

SPEAKEASY

By Jane Taylor & Reccia Mandelcorn

Images and sounds from the 1920s rifted through our broadcast when this week's Speakeasy featured Theatre Aurora's upcoming musical *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Guest host Shelagh Carlini, subbing for Jane, joined me in a high-energy interview with Heather Nutt-Christensen, stage manager and Dave Kouhi, cast member making his debut performance as a pastry chef with a nod to humour and choreography. We hope you get a feel for the energy we experienced in this print edition of The Speakeasy.

The Drowsy Chaperone, winner of five Tony Awards, is a loving send-up of the Jazz Age musical, featuring one show-stopping song and dance number after another. The show has enjoyed major productions in Toronto, Los Angeles, New York, London, Melbourne and Japan. Bringing it to Theatre Aurora has allowed our local, award-winning theatre company to put its own stamp on what's already become a Canadian classic in musical theatre.

The Drowsy Chaperone is a story within a story. With the houselights down, a man in a chair appears on stage and puts on his favourite record: the cast recording of a fictitious 1928 musical. The recording comes to life and the *Drowsy Chaperone* begins as the man in the chair looks on. Mix in two lovers on the eve of their wedding, a bumbling best man, a desperate theatre producer, a misguided Don Juan and an intoxicated chaperone, and you have the basic ingredients for an evening of madcap delight. No wonder Heather and Dave were so full of laughter and anecdotes about the play – and after meeting Dave and hearing how he stumbled into the role because he dropped by a Theatre Aurora party dressed in a Halloween costume and subsequently became part of the cast – well we definitely have to check him out!

Tickets are available at theatreaurora.com. Matinees are sold out but you should definitely book for opening night when cupcakes will be part of the theatrical experience.

While the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival may be over in Toronto, film buffs can continue their love affair with outspoken filmmaking at Aurora Public Library's documentary film festival. Hannah Dugas, who programs and coordinates the festival for APL, stopped by to whet our appetites for this fabulous cinematographic experience.

Hannah currently has APL's dream job of selecting the docs to be screened in the festival. Partnering with Hot Docs, the largest documentary festival in North America, Hannah chose the eight films for the festival, including four that were Canadian-produced. Some are serious and powerful; others are more light and fun – but as Hannah says, all eight films are simply wonderful.

Hannah also gave us a preview to a new direction in film screenings by APL. The Library has purchased a license to Criterion Films, enabling you to watch fabulous films at your public library. From new releases to holiday films to classic movies, there's so much to experience together on APL's big screen. And there's always freshly made popcorn on hand to enhance the total experience.

Check out the Doc Film Festival – as well as other fabulous free movie offerings at aurorapl.ca. There's definitely something for everyone's tastes.

November is a happening month in Aurora, with the Aurora Studio Tour on November 24 and 25; Philippa Hajdu's acrylic/mixed media exhibit on view in the APL's Colleen Abbott Gallery; and the great sounds of the Heather Bambrick Jazz Quartet at the Aurora Cultural Centre on November 16.

No need to travel for your cultural fix – Aurora has it all right in your own backyard! From The Speakeasy – see you next month!

Jane Taylor is Communications and Events Manager at the Aurora Cultural Centre and Reccia Mandelcorn is Manager of Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. They co-host The Speakeasy on the first Wednesday of each month on 102.7 CHOP-FM. Subbing for Jane this month was Shelagh Carlini, Sales Director, Theatre Aurora.