

Anything can happen at Wednesday's 'Beauty at the Beast'



By Brock Weir

Have you ever thought Belle should just cut to the chase and go with the Beast right off the bat, or have been yelling at the screen to ditch the fur ball for the beefcake of Gaston?

Well, their fates could be up to you this Wednesday at the Aurora Cultural Centre as DuffleBag Theatre presents 'Beauty and the Beast' at 2 p.m. this August 23.

This isn't your everyday production of the classic fairy tale, however; this is a show where the DuffleBag actors take a back seat to lead actors plucked from the audience.

And, as you can expect, anything can happen up on stage and it will be up to the narrator to keep up.

'Beauty and the Beast is one of our favourite shows to do,' says Marcus Lundgren, Artistic Director at DuffleBag. 'Especially with the movie having come out it is back in people's minds, it is great to watch families participate and enjoy the show. We play the other parts and have the narrator who tells the story and guides the characters through. They don't get a rehearsal, so there is a lot of improv and based on the choices our audience actors make.'

Take, for instance, if the narrator's action is 'Belle walked up to the castle door,' it would be up to the audience member selected to portray Belle to figure out what to do next as this is one case where a door is not a door; rather, the door is an audience member. She will have to figure out how to rap on the door while the audience as a whole is tasked with creating the sound of the knock.

'This is one of those things that the whole family can enjoy,' says Mr. Lundgren. 'We're not just for the kids and we're not just for the parents. We're really something that everybody finds funny and entertaining. It is hard to find things that really work for all ages, but we're one of those things where it really is a shared family experience. There isn't much of that happening anymore in the age of video screens, movies and technology; this is a chance for everybody to come in, share a laugh and do a story together.'

In the end, the laughs are up to you. If the audience members are feisty, the impromptu actors up on stage will be feisty as well. The crew adapts to what their new actors bring to the boards and there is a lot of fun to go around.

?It is our job to make whatever happens up on stage part of the story. If Belle decides she doesn't want any part of the Beast or the Prince at the end, then we better figure out a way to have that happen. If she wants to just jump right to the chase, okay! If they are going to get married and live happily ever after, and she knows that right away, I guess we'll just skip that other section of the Prince proposing. The audience can participate as much or as little as they want, but we make it so much fun people just want to be a part of it.?

Beauty & The Beast: A Family Theatrical Presentation takes place this Wednesday, August 23, at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Tickets are \$10 each (\$35 for a family four-pack) in person at the Centre or over the phone by calling 905-713-1818. Showtime is 2 p.m.