

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CINDERELLA: STEPSISTERS' REVENGE BRINGS BELOVED OSHAWA HOLIDAY TRADITION BACK

**OSHAWA, ON** – After a pandemic-induced hiatus, Mansfield Entertainment has, finally, revived the panto tradition in Oshawa, having launched their family holiday hilarity in 2016.

“We’ve been bringing the tradition of classic British panto – with our own spin, of course – to Oshawa since 2016, and since 2017 it has always played the Regent Theatre between Boxing Day and New Year’s.”, the producer Zac Mansfield says, “It’s incredible how much I’ve missed the tradition with a pandemic forced closure in 2020, and a “better safe than sorry” approach in 2021. That time between Christmas and New Year’s just wasn’t the same the last two years. Audiences have been slow to return to pre-pandemic levels, but I’m so thrilled to see the enthusiasm back as the tradition returns.”

Mansfield notes that a highlight of the production this year is the musical is accompanied by live musicians. “For our major productions we produce at the Regent Theatre during the summer times, a live band is always there, but for our pantos we have traditionally used orchestral tracks. As we continue producing theatre in a different world still navigating a pandemic – I’m reluctant to use the phrase “post-pandemic” because we aren’t quite there yet, it was a chance to build back better, and that included growing our business to the point where we are proud to be a living wage employer for our performers, designers, production staff, and musicians – and be able to provide even more professional opportunities in Oshawa.” Mansfield also noted the organization is embarking on creating and implementing a new five-year strategic plan in early 2023, with the goal of providing opportunities for full-time, permanent staff by the end of that strategic plan, and year-round programming in Oshawa and beyond. Mansfield Entertainment is a professional and commercial theatre company, with their main income relying on ticket sales, and sponsorships when they are available. “It’s a crapshoot, this showbiz, you never quite know if people are going to show up”, Mansfield says, “Happily, I think for both professional and amateur theatres, people are coming back. Not quite in droves, but they’re back.”

This year’s panto is a sequel to Mansfield Entertainment’s 2018 panto “Cinderella”. But you don’t need to know that one to enjoy this one.

“I have the joy of writing these scripts year after year,” Mansfield says, “And I’m proud of this one, which I’d like to say provides a laugh-a-minute (but I’m not giving you a refund if you laugh only every two minutes), and has really been written for a 2022 audience – yes, the TikTok generation, but plenty of laughs to be had by both the young, and young at heart. This new panto, with fun music – watch for the Taylor Swift nod – is a “what if” sequel-of-sorts to the original Cinderella story, and has been written and set up in a way that if you know Cinderella, you’ll really get a kick out of where we’ve taken these characters. There’s magic spells, time travel (I won’t spoil exactly how certain time travel works, but you gotta hit 88 miles), and of course a lot of local references audiences will love. It’s a real holiday treat this year for families.”

The professional production – meaning everyone involved is paid – is directed by Joan Mansfield, Mansfield Entertainment’s Founding Artistic Director. She has directed every panto, but Zac says “She’s really surprised me with this one. I haven’t really been around for rehearsals with this one, but there’s been some delightful surprises when I have seen a run that I think audiences are really going

to enjoy. The cast is stunning, despite only numbering 6 – an unusually small cast for our pantos, but given last year’s numerous holiday cancellations, this is also a reflection on the “better safe than sorry” policy during this pandemic. You actually forget you’re not watching a 20-plus cast, it’s incredibly entertaining. There’s so much audience participation in this new show, kids will love it. Some of the cast is new to our company, and there are some previous audience favourites we have returning.”

The show is choreographed by Jordan Robertson-Reid, who Mansfield notes “is an incredible choreographer. If you saw “Evil Dead” at the Regent this past August and were floored by the dance moves, that was all Jordan.” A student in her final year at the illustrious Boston Conservatory at Berklee, the show was choreographed via video link from Jordan’s residence in Boston, while the cast learned it in Oshawa. “We were also pretty lucky to have Jordan run one rehearsal when she was back briefly in Canada a couple weeks ago.”

Throughout rehearsal, Diana Chappell, who has appeared as the character of Mildred since 2017 in each panto, got the cast up to snuff on their vocals and in arranging the vocals for the show. Sarne Lightman, new to the company, playing Prince Charming, also contributed to a song in the second act, a “surprise I’m not giving away” the producer notes.

Also in the cast are audience favourites and Mansfield Entertainment returning artists Rebecca Rodley (Cinderella), Kyra Weichert (Brunnhilde the Wicked Stepsister), and Bob Bauldry (Helga the Wicked Stepsister). Also in the cast is Kendra Brophy, playing the role of Zippers.

The 25-year old Mansfield notes he “used to” be in the cast of the pantos but “retired” to focus on the producing side following the 2018 Cinderella. “But, also, never say never. We might have a few tricks up our sleeves in Oshawa this year. But you’ll have to come see it to find out what.”

Costumes designed by Andrew Nasturzio, with music direction in Oshawa by Miguel Esteban leading the live band.

Tickets are \$35 each, or you can ask the box office about the \$100 family 4-pack. The show runs 7PM December 28 – 30, with a 1PM matinee on the 29. For info, please visit [www.mansfieldshows.com](http://www.mansfieldshows.com); and for tickets directly, visit [www.regenttheatre.ca](http://www.regenttheatre.ca) or contact the box office during business hours.



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