



Celebrating 50 Years of Theatre in Grand Bend

*2022 Season announced at the Huron Country Playhouse
with multiple performance capacity options*

Monday, March 28, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Open the doors and cue the stage lights! The historic **Huron Country Playhouse** will finally welcome audiences back to the Mainstage and newly named South Huron Stage (formerly Playhouse II) in Grand Bend this year. 2022 is a landmark season for the Huron Country Playhouse as the iconic summer theatre destination celebrates 50 years of theatre in Grand Bend. Over 230 productions have been on stage at the Huron Country Playhouse since its inaugural season in 1972. The venue’s two stages will be filled 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 five productions on stage during the summer season, which will run from **June 23 to September 4**.

“Commemorating the longevity of the Huron Country Playhouse means that much more after all we’ve been through over the last few years,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “We encourage audiences to make a special trip to Grand Bend – hit the beach, visit local restaurants, play a round of golf, tour the wineries nearby, stay over at one of the many first-rate area accommodations, and of course, see a show or two to mark this momentous anniversary. Years from now we’ll all talk about where we were, and what shows we saw, the year that theatre came back.”

Fiddler on the Loose will bring its high-energy musical prowess to kick off the 50th Anniversary Season in Grand Bend. 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 many more. ***Fiddler on the Loose*** will run **June 23 to July 9** on the Mainstage.

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*** running from **July 20 to August 6** on the Mainstage. 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.

The hills will be alive with *The Sound of Music* as Rodgers and Hammerstein's treasured musical brings the Mainstage summer season to a close. 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 **August 17 to September 4** on the Mainstage.

Over on the South Huron Stage (formerly Playhouse II), *Good Ol' Country Gospel* will bring its soul-stirring ballads and spirited songs of praise to audiences from **July 20 to August 6**. Featuring glorious arrangements and heavenly voices, this uplifting celebration shines a new light on spiritual favourites including "Amazing Grace," "Peace in the Valley," "How Great Thou Art," "When The Saints Go Marching In," "I Saw the Light," and many more.

Then, *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club* brings Southern-fried humour to Grand Bend to wrap up the season on the South Huron Stage. 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*, part *Designing Women* with just a hint of *Golden Girls*, this fresh and funny friendship comedy is on stage from **August 18 to September 4**.

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

In addition to the five professional shows on stage at this beloved summer hot spot, the popular Youth Pre-Professional Production Program will move to Grand Bend giving aspiring young performers from the area the opportunity to perform a one-hour version of Disney's *Frozen Jr.* from **August 9 to August 13**. *Frozen Jr.* will be performed by kids for kids with the intention of giving local youth the chance to participate in and learn more about theatre.

"It's exciting and emotional at the same time because we've waited so long for the return of live entertainment," says Mustakas. "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. For June and 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. For August through the end of the

season, 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.

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, and online 24/7 at www.huroncountryplayhouse.com beginning on Monday, April 4. To order by phone, please call **519-238-6000** 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.

Huron Country Playhouse Season At A Glance

Mainstage

Fiddler on the Loose (June 23 to July 9)
In Runs In The Family (July 20 to August 6)
The Sound of Music (August 17 to September 4)

South Huron Stage

Good Ol' Country Gospel (July 20 to August 6)
The Sweet Delilah Swim Club (August 18 to September 4)

Youth Production

Disney's Frozen Jr. (August 9 to August 13)

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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