



Interactive

THE NEWSLETTER OF VICTORIA TARGET THEATRE SOCIETY
a troupe of mature performers, acting as a voice for the elderly, using drama as a teaching tool

A Season of "Firsts"

Welcome to Target Theatre's inaugural newsletter! It seems fitting that we should start our official communique in a year that saw another "first" — it was the season that saw us expand our artistic horizon by offering Actual public performances!

Sure, the troupe has faced the general public before. The cabaret-style World War II reminiscence piece *Wot, No Soap?*, written by the players themselves, was a crowd favourite at the 1996-98 Victoria Fringe Theatre Festivals. But this year's production of *Can't You Hear Me?* marks the first time Target Theatre has put together a selection of already published plays and then performed them in the community at large. It was also the first time the company had to run the whole show — from advertising to ticket sales to audience services, from pre-recording studio sound to renting lighting equipment.

If you are now thinking, "What's so special about that? Isn't that what theatre companies do?" a little background into Target Theatre's way of doing business is in order. It should explain why this company has been a relatively unknown entity in its own hometown.

In the past the troupe's performance pieces have usually grown out of requests from health care societies, hospitals, nursing schools, conferences and other organizations. These plays were developed and written by the performers and covered subjects ranging from dementia to incon-

tinence, elder abuse to injury prevention. They were mostly presented to give continuing education and "sensitivity training" to health care professionals, home caregivers, nursing students,



The cast of Can't You Hear Me? with (standing, l-r) Kevin Matviw, Lou-Ann Edgar, Denis Ethier, Dorothy Mabey, Ernie Jarman; (seated, l-r) Jo Cannon, Rosalie Frampton, Tony Montgomery.

administrators, and Alzheimer conference delegates to name a few. But while Target Theatre has travelled as far afield as the Lower Mainland, Alberta, and Washington State, spectators have been "captive audiences," and little was known about the troupe among the general public at home in Victoria.

With the financial assistance of both public and private organizations last year, our society has now been able to bring its work to a broader range of people than ever before.

"We are still fulfilling our mandate of educating the public about senior stereotyping and seniors perspectives," says executive theatrical director Heldor Schafer. "But for the first time in Target's history we have selected a number of published plays and are performing them on the public stage."

By finding a new audience in Target Theatre's own "backyard" the company is trying to show that theatre can be both educational and entertaining, employ humour as well as speak to the serious side in our social conscience.

While the goal of the troupe hasn't changed — the idea always has been to inspire empathy for

the elderly — the players now hope to encourage general audiences to show tolerance toward the elderly and interact with them socially.

Our audience surveys have yielded a wide range of comments, from mildly critical such as "A little too sad" to enthusiastic, as in "Thank you for the thought-provoking experience" and "Fine acting with a well thought-out script." Many people also made suggestions on subjects they'd like to see addressed in future productions. On one point there seems to be overwhelming agreement: "Your group should continue public performing," wrote one person, and this request was echoed by many audience members during question-and-answer period after each show.

The production of *Can't You Hear Me?* began in November 2003 with two performances at Saanich and Sidney locations, followed by four shows in the Western Communities and Victoria in January 2004. Four spring performances in Sooke and Prospect Lake in April rounded out Target Theatre's tour of this selection of short plays about the challenges of communication between different generations.

Workshop Show

Our annual theatre performance workshop, for novice and "rusty" actors, is now in full swing. This isn't merely an acting course but the "real thing" on a small scale! Participants form a small theatre cast rehearsing a short play, with the director of Target Theatre gently guiding them from first read-through to actual performance in front of a live audience—in only eight weeks!

The show is a short version of *Mother's Little Holiday*, by John Tench, and will be performed Sunday, Nov. 14th, 2 pm at James Bay New Horizons, 234 Menzies Street. This year our audience will also be treated to a special performance of one of Target Theatre's most popular plays of the past season: *I'm Herbert*, by Robert Anderson, features two regular Target actors, June Boston and Fred Mabey (see page 5). They portray a couple in their 90s who discuss the past but can't always remember who the other one is. Admission is free!

VICTORIA TARGET THEATRE SOCIETY

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Company of Players

June Boston, Lou-Ann Edgar, Rosalie Frampton,
Ernie Jarman, Dorothy Mabey, Fred Mabey,
Madeleine Mills, Phyllis McGee,
Tony Montgomery, Fred Storgeoff.

Executive Theatrical Director

Heldor Schäfer

Board

Sue Mitchell, president; Joan Looy, past pres.
Kim Dixon, secretary; David Davies, treasurer;
Sheila Statham, Kathie Davies, Jean Nicholson.

Remembering Jo and Lorne

In the spring of 2004 two active long-time members of Target Theatre passed on, leaving the rest of us to mourn but also to celebrate their lives and remember with joy and fondness the time they had given the company of players and their audiences.

I met Jo Cannon in June of 1996 when I joined Target Theatre. She was quick to welcome me into the group, as was everybody else. But more than that, she became like an older sister to me, as well as a friend.

We would go for walks along the waterfront on Dallas Road three or four times a week. She went every day, committed to keeping fit no matter what the weather; I was the one to go only three or four times — if the weather was good.

We usually went to the Ogden Point Café for coffee after our walks, where she had friends who also were there every day. They became my friends too.

After several months of going to the café, the staff were used to seeing us arrive together. On one of my off days, one of them asked Jo where her husband was. She replied that I was not her husband, merely a friend. The next time I went, she was ahead of me in the line-up and it was my turn to pay, so I said to the cashier who had earlier assumed I was the husband, that I would pay for my wife's coffee also. Poor girl didn't know what to think.

For two or three summers we would go to my cousin's place and pick a huge amount of Bing cherries, some of which we would take home and eat. However, most of them were crushed, and Jo made them into the best home-made wine I've ever had, better than you could buy at the liquor store. She also made jams and jellies from other fruits, and gave jars of them to her friends at Christmas. Jo was a jack-of-all-trades and a master of most of them.

I have many wonderful memories of her, but for now I'll save them in my mind and in my heart.

Goodbye for now, Jo. See you soon.

— Fred Storgeoff

Jo Cannon was an unforgettable woman — loving, giving, intelligent, creative, physically agile, and environmentally aware. I remember at rehearsal one day she announced that she was



Lorne and Jo during rehearsal, dancing the "Bump."

going to go 50/50 from now on, meaning that only half of whatever she was using would go into landfill — paper towels, toilet paper tissue, etc. I never did remember to ask how she was doing with her resolution, but knowing Jo, she would make it work. She loved animals (even more than

people sometimes) and, boy, could she cook! I have several of her delicious recipes to treasure.

Before our performance at Sanscha Hall last year, she and I went with Hedor, our director, to Sidney where we attacked some of the large parking lots, distributing advertising flyers about the upcoming show under the windshields of cars. She flew like a gazelle, although she was not well at that time. I tried to keep up and it became a game to see who could distribute the most. I'm sure Jo won.

Another time we were going to a Target meeting at Jean Nicholson's place. I had no idea how to get there, but Jo said, "Come to my abode and we'll walk; it isn't far." Well! Not far to Jo is, well, you know... And walk is a figure of speech. We raced. Fortunately for me, Jean had coffee and cookies ready for revival purposes. At subsequent meetings I found my own way to Jean's.

I feel privileged to have had Jo in my life, as a friend and role model. I just wish there had been more time to benefit from her wonderful, wise company.

— Dorothy Mabey

How can one describe Lorne Bush? He was a comic, a joker, a craftsman, but mostly he was a gentleman.

You never knew when he was joking or not. He would start off on a serious note and end his anecdote completely opposite to what you expected.

One of his sayings was, "I never knew what true happiness was until I got married — then it was too late." And when asked how he got that scar on his chin, he'd explain, "I was fighting in a back alley for a woman's honour — but she wanted to keep it!"

He once said, "If I knew I was going to get cancer, I would have taken up smoking, drinking, and chasing after loose women." Sometimes you'd wonder if this guy could ever be serious.

Lorne was a meticulous craftsman. He was

once asked by an acquaintance if he could fix up an old doll house; the woman wanted to pass it on to her granddaughter. Of course he said he would try, and over several weeks he practically rebuilt it. It was a work of art. Fortunately, he kept a photographic record of his progress much to the delight of the woman and everyone else who knew about the project.

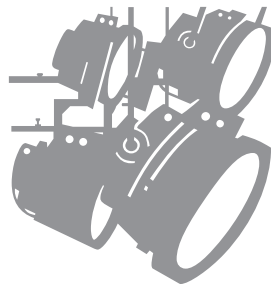
A few years ago, my forty-year class reunion was coming up, and one of my responsibilities was to arrange for door prizes. I thought it would be unique to have a door as a prize, so I asked Lorne if he would make one for me. Sure enough, he made a door which measured about 12 inches high and 6 inches wide, complete with tiny hinges, and a doorknob. Thanks again, Lorne!

He was a charmer as far as the ladies were concerned. He'd always say something that would cheer them up and make them feel wonderful and special. I never heard Lorne utter a bad word about anyone; he found good in everybody.

I think every actress in Target Theatre had her shoulders massaged by him at some time during rehearsals or other tense times. None of the guys did, though! Favouritism? Well, I think so.

Lorne Bush was taken from us too soon, and he is sorely missed.

— Fred Storgeoff



Jo Cannon 19 Jun 1926 - 20 Mar 2004

Lorne Bush 1 Nov 1934 - 23 Apr 2004

Jo came to Target Theatre in 1995 and Lorne joined the following year. Both stepped onto the stage for us for the last time in January of this year, Jo playing the role of "She" in the play Fourteen Years and Lorne as the "Conductor" in Trouble's Just a Bubble. Both pieces were part of our production entitled Can't You Hear Me? Jo, a journalist and a poet, also penned four short plays that are now part of Target Theatre's repertoire.

A New play about donating organs

Target Theatre has been commissioned to produce a play on the subject of "seniors and organ donation" (see advertisement on page 6) by the Kidney Foundation of Canada, Victoria chapter. We are now doing improvisations around the theme together with the writing of the script. Next are the actual rehearsals to ready the play for performances in Victoria on Jan. 30 and Feb. 3, in Surrey on Feb. 5, and in Vancouver on Feb. 6. If you know of an organization interested in seeing the play as a group, please have them get in touch with Ken Merkley, organ donor awareness co-ordinator of the Kidney Foundation of Canada, Victoria chapter, at 474-1557 for reservation. Admission to the play will be free of charge!



Fred Mabey and June Boston play 96-year old Herbert and Muriel in I'm Herbert, a comedy about dementia by playwright Robert Anderson.

Nothing else in life is free, except...

This newsletter is being mailed to you because you or someone in your family has requested it or asked to be kept informed about Target Theatre news and performances. If you do not wish to receive future mailings, please phone or e-mail us (see contact information on page 2). We also welcome questions and comments for our *Audience Forum*; please send them to the same address.

No, we don't charge for *Interactive*, but if you feel so inclined, we gratefully accept voluntary subscriptions to help offset the cost of printing and mailing this occasional newsletter. You may also become a member of Victoria Target Theatre Society. The annual membership fee is \$20 for individuals, \$30 for couples or families.

Benefits of a full membership include voting rights at our annual general meeting in June of each year, participation in committees such as fund-raising, publicity, and play reading; opportunities to assist during performances; being invited to our Christmas party and to previews of new plays; receiving e-mails about what's going on; and of course getting this newsletter.

Volunteers

A great big "thank you" goes to all the people who volunteer their talents. In addition to our dedicated players and board members, we had the following non-members helping out in various on-stage and backstage jobs during the 2003-2004 production of *Can't You Hear Me?*

Judy Haynes back stage
 Charlane Simpson costumes
 Rod Webb sound
 Christine Allen, Phyllis McGee,
 Angus Bramadat front of house
 Kevin Matviw, Denis Ethier,
 Diane Wallrich acting

During 2002-03 we had three guest actors participate in some of our plays as well. They were **Frank Young**, **Christine Tomaschuk** and **Rob Fukushima**. That same season, one of our regular actors, **Josie Newman**, retired from Target Theatre's company of players after 14 years with the troupe. She now keeps active as a member of St. Dunstan's Anglican Church, helping organize their annual fall fair, and playing tennis once or twice a week.

A year In the News

Target Theatre made the news quite a few times during the past year. The editors of the News Group, in particular, have been generous in their coverage of our production *Can't You Hear Me?* The Oct. 29, 2003 issue of their annual seniors supplement featured an article written by **Jeanine Soodeen**, while arts editor **Ingrid Paulsen** interviewed us during one of our rehearsals; that story appeared in the Jan. 21 arts section of the Victoria area papers. Other articles written by our director, a former journalist, and photos of our actors in rehearsal were published in other News Group papers as we performed in their communities throughout the season.

An interview by CHTV reporter **Holly Unwin** together with a scene from the play *Trouble's Just a Bubble* was aired Jan. 22 on the evening *Go! Magazine* program. The following day our artistic director appeared in a live two-minute interview on the station's noon hour show.

A short article on Target's production, written by **Adrian Chamberlain**, was published in the

January 24th arts section of the *Times Colonist*.

Reporter **Dan Kahan** and camera crew from Shaw Cable TV taped us during rehearsals of *Fourteen Years*. It was aired Easter week.

Actors **Lou-Ann Edgar** and **Fred Storgeoff** appeared on the CFUV radio program *Forever Young*, April 15; they were interviewed by the host of this weekly one-hour radio program, **John Azar**.

Finally, in June, Target Theatre was featured in the inaugural issue of a new local seniors magazine, *Senior Living*. Writer **Bobbie Jo Sheriff** had attended our last performance of the season, April 24, at Prospect Lake community hall.

While we don't want to appear ungrateful for all the media coverage we have already received, we are looking forward to more articles and interviews. How about it, CBC, CFX radio and CIVI television? And maybe we'll rate a major feature in the *Times Colonist* one day, with colour photo spread, just like those Hollywood movies...

Our Sponsors

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their financial assistance:

Friend of Target (\$21-\$75):

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Wal-Mart

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Cheap Tickets & Travel

Target Patron (\$751-\$2000):

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City of Victoria

TARGET THEATRE

presents

Nobody Wants My Old Organs

a play about the issues facing seniors as they consider organ donation or transplant

Sunday & Thursday

Jan. 30th & Feb. 3rd 2005

2 pm

ERIC MARTIN PAVILLION THEATRE

2334 Trent Street • Victoria, B.C.



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