

## Sexsmith, Slean, Wiley to Send Circles Around Summerside

Pack it in ladies – one look into Ron Sexsmith's puppy dog-eyes and you're done. "Yeah," you say, "but I've dated bazillions of rock stars before, and they were all soooo arrogant. Is this guy humble?" Why, of course Ron is humble, you simple girl – you'd have to be to play Summerside (bazing!).

Ron Sexsmith, Sarah Slean, and Nathan Wiley are slotted to play Summerside's Harbourfront Jubilee Theatre on November 18th in what will surely be the greatest PEI music moment since the 1992 release of Haywire's "Get Off." Ron is hitting the road and hitting it hard with a sprawling 25-date tour of Canada and the UK.

Ron is sharing the bill with a veritable cornucopia of Canuck talent. Sarah "Don't call her sultry" Slean has all but cornered the Canadian piano rock market and is best known for her catchy "Sweet Ones" single. Homefry Nathan Wiley has just released his new LP "High Low" and hopes to inspire some unbridled boot stomping with his rootsy brand of alt-country.

Sexsmith is still riding high on the hog from his April release of his latest album "Retriever," an album that has gotten him exposure in unexpected places. Ron's music was featured on CNN's Headline News in a spot usually reserved for the Lindsay Lohans of the world.

Truthfully, it's not often that an artist of Ron's caliber comes to PEI, let alone three (!) artists of Ron's caliber, so people, do not screw this up – get off your arses and on November 18th, get up west. Tickets are now available at the Jubilee Theatre box office, by phone (902) 888 2500 or 1 (800) 708 6505. Good day and Godspeed.

## Theatre Society Gearing Up For Latest Production: Play Themes Still Hold True Today

Well, the UPEI Theatre Society is going to hell....For their newest production, that is.

Doctor Faustus director, MariPve MacGregor, says the themes of the 16th century story about a man who sells his soul for infinite knowledge still hold true in today's fast-paced world.

"Though it was written over 400 years ago, the themes that run throughout the play are still very modern. People still seek undiscovered knowledge in science and technology. People still question God and the supernatural world. People have questions about existence. Though the language can be a bit difficult at times, the messages are still there."

MacGregor said when she studied the Christopher Marlowe play (based on a German novel) for her Renaissance Drama class last semester, she knew she had stumbled upon something special.

"There is just something of magic and mystery in this play that is so alluring and fascinating. As I read (the play), I saw the angels and devils and various characters take shape before me. It came to life in my mind and I could see the society having a lot of fun with it. I had been on the lookout for something fun, something abstract. This was it."

There are over 50 students and a few professors involved in the production. Participants range from actors, dancers, singers, costumes, props, publicity, lighting, special effects, music, sound effects and production. MacGregor added this is the largest cast and crew the UPEI Theatre Society has seen in a long time and the play has virtually been student run.

Some of the stars of the play (both on and off the stage) include MacGregor as director, stage manager Jackie Black and producer Dr. Greg Doran. Lead characters and actors are Greg Chandler as Faustus; Caroline Hewson as Mephistophilis; Gary Vincent as Wagner; Emily Gauthier as Lucifer and Amelie Wong as Beelzebub.

MacGregor said the cast and crew have a wide cross-section of experience but they are all equally passionate about the project despite the size of production.

"Everyone involved has been wonderfully dedicated. I think this is the most rounded, enthusiastic group we've ever had in a production of this size. The unity of this size group is incredible. Rehearsals have been producing this magic effect that has only to grow from now until show time. There is definitely something special about this production."

It's been a learning experience for everyone,

she said – including herself.

"As this is my first time directing a full-length play, I'm learning as I go. I believe this is the largest project I've ever undertaken in my life ... It is a larger bearing than writing my honours thesis," she exclaimed.

"This is really a huge learning opportunity for many of those involved too. Some have never been in a play before. Some have never danced or chanted before. But everyone is helping everyone else."

MacGregor said she is far from alone in this venture...she gets help when she needs it, adding putting the play together is more of a collaborative process than a one-woman show.

"I have my mentors to go to when I need help. I ask the actors what they think of certain scenes and certain interpretations. It's really a check-point system we've got going

on." So is she excited?

"Yes, of course I'm excited...scared, but excited. I am on constant ups and downs with this show. Sometimes I feel just overwhelmed. At other times it seems like the show is running itself. But I'm always excited about what will happen next".

"Every step is something to look forward to: full run-throughs, getting on the actual stage, seeing the props and costumes and effects for the first time, getting to opening night, getting to closing night, getting to the cast party. There's a lot to look forward to. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone take pride in the show. It's all exciting. Oh, the drama of drama!"

The cast and crew have another few weeks of blocking before running the show on the stage of Charlottetown Rural High School November 18, 19, and 20. For now, completion is nearly finished on scene assembly, actors are memorizing lines. Costumes and masks will be made in the coming weeks.

What else could the proud director possibly have to say about an event of such magnitude?

"It's a great play and everyone should go see it!" Of course.

If you have any questions about the production, contact the UPEI Theatre Society at upei\_theatre@hotmail.com.

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