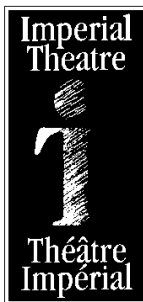


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A moving salute to veterans
Jake's Gift
Imperial Theatre — Tuesday, October 13 at 8 p.m.

"I am a veteran of the Second World War and this play and its performance made a greater impact on me than all the memorial services I have ever attended." — Anthony Holland

Jake stands alone by his brother's grave. "I never did nothin' special," says Jake as he muses over his life and the loss of his brother so many years ago. Jake is an old man now, a veteran who lost his brother in a war that rocked the world over 50 years ago. As he struggles with buried feelings and distant all-too-real memories, Jake unknowingly embarks on a journey that takes him to his past and back. That journey is **Jake's Gift**, a one-hour play that refutes Jake's feelings of "nothing special" and pays homage to ordinary people turned heroes.

Coming to Imperial Theatre on Tuesday, October 13 at 8 p.m., **Jake's Gift** tells the story of 80-year-old Jake, a Canadian World War II veteran who reluctantly returns to Normandy, France for the 60th Anniversary of D-Day to find the grave of his eldest brother who was killed during the Battle of Normandy in 1944. While revisiting the beach he landed on decades ago, Jake encounters Isabelle, a precocious 10-year-old from the local village. Isabelle's grandmother taught her all about the war, including her own tragic family loss, and the girl's sense of gratitude and remembrance towards the Canadian soldier cannot be contained as she approaches him. Surprised by the unabashed greeting, Jake brushes her off, but Isabelle is not deterred. In the end, the girl's inquisitive nature and charm soften the old soldier and challenge him to confront some long-ignored ghosts.

In 2004, playwright and actress Julia Mackey traveled to Normandy, France for the 60th Anniversary of D-Day to interview dozens of Canadian, British and American veterans who had returned for the ceremonies. Their stories, the events that unfolded during her eight-day journey and Mackey's lifelong interest in WWII were the inspiration for **Jake's Gift**. In 2007, the play was named *Best New Play* at the Victoria Fringe Festival. In 2008, **Jake's Gift** was the toast of Fringe Fest once again and earned *Best of Show*, *Best Drama* and *Best Female Performer*. In 2008, **Jake's Gift** garnered five-star reviews at the Saskatoon, Edmonton and Victoria Fringe Festivals. Furthermore, in July 2009 it was named *Best of Fest* at Winnipeg's Fringe Festival and received five-star ratings out of five from CBC, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Winnipeg Sun and Winnipeg's Uptown magazine. Julia Mackey was nominated for a 2009 Jessie Richardson Theatre Award for *Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Lead Role* for her performance in **Jake's Gift**.

"It's hard to say which is better — her script about a reluctant veteran's return to Juno Beach or her twin performances as a 10 year-old girl and 80 year-old man — both of which, in 60 minutes, speak more to the heart about Canada's role in WWII than would a six-hour National Film Board documentary." — Monday Magazine, B.C.

Artist Web site: www.juliamackey.com

A funny and touching salute to veterans, **Jake's Gift** celebrates the legacy of remembrance and the healing powers of friendship. Tickets are \$26, \$24, \$22; Youth 18 & Under: \$15 and can be purchased online at www.imperialtheatre.nb.ca, by visiting Imperial Theatre Box Office, or by calling 674-4100 (or 1-800-323-SHOW for out-of-town callers).

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