



The cast of *Haunted House Hamlet*, a co-production of Theatre Canmore and Calgary's Artist's Collective Theatre.

NIGEL FRANCIS PHOTO

CCHS to host *Haunted House Hamlet*

DAVE WHITFIELD CANMORE

If you're one of those people who just can't wait for Halloween's ghouls, ghosts and goblins to arrive, you're in luck – a haunted house is making an early appearance this year.

Canmore Collegiate High School will be the site for *Haunted House Hamlet*, a co-production between Theatre Canmore and Calgary's Artists' Collective Theatre, Oct. 20-22 at 7:30 p.m. and Oct. 22 for a 2 p.m. matinee.

An adaptation of Shakespeare's classic by Canadian playwright Peter Eliot Weiss and directed by the Collective's Amanda Liz Cutting, *Haunted House Hamlet* will offer something different for audiences in that they can decide on their own experience in viewing it. Nothing in the play repeats and there are three simultaneous areas of action, so people must choose what to see.

"We met with Melanie (DesRoches of Theatre Canmore) in summer and talked about a couple of different productions," said Cutting. "We're working to bring some shows to Canmore and help them develop a professional theatre program."

The cast is from the Collective, while Theatre Canmore is lending a hand with the technical side of production under the mentorship of the Calgary company.

"Our mandate is to support other companies," said Cutting, "so we'll help produce a show and work with a group like Theatre Canmore on lighting, sound and marketing and promotions."

The Collective, which has been in place for eight years, has also worked with Canmore's Pine Tree Players on the recent *Alice's Wonderland*, which was staged in Centennial Park on the Stan Rogers stage.

"Canmore is so lucky to have two theatre companies," said Cutting. "They're both great and are doing a good job in staging theatre in Canmore. The benefits of co-productions are massive; it provides different opportunities for artists in Canmore, and for the community."

According to Cutting, *Haunted House Hamlet* was first produced in Vancouver 48 years ago, and she saw it 25 years ago in Calgary and loved it.

"It's classical Shakespeare, with contemporary flair," she said. "For those who love Shakespeare, it's a tradition-

al script, and people who think they don't like Shakespeare love this. It's got Hamlet's ghosts; it's a dark story, but it's a lot of fun and people can actually see five different shows because we use different areas of the school.

"It's modern and contemporary, the best of both worlds."

Hamlet will be staged not only in the CCHS theatre, but in the theatre lobby, on the catwalk and other locations. In all, with the different scenes in different locations, there is a total of about six hours worth of script condensed into 1.5 hours for the viewer.

Possibilities for viewing include: Follow Shakespeare's Hamlet story; follow any character that interests you; stay in one location and see the hallway play, the crypt play or the upstairs play or move about at random following your impulses as characters move around the house.

The show is opening in Canmore, then will tour Western Canada and the U.K. in spring.

The play is rated PG13, with some adult content.

The cast includes Ben Jacobs (Hamlet), Daniel Rousell (Spyder/

Horatio), Kristy Benz (Polonius), Mikenzie Page (Ophelia), Owen Bishop (Claudius), Cutting (Gertrude), Kaleigh Richards (Guildenstern), Anastasia St. Amand (Rosencrantz), Sarah Keith (Laertes) and Shelby Nicole (Gravedigger).

As adapted by Weiss, *Haunted House Hamlet* sees your typical Canadian punk, Jimmy "Spider" McKuen, stumble upon an old haunted mansion. There he meets the Prince of Denmark himself, Hamlet. Enthrilled in the classic tale he is reminded of from his school days, he follows Hamlet, Ophelia, and the rest of Shakespeare's characters so far as to start talking in iambic pentameter.

Tickets are \$15 regular and \$10 for student/youth at eventbrite. For more information, visit www.theatrecanmore.com/hauntedhousehamlet. On Friday (Oct. 13), Theatre Canmore will offer a 24-hour, 20 per cent off sale on tickets through www.eventbrite.com.

As well, in order to make Theatre Canmore shows accessible to youth in the Bow Valley the company will offer \$10 tickets to all performances to students and members of the Canmore Young Adult Network and BanffLIFE.

Rocky Mountain Outlook

ON THE FRONT: hummingBird plays the Canmore Legion, Oct. 21.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

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