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LEND ME A TENOR - COMEDY'S GOLDEN AGE REVISITED

There's an old saying that "when you're famous, everyone wants a piece of you". *Lend Me A Tenor*, the summer comedy by Ken Ludwig that plays from July 22 through August 27 at the Thousand Islands Playhouse Springer Theatre, is a perfect example of being careful what you wish for – as a young wannabe singer finds he's close to getting far more attention than he can actually handle. And so does a usually insatiable star!

Lend Me A Tenor is a tip of the top hat to the golden age of screwball comedies, where mistaken identities, preposterous plot twists, and larger-than-life emotions combine for non-stop entertainment. Set in a posh hotel in the 1930's, when opera singers were the rock stars of the day, the comedy follows the hijinks of a gaggle of fans who are beside themselves over the arrival of a famous Italian star, Tito Merelli (Kyle Dadd). Everyone from "the world's oldest bellhop" (Timm Hughes), an ardent grande dame Opera Guild chair (Lorna Wilson) and a deliciously desperate diva (Jan Alexandra Smith) are fighting for a moment to themselves with the maestro, but Tito's sulky wife (Kathryn MacKay) stages a walkout that throws him completely off-base. Since committing suicide with the kitchen utensils is hardly becoming for a star of his reputation, something has to be done.

Under pressure from harried producer Saunders (Matthew Gibson) Max, an aspiring singer and "go-fer" (Matthew Lundvall) comes up with a solution to calm Tito down. When his idea backfires, a new tenor must be found, or the crowd will be furious. When sweet Maggie (Keely Hutton), Max's almost-fiancee and Tito's biggest fan can't even tell the difference between Tito and a costumed Max, he finally gets "face time" with the girl of his dreams – and a shot at a real career. But can it last?

In the 20-some years since it was first discovered by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Lend Me A Tenor* has become a mainstay in English speaking theatres around the world. Artistic Director Greg Wanless, who directs this production, chose it as the centrepiece of his 30th anniversary season because it is one of his favourite comedies of all time. Two of the cast members (Kathryn MacKay and Timm Hughes) were in the original Playhouse production from 1992 (although MacKay played Maggie, in that production.) Other cast members have been part of a number of Playhouse productions. Kyle Dadd starred as the Narrator in *Blood Brothers* last season. Both Jan Alexandra Smith and Matthew Gibson appeared in *The Drowsy Chaperone* and several other shows, and Matthew John Lundvall appeared in productions including *The Mollycoddlers* and *Anne of Green Gables*. Keely Hutton and Lorna Wilson both make their Playhouse debuts with this show, but Hutton stars in *Ned Durango* later this season and Wilson has appeared at Stratford and Shaw Festivals, and across the country.

Set and costume design for the production are by Robin Fisher, whose Playhouse designs range from *The Mollycoddlers* to *The Girl in the Goldfish Bowl*. Lighting is by Adair Redish, designer of the original Playhouse production of *Tenor* and numerous other shows. Stage Manager is Jane Osborn and assistant stage manager Nan Shepherd.

Showtimes: Tuesday-Saturday 8 p.m. Opening Sat. July 23. ½ price Preview, 8 p.m. July 22. Matinees (after July 23) Sunday, Weds. Saturday, 2:30 p.m. Tickets: Tickets are available online at www.1000islandsplayhouse.com or through the Box Office, 613 382-7020, 1-866 -382-7020.

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