



## Happy Days Star Donny Most to Headline 'ART' at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse

*All-Star Cast for Drayton Entertainment Fall Production*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – After successfully presenting George Wendt in *Death of a Salesman* and Cindy Williams in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Drayton Entertainment has once again accomplished a major casting coup. Popular television actor **Donny Most**, best known for his role as jokester Ralph Malph on the classic sitcom *Happy Days*, will play Serge in the not-for-profit professional theatre company's upcoming production of the hit play 'ART'. The production will run at the **St. Jacobs Country Playhouse** from **October 2 to October 20**.

"Donny Most remains one of Hollywood's most cherished television actors. In addition to his memorable role as funny-guy Ralph Malph on *Happy Days*, he's appeared as a guest star on countless other TV shows, and built an equally impressive career as a stage performer," says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. "Based on the incredible response when George Wendt was in St. Jacobs in 2017, I recommend that patrons buy tickets as soon as possible."

*Happy Days* was a defining sitcom of the '70s and '80s, airing 255 half-hour episodes from 1974 to 1984 spanning eleven seasons. Set in the mid-1950s, the hit show chronicled the escapades of Milwaukee teens Richie Cunningham (Ron Howard) and his best buddies, Ralph Malph (Donny Most), Potsie Webber (Anson Williams), and definitive cool-guy Arthur "Fonzie" Fonzarelli (Henry Winkler). Developed by legendary director and producer Garry Marshall, the popularity of *Happy Days* resulted in several spin-off series, eight books, a musical, and a variety of merchandise. The show made stars out of its young cast, became syndicated worldwide, and remains one of the highest-rated American TV series of all time.

Famous for his signature catchphrase "I still got it," which was often uttered after a hilarious one-liner, Most's lovable, wise-cracking character was an instant audience favourite. Although he started out as a guest star, Most was promoted to a series regular in the second season and ultimately appeared in 168 episodes. After his longstanding stint on *Happy Days*, he guest-starred on many well-known TV shows including *Glee*, *Family Guy*, *Sliders* (FOX), *Men of a Certain Age*

(TNT), *Century City*, *Diagnosis Murder*, *Charles in Charge* (CBS), *Star Trek Voyager* (UPN), *Sabrina* (WB), *Baywatch*, *The Crow*, *Dark Skies* (NBC), and *The Love Boat* (ABC), to name a few.

An avid stage performer, Most has appeared in a number of plays and musicals including the National Tour of *Grease*, the National Tour of *Damn Yankees* with Dick Van Dyke, the west coast premiere of *Strike Up The Band*, *The Sunshine Boys* at the Judson Theater Company, and *Barefoot in the Park* with Maureen O'Sullivan at the Lakewood Theatre, among other notable credits. In addition to his theatre work, Most is also an accomplished singer and continues to tour with his popular Big Band crooner concert, *D Most Mostly Swinging*.

In '*ART*', Most will play Serge, who all of a sudden becomes a modern art collector. Much to his friends' dismay, he purchases a large, expensive, painting – a white canvas with fine diagonal white streaks. The abstract piece sparks a fierce debate about the value of art, and lines are drawn as the three friends square off over the canvas, testing the limits of their friendship. As the discussion becomes less theoretical and more personal, truths are revealed, egos are bruised, and buried emotions come to the surface.

In addition to Most, the cast for '*ART*' will also include Broadway performer **Lee MacDougall** as Marc, Serge's opinionated friend who is appalled by his extravagant purchase. A veteran actor, MacDougall has appeared on stages across the country; he originated the role of Nick in the acclaimed Canadian musical *Come From Away*, playing the role in the initial Toronto production and for two years on Broadway before returning to Canada. Among his many credits with Drayton Entertainment, MacDougall recently appeared as Mickey in the Canadian premiere of *Rocky: The Musical* earlier this season.

Accomplished actor **Ralph Small** will take on the role of Yvan, Serge and Marc's more level-headed friend who repeatedly gets caught in the middle of their heated dispute. Small's extensive career includes productions at theatres throughout Ontario, as well as a number of Drayton Entertainment productions including *Marathon of Hope: The Musical*, *Unnecessary Farce* and *Bedtime Stories*.

This stellar trifecta of actors will be led by expert Director **Max Reimer**, who has helmed many productions at theatres across the country, including *The Foursome*, among other shows for Drayton Entertainment. Reimer will be joined by Set Designer **Samantha Burson**, Costume Designer **Jessica Pembleton**, Lighting Designer **Kevin Fraser**, Stage Manager **Paul Pembleton**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Jasmyne Leisemer**.

Touted as one of the most successful plays ever, '*ART*' is a serious comedy that explores the dynamics of male friendship and the perceived worth of art. Originally written in French by playwright **Yasmina Reza**, '*ART*' premiered at Comédie des Champs-Élysées in Paris in 1994. The production caught the eye of renowned painter Micheline Roquebrune, who is the wife of Hollywood icon **Sean Connery**. The James Bond star quickly snapped up the rights and became a lead producer on the play facilitating its introduction into the English theatre world.

With a translation by British playwright **Christopher Hampton**, '*ART*' subsequently premiered in London's West End in 1996, and then on Broadway in 1998 to universal acclaim. It won most major awards including the 1995 Molière Award for Best Commercial Production, the 1997

Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy, the 1998 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play (Alfred Molina), the 1998 Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy, and the 1998 Tony Award for Best Play, among other honours. It has been translated into 30 languages and produced in over 40 countries. The three roles in the show are all considered coveted parts for actors, and as such, productions of the show often attract celebrity talent. Previous productions have included well-known actors such as Albert Finney, Alan Alda, Rufus Sewell, Victor Garber, and Alfred Molina, to name a few. Reza and Hampton went on to repeat their collaborative success with the multi-award-winning play *God of Carnage*.

'ART' runs for three weeks only from **October 2 to October 20** at St. Jacobs Country Playhouse. Regular performance tickets are \$48 for adults and \$29 for youth under 20 years of age; \$39 tickets are also available for select Discount Dates. Tickets can be purchased in person at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, online at [www.draytonentertainment.com](http://www.draytonentertainment.com) or by calling the Box Office at (519) 747-7788 or toll free at 1-855-drayton (372-9866).

'ART' is proudly sponsored by **St. Jacobs Furniture House**. Media Sponsors are **FM 98.5 CKWR** and **The Wellington Advertiser**. Design Sponsors are **Holiday Inn Express & Suites** and **Waterloo Printing**. The 2019 Media Season Sponsor is **CTV**.

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### About Drayton Entertainment & St. Jacobs Country

'ART' is produced by **Drayton Entertainment**, a registered not-for-profit charitable arts organization operating seven live theatres throughout the province of Ontario and entertaining an audience exceeding 250,000 annually. The season playbill consists of an eclectic mix of Broadway musicals, comedies, family programming, and original works produced by Canadians and/or featuring Canadian content. The theatre company is regarded by the Canadian Actors' Equity Association as one of the largest employers of professional artists in the country. For more information about Drayton Entertainment, visit [www.draytonentertainment.com](http://www.draytonentertainment.com).

The production will play at the **St. Jacobs Country Playhouse**, which is located west of Toronto and within an hour and a half of Niagara Falls in beautiful Waterloo Region. The 400 seat theatre is situated in the heart of St. Jacobs Country, a popular tourism mecca with 1.5 million visitors annually. Canada's largest year-round Farmers Market and the charming village of St. Jacobs are located close by. Visit [www.stjacobs.com](http://www.stjacobs.com) to plan your daytrip or overnight stay.