

Behind the Scenes

IMPERIAL THEATRE

December 2010

“I wanted to be an Artist”

An Imperial Theatre art installation created by Andrea Butler

Written by: Jeff McAloon

Do you remember the little elementary school memory books you kept for your children or perhaps the ones your parents kept for you? You know, the little book with your class photos for each year from Kindergarten to Grade 6 with all kinds of challenging fill-in-the-blank questions like, “My favourite food is...”, “My best friend is...”, “My favourite toy is...”, and “When I grow up I want to be a...”. I specifically remember this last question and being particularly fascinated by all of the ‘check-box’ options.

If you were to look at Andrea Butler’s elementary school memory book, you would find that every single year the check box “Artist” was selected – except for Grade 4 when she veered slightly and wanted to become a hairdresser! If you know Andrea, this won’t surprise you a bit. Her brother Joel has been known to say that, “Andrea was born with a colouring book and crayons.” I am Andrea’s older cousin by a few years, and I too can attest to the fact that this woman was born for the creative arts.



Andrea Butler with the three tapestries she created, exhibited on the east wall of Imperial Theatre.
Photo by: Jeff McAloon (September 17, 2010)

A few years ago, Andrea’s mother gave her some drawings that she had created as a young girl. While she didn’t have any recollection of doing the drawings, she thought that they would make great subject matter for a tapestry. “I wanted to do something with them.” Andrea told me, “They’re simple, fun, and colourful. I wanted this piece to really be something that was easy to appreciate. Not something that brought about deep questions of life or something that left people feeling intimidated.”

Andrea received a grant from Arts NB, the City of Saint John, Enterprise Saint John, and the Provincial Department of Wellness, Culture, and Sport to complete this artwork. Part of the funding requirement was that she partner with an organization in the community that would display the piece in an untraditional manner. When Andrea, who works part-time at the theatre, approached General Manager, Peter D. Smith, he thought that the installation was a fantastic idea. “This temporary exhibit was a new and innovative way to display art at Imperial Theatre, art created by one of our own team members who is also a professional artist. It allowed Andrea to create a really BIG work of art that could never be displayed in a normal gallery setting, and that could be seen by a great number of people from greater Saint John.”

The three tapestries (12, 16, and 29 feet long) were installed on the exterior wall at the east side of the Imperial Theatre. Andrea remembers being surprised at how diminished they looked on the side of the building, “when the 29 foot long tapestry was wound up on my loom, it just barely fit. It was also really exciting to see all three pieces hung up in full. When working on them in my studio, I only ever saw 2 feet at a time.”

Congratulations to Andrea for over 2 years of work that resulted in a stunning example of public art. I hope that her creativity, along with the support demonstrated by Imperial Theatre and the organizations that provided the grant, will inspire other artists. To me, exciting and unique art installations like this only add to the cultural richness of our city – here’s to more of it Saint John!

Imperial in the Community...

Everything you ever wanted to know about Canadian history, American jazz and Argentine tango and African dance!

Well, maybe not everything, but there will be a variety of opportunities for both students and adults to participate in outreach programs in all these areas this winter and spring. In February Dublin born Canadian balladeer Aengus Finnan, described as "a travelling archivist" by Saturday Night Magazine, will not only be performing both for schools and for the general public at Imperial Theatre, he will also be offering a workshop called "There was a time in this fair land" which teaches children the history of Canada through song.

Jazz virtuoso Rémi Bolduc is bringing us not only his tribute to Charlie Parker, he will also be offering youth and adult jazz workshops.

After a bit of a March break, we're back with an April full of dance. Spotlight on Tango will offer an intermediate level tango workshop on April 9 for ten local dancing couples. Then to close out the month, the group H'Sao will bring us an open workshop for kids and adults who want to experience the energy of African dance. For more

information, keep checking the Education and Outreach page on our website, which we will update as details become available.



Rémi Bolduc Jazz Ensemble performing at Imperial Theatre on February 12th, will also be giving adult and youth jazz workshops.

Local Children Join the Lollipop Guild!

That's right, twelve local children will be performing with the professional company of *The Wizard of Oz* on the Imperial stage January 25th and 26th. The kids will sing and dance in the roles of "munchkins" and "winkies." Talented local performer and teacher Sarah Butler, in her latest role as "Munchkin Group Leader", will be assembling a group of students from Interaction Theatre as well as Imperial's own Performing Arts Schools to audition for the roles.

Those chosen will have a busy rehearsal schedule, as Sarah leads them through the process of learning the music and

choreography sent out by the producers so they are ready to leap right in with the professionals when they arrive. We are thrilled to be able to give our talented local youth this amazing opportunity!

For updated information about our education and outreach and activities.

Visit us online at

www.imperialtheatre.nb.ca

or call Lee at 674-4197

"A LAVISH STAGE PRODUCTION"
- NY Times

THE WIZARD OF OZ
THE SPECTACULAR NEW NATIONAL TOUR

IMPERIAL THEATRE
Fort Reliance Auditorium
Tues. Jan. 25 & Wed. Jan. 26 at 7 p.m.

TICKETS: www.imperialtheatre.nb.ca
Box Office 674-4100 or 1-800-323-SHOW

McLEAN MICRO

The Wizard of Oz: L. Frank Baum "1900 Revised Edition" - E. Y. Harburg "1939 John Kane Edition"

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

SPOTLIGHT

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PLEDGES AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2010

Total Pledged \$3,000,000

Total Received \$2,721,175

Our 'dressing room mirror' lights show pledges have surpassed the Campaign goal of \$2.5 Million.

Honouring your pledge ensures theatre repair and upgrade projects can be planned and completed over the coming years.

THANK YOU

ENCORE! ENCORE! *KEEP IT LIVE* CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CABINET

Derek Oland	Campaign Chair
Hon. Michael Meighen	Honourary Chair & Senator
Wendy Nielsen	Honourary Chair & Soprano
Jacqueline Oland	President, Imperial Theatre Inc. & Family Gifts Chair
Lloyd Foote	President, Imperial Theatre Foundation Inc.
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Peter D. Smith	General Manager, Imperial Theatre, Inc.

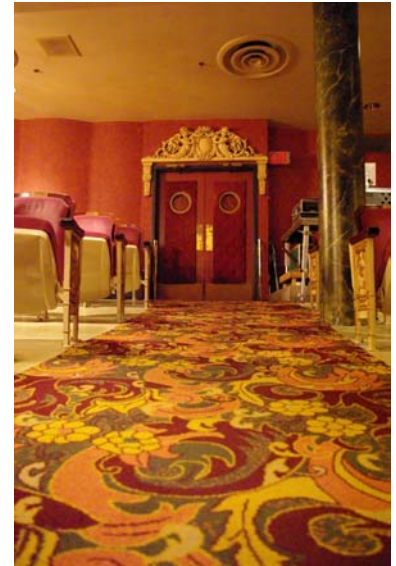
THERE IS NO NEED TO “WATCH YOUR STEP” ANYMORE!

There is no need to “Watch Your Step” any longer as you enter the Irving Auditorium at Imperial Theatre.

For years the Theatre volunteer ushers have gently pressed this caution upon its patrons entering the Auditorium from the right hand side of the Lobby, as special cables providing power to the soundboard at the rear of the theatre were stretched across the aisle and concealed by a raised tent-like ramp. An easy fix of carving out a trench to bury the cables was not an immediate option, as it was unknown what might already be housed in the cement flooring. It was necessary to x-ray the floor, design a plan, and then work around performances to get the job completed. It was also a costly procedure that required capital maintenance funds.

The problem with the cables was one of the major issues that precipitated the need for the Theatre’s Capital Campaign, “*Encore, Encore Keep IT Live*”. The Campaign raised \$3 million for maintenance and upgrades, and the trench is the latest item in a long list of needs. The Stage House, a high priority item, received new cladding during the summer months, and is no longer in jeopardy of leakage.

New lobby and house lighting controls, sound system, lighting console and ticketing system have all been purchased and installed in the last few years. Each of these items was a requirement to ensure the Theatre is up to date in terms of the industry standards and to ensure that people who attend and



Auditorium right isle where “cable hump” used to be. The sound board cables are now housed in a trench cut into the floor.

perform at the Theatre receive the best possible service and experience we can offer.

Mike Doyle, a member of Imperial Theatre’s Foundation Board and a long-time patron, is pleased with the trench completion. “The cable ramp presented a potential risk factor, but also detracted from an otherwise beautiful setting upon entering the Auditorium.” However, this is no longer the case. Theatre-goers are now able to enter the Irving Auditorium without having to look to their footing, and take in the splendour and glory of one of the most beautiful arts venues in Canada.

For more information or to make a donation to Imperial Theatre’s *Keep IT Live* Capital Campaign please contact Carol Fortune at (506) 632-6163 or carol@imperialtheatre.nb.ca

Why I Give:

A Confession by Angela Campbell

I am going to do something that most people would consider a breach of etiquette, or uncouth. I am going to tell you how much money I donate to Imperial Theatre each year. Okay, here it comes... \$500.00. Phew! What a load off my chest!

What prompted my decision to confess this personal aspect of my finances? Well its quite simple really. After years of asking you for your support and listing off all of the logical reasons why you should, I realized that I needed to share with you my own personal reasons for giving to Imperial Theatre.

The arts have always been a part of my life. I was fortunate enough to have parents who love the arts and exposed my sister and me to music, dance, poetry and acting. I remember going to TNB's Christmas production every year and thinking how glamorous I was as I walked through the doors of Saint John High School, in my red velvet dress. At six-years old I was one of the inaugural members of Anne Elman's Children Drama Workshop and standing on stage for the first time felt like the most natural thing in the world. From that moment on the arts have always been my solace, my refuge and inspiration in my life.

I spent many years on stage through my youth and young adult life. Then moved on to University and a career, building a life and raising children, and although my path has led me back to the arts it was not as a professional actress. The epiphany? Having the opportunity as a child and young adult to experience live

performance, both as a performer and as an audience member, shaped who I am today. And now working at Imperial Theatre I witness every day how art enriches and enhances the lives of so many people.

Whether it's the young Canadian musician who is playing on our stage for the first time in their career or the seasoned thespian who is so complimentary of our stage; the young dancer who has won the role of Clara in the local dance production of *The Nutcracker*, and is experiencing the exhilaration of having the spotlight hit her on centre stage to the thunderous applause of her friends and family; the tearful eyes of one of our elders, who while sitting in the darkened theatre, heard a piece of music that propelled her back to her youth. It is for each of these people that I give.

Five hundred dollars may seem like so little to some and to others it may seem like a fortune. The amount itself doesn't matter. It is the reason behind it that is the point. I am frequently asked "Why should I support the arts when there are so many charities that save lives and help the those in need?" Because now I get to share those experiences with my children.

The first time I brought my daughter Emma to see a show at Imperial Theatre, she was three-years old. We came to see Motus O's *Variations of Love*, a contemporary dance piece. She insisted on wearing her best dress. My expectations were to make it to intermission and then take her home. She waited patiently and then finally the lights went down and the first piece started. She

was captivated. She couldn't take her eye's off the stage.

As the show went on she became more and more engrossed. In one of the final pieces in Act One a video was projected on the up-stage cyc. As the film played in the background the dancers moved in front of the screen. At one point the dancer in the movie moved forward and through the magic of theatre walks off the screen and on to the stage... Emma was frantic. Sitting on my lap at this point, she turned around and to the amusement of those around us, cupped her small hands on my cheeks and said rather loudly, and with great excitement, "How did she do that?" and then "Is it my turn now?"

In that moment, a mere three or four minutes in a lifetime of minutes, I shared with my daughter an experience that we still both carry with us today. Her memory of it is different from mine. For her it was the magic of the dance that she keeps locked up in her inner memory box. For me it was watching a life connected so closely to mine discover the world of dance. Emma is now seven and is in her third year studying ballet, jazz and tap.

This is why I give. To ensure that Imperial Theatre is here twenty, thirty even one hundred -years from now as the catalyst to create wonderful memories and experiences for our community's future generations. Did the theatre save my life? No. Without out it I would have grown up and probably would have been successful. What it did for me was create a plethora of experiences and self-exploration that made my life better. And it still does today.



IMPERIAL THEATRE
FOUNDATION

Imperial Theatre Foundation is an independent registered charity created to provide a secure source of funding for the operation of Imperial Theatre. 'Behind the Scenes' is a special publication for the Members and sponsors of Imperial Theatre and Imperial Theatre Foundation.

Quilters help enhance the holiday atmosphere at Imperial Theatre

'Tis the season, and with the help of the Marco Polo Quilters Guild, Imperial Theatre's lobbies sure look jolly! Imperial Theatre Exhibition Committee (ITEC) presents a lovely holiday-themed collection of quilts this month, each crafted by members of the Marco Polo Quilters Guild. More than just a quilt, each piece is a colourful portrait created with fabric by nimble fingers. From cascading snowflakes to Christmas angels and stockings hanging from a hearth, this exhibition has filled Imperial Theatre's lobbies with holiday cheer.

A member of the Canadian Quilters Association, the Marco Polo Quilters Guild was founded by dedicated crafts people wishing to promote the art of quilting in the greater Saint John area. Don't miss this festive exhibition, starting December 6, 2010. The Marco Polo Quilters Guild's Christmas Exhibition will remain on display in Imperial Theatre's main lobbies until early January 2010 and can be viewed during regular Box Office hours, as well as on performance nights.

For more information about the Marco Polo Quilters Guild, visit
: <http://sites.google.com/sitemarcopoloquiltersguild/home>



Cardinal Delight by Marilyn Upton is one of over 25 Christmas quilts decorating the lobbies this season.

Please accept my gift to Imperial Theatre in the amount of:

\$50 **\$100** **\$250** **\$500** **\$1,000** **\$2,500** **Other \$** _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City & Prov. _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone #: _____ Email Address: _____

Please make cheques or money orders payable to: Imperial Theatre Inc.

American Express Master Card Visa

Card #: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____

Peter's Picks: Three shows you have to see!

Late Nite Catechism
Thursday, January 27 at 8 p.m.



Peter says: *This is a show I've always wanted to do. It's really funny and gets the audience involved. Sister is a good old-fashioned teacher: if you do things right she gives you cool things like a glow-in-the-dark rosary, and if you misbehave, she'll haul you up on stage and humiliate you. It's a fun, fun show. You don't have to be Catholic to get it, but it helps.*

Andy Jones,
an Evening with Uncle Val
Friday, February 4 at 8 p.m.

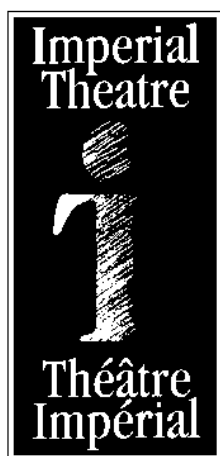


Peter says: *Andy Jones is really funny and this is him at his gentlest and most heartwarming. I've seen this showcased three times, and each time the audience loved it. Everyone should see this show!*

Théâtre Sans Fil's,
The Hobbit
Saturday, February 19 at 7 p.m.



Peter says: *I worked on this show almost 20 years ago at Centaur Theatre in Montreal. It's a wonderful, wonderful show. It's a wonderful story. I think the coolest special effect is the spider web... and no, I won't tell you how it's done, but it's really effective - and simply magical.*



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Thank you!