son when he is detained by the local police following a traffic stop incident. Maternal, marital, and societal tensions escalate as the

parents and officers become engulfed in a battle of bias, judgement, and racial prejudice. Winner of the prestigious Laurents Hatcher Award, *American Son* is on stage in St. Jacobs from **November 2 to November 20**.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road to the theatre because one of the greatest tales ever told is touching down in St. Jacobs for the holidays with a brand-new twist – *Wizard of Oz: The Panto*. With its joyous blend of incredible music, lively dancing, extraordinary costumes, audience participation, and of course, a dash of theatrical magic, this playful panto adaptation of the famous family favourite brims with humour, heart, and adventure. Join Dorothy as she takes a surprising new journey over the rainbow and makes her way to Oz with the help of some newfound friends from **December 1 to December 31** in St. Jacobs.

St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre

The seating at the Schoolhouse Theatre has changed this season. To create more space between audience members, the cabaret tables have been removed and the seating has been arranged in rows with fewer seats in the space even at full capacity.

The Canadian musical memoir *Billy Bishop Goes to War* runs for three weeks only from **May 25 to June 12** at the **St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre**, which will expand its season having traditionally only operated in the fall. The incredible saga of Canadian WWI flying ace William Avery Bishop follows one of Canada's most irreverent heroes as he transforms from a rebellious young underachiever at the Royal Military College into the most successful Air Force fighter pilot of his generation.

Next, acclaimed Canadian crooner **Michael Vanhevel** will bring his smooth and snappy vocal style to the Schoolhouse Theatre for nine weeks from **June 29 to September 4** in *The Crooner*. This entertaining musical tribute pays homage to unforgettable legendary singers – classic icons like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole, and Bing Crosby, mid-century stalwarts like Tony Bennett, Andy Williams, Perry Como, Paul Anka, and Bobby Darin, modern-day superstars like Michael Bublé, and more.

From morale-boosting melodies and lovelorn ballads, to jukebox jives and high-energy swing tunes, music, mirth, and memories of the war years are celebrated in the nostalgic revue *We'll Meet Again*. This brand new "sentimental journey" through a hit parade of wartime classics includes "Oh! What a Lovely War," "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "The White Cliffs of Dover," "Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag (And Smile, Smile, Smile)," "Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree," "You Made Me Love You," "In The Mood," the famous title song, and many more. *We'll Meet Again* is on stage from **September 28 to December 24** in St. Jacobs.

Creative teams and casting will be announced at a later date.

“Although we continue to navigate this ongoing pandemic, we’re hopeful about the future,” says Mustakas. “We know our audiences, tourism partners, and communities love and miss theatre as much as we do, so we encourage everyone to join us in making wonderful memories this season. Years from now we’ll all talk about where we were, and what shows we saw, the year that theatre came back.”

Tickets are on sale exclusively to Members by phone now. Tickets are on sale to everyone by phone, in person at select Box Office locations (Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge and St. Jacobs Country

Playhouse only), and online 24/7 at www.draytonentertainment.com beginning on Monday, April 4. To order by phone, please call **519-621-8000** or toll free at **1-855-372-9866**. For more information about Drayton Entertainment's complete 2022 Season on all seven stages, please visit www.draytonentertainment.com.

Season At A Glance

Drayton Festival Theatre

Sorry, I'm Canadian 2 (June 1 to June 18)

Buying the Farm (June 29 to July 16)

Good Ol' Country Gospel (August 11 to August 28)

Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge

Fiddler on the Loose (June 1 to June 18)

On Golden Pond (July 20 to August 6)

It Runs in the Family (August 11 to August 28)

Good Ol' Country Gospel (October 27 to November 12)

The Sound of Music (November 24 to December 24)

St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre

Billy Bishop Goes to War (May 25 to June 12)

The Crooner (June 29 to September 4)

We'll Meet Again (September 28 to December 24)

St. Jacobs Country Playhouse

Mamma Mia! (June 15 to July 9)

The Sweet Delilah Swim Club (July 27 to August 13)

Driving Miss Daisy (October 6 to October 22)

American Son (November 2 to November 20)

Wizard of Oz: The Panto (December 1 to December 31)

About Drayton Entertainment

Drayton Entertainment is an award-winning, not-for-profit charitable organization (12591 1313 RR0001) operating seven live theatrical venues in five unique Ontario locations – the original Drayton Festival Theatre in Drayton, Huron Country Playhouse (Mainstage and South Huron Stage) in Grand Bend, King's Wharf Theatre in Penetanguishene, St. Jacobs Country Playhouse and Schoolhouse Theatre in St. Jacobs, and the Hamilton Family Theatre in Cambridge. With over 400 artist contracts issued annually, Drayton Entertainment is one of the largest employers of professional artists in the country – across all artistic disciplines. The organization's sustainable theatre model has emerged as a powerful force for culture and tourism in Ontario and has been recognized by the office of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario as well as the Ontario Innovation Excellence Awards.

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