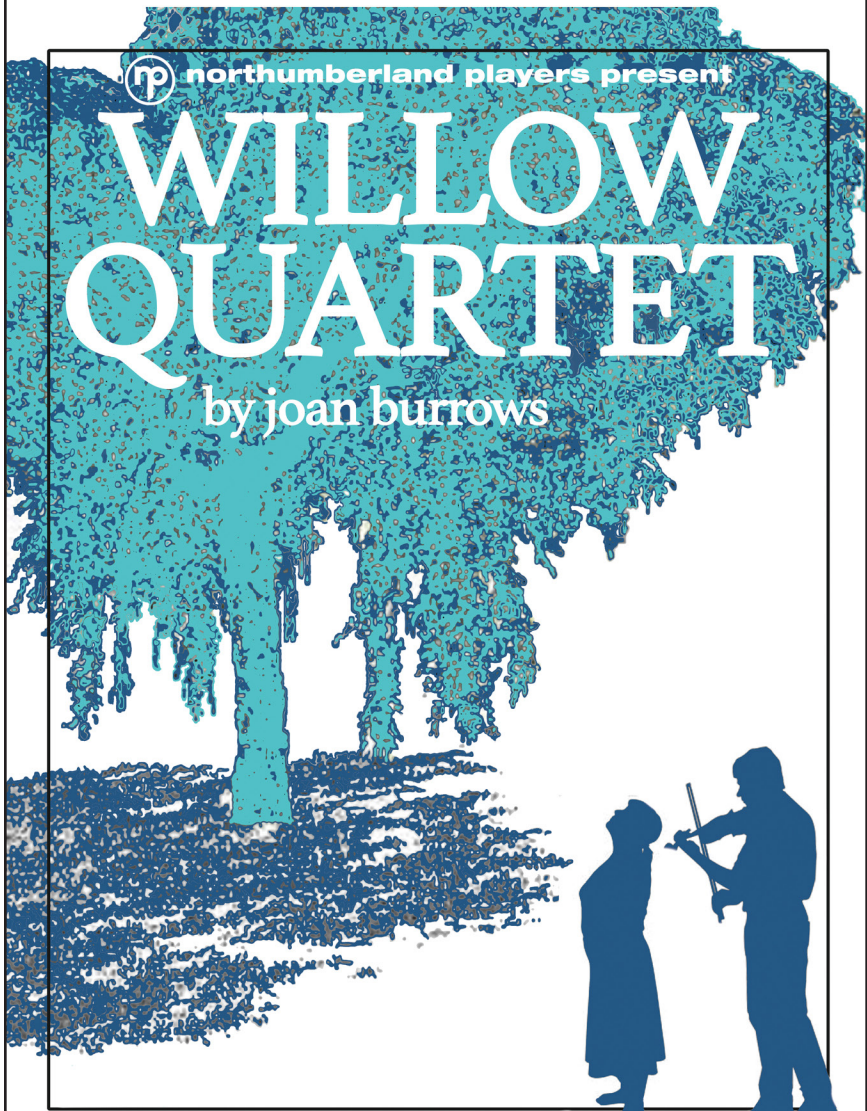




northumberland players present

WILLOW QUARTET

by joan burrows



FIREHALL THEATRE
SEPT 20 TO OCT 6, 2024

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Writing this director's note has been a bit challenging for me. My focus over the last few months has been on the experiences of the people involved around me and ultimately of the audience who will see this play. But now that I am required to communicate about my own thoughts, I guess the word I keep landing on is gratitude.

Gratitude to Jack, Valerie and the members of the board who gave me this rare opportunity. Gratitude for a talented cast that were eager to work and came well prepared. Gratitude

to set designers, builders, props people, producers, front of house folks, painters, costumers, backstage crew, sound guys, lighting designers and stage managers who all gave their best to support this project. Gratitude for a community that supports the arts, making it possible for countless people to experience the unique joy of making theatre.

While it is true that this is the first play that I have directed for the Players, it somehow doesn't feel like it. I have been involved in theatre my entire life and have been very lucky to have worked with some excellent directors along the way, all of whom taught me something different. So many talented people have helped me to learn and grow but I must say that the biggest influence was certainly my dad, Bob. He directed many plays and musicals, including some of the very first plays this company ever produced, and as a kid I loved watching him work from my spot, cross-legged on the floor, at the back of the rehearsal space. I have thought about him many times throughout this process and I hope he would be as proud of this show as I am.

Joan Burrows' play, *Willow Quartet*, is a story of grief, family and forgiveness. It has been a pleasure to spend time with this story that touches on some difficult themes and emotions but also makes room for warmth and humour. This has been a wonderful experience for me and I hope that you enjoy the fruits of all of our labours.

Mary Schultz



There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

CAST

(In order of appearance)

Sheilah Currie ~ **Marjorie**

Don Mann ~ **Ben**

Anne-Marie Bouthillette ~ **Kim**

Michael Johnson ~ **Jim**

SETTING

The outskirts of a rural town in Ontario

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producer ~ Valerie Russell

Director ~ Mary Schultz

Stage Manager ~ Lynne Templar

Assistant Stage Managers ~ Glenis Burnie, Anthoula Mamalos

Set Design and Decor ~ Erastus Burley

Lead Builders ~ Rick Hoogsteen (mentor) and Joe Halliwushka

Lead Painter ~ Louise Sirtonski

Properties ~ Valerie Russell, Mary Schultz

Sound Design ~ Victor Svenningson

Costume Design ~ Marley Soutter

Lighting Design ~ Evan Soutter

Makeup ~ Madaleine Nelson

Sound Operator ~ Mike Duncan

Classical Music Selection ~ Mike Duncan

Lighting Operator ~ Lynne Templar

Graphic Design and Program ~ Lauren Page Russell

Website and Social Media ~ Ian Everdell

Marketing ~ Valerie Russell

Radio and Sponsors ~ Jack Boyagian

Photography ~ Jeannie Gane, Gregory Curtis

Treasurers ~ Leslee Argue, Jamie Finan

Builders ~ John Geloso, Jim Abbott, Paul Herron

Painters ~ Tori Geloso, Trish Graham, Fran Martin,

Claire Rowett, Hsiu Liao, Sharon Rathbone

Front of House Volunteers ~ Sharon Rathbone, Margaret

Heenan, Kara Besson, Leslee Argue, Kaye Torrie, Andrea Kalil,

Kate Blundell, Matt Blundell, Brenda Worsnop, Chris Worsnop,

Margaret Hilborn, Marlynn Warling, Brenda Ferris,

Wendy Elinsky, Lee Wakelin, Denise Johnson, Jennifer Darrell,

Elaine Rostetter-Saunders, Jean Gardner, Deirdre Finnan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anna Mastin, David Ioannou, Jennie Ryan, Lynne Templer, Sharon Anderson (Mentor to Marley Soutter), Jack Boyagian, Vince Edgar (Victoria Hall Box Office), Marie Anderson, David Hoare, David Shewchuk, Tim Russell, Lana Ashton, Susan Eyman

THE PLAYERS



Sheilah Currie



Don Mann



Anne-Marie Bouthillette



Michael Johnson

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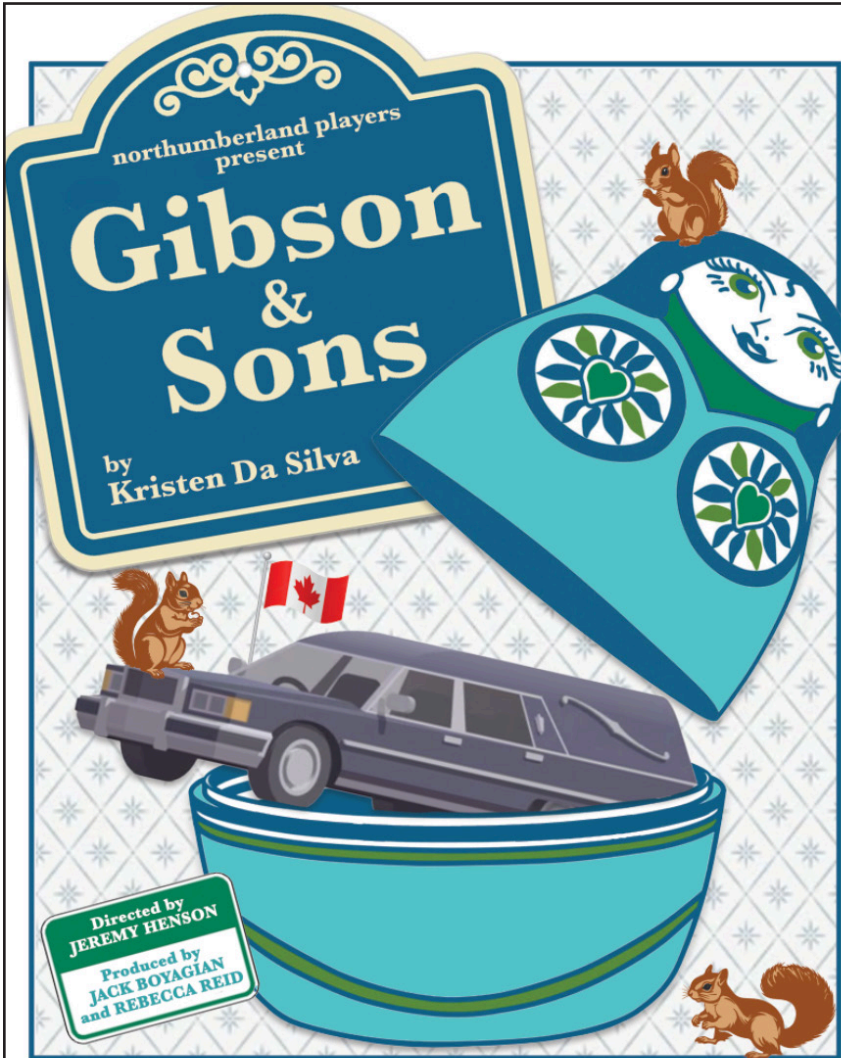
SHEILAH CURRIE (*Marjorie*) is a retired teacher who spent much of her youth doing theatre, then took a 40-year break, and is now back in the saddle. This is her second role with Northumberland Players. She played Doris in *The Cemetery Club* at the Firehall in 2023, and now embraces the role of the matriarch, Marjorie, in *Willow Quartet*. She loves the spare writing and realistic dialogue of this play, and how its difficult subject matter is handled with such sensitivity and heart.

DON MANN (*Ben*) is a retired teacher and former farmhand. In the past few years, he has appeared in a couple of dinner theatre comedies (most recently as Professor Plum in *Clue*) at the Best Western, and a couple of dramas (*All My Sons* and *You Will Remember Me*) here at the Firehall. This intimate theatre is the ideal venue for *Willow Quartet*, and Don is grateful for the opportunity to join the team of new acquaintances, familiar faces, and trusted collaborators who have worked on stage and behind the scenes to bring this multi-layered Canadian play to the Northumberland Players' audience.

ANNE-MARIE BOUTHILLETTE (*Kim*) has been a member of the Northumberland Players for over 15 years. She has volunteered in a number of capacities, whether on stage, off stage, backstage, or in governance. From her stage debut in 2009 as an ensemble member in *Hair*, to award-winning performances in *Boeing Boeing* and *Waiting for the Parade*, among many others, performing remains the "role" that is closest to her heart, but she has also stage managed, produced, and served on the company's Board of Directors, and had her directorial debut with last year's *When We Were Young and Unafraid*.

MICHAEL JOHNSON (*Jim*) is a semi-retired speech-language pathologist. He has played minor roles in numerous school and community theatre productions. Still, he took a break for about 25 years before returning to the stage for the Northumberland Players' production of *Clue* last year. Primarily involved with comedies and musicals, this is his first experience with drama (of the theatrical variety, that is). If his two Westies, Maddie and Lilah allow, he generally wastes time playing video games, watching YouTube videos and cooking. He wants to thank everyone involved with *Willow Quartet* for being wonderful and perfect. A special thank you for the opportunity to play this role. Most of all, he wants to thank his wife, Lisa, for her kindness and support during the inevitable learning curve.

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