

Canaries chirping out Ballyduff way!

The Dawn Players drama group, which has literally kept the show on the road in Ballyduff Lower and Kilmeaden for many a long winter's night, is currently entering the home stretch of rehearsals for their latest production. And one suspects their 2019 play will have audiences rolling in the aisles once more!



The cast of Dawn Players 'The Canaries' pictured during a pre-Christmas break in rehearsals. Their latest production, directed by Miriam Daly, runs from January 30th to February 2nd.

From Wednesday, January 30th to Saturday, February 2nd at Ballyduff National School (8pm), the group will stage Bernard Farrell's 'The Canaries', 10 years on from their first spin with this particular script.

Set on the Canary Islands, the play convenes with the protagonists arriving at a holiday resort in high spirits, but as the weather disimproves, some of those unpacking their shorts and sunblock are not whom they initially appeared to be. And, before too long, the holiday ascends into high farce.

Married couple Marie (Karen Smyth) and Tommy (Jim Laffan) find themselves 'out foreign' with Marie's 'Da', (Paddy Hennebry) in tow, where they meet another couple, Jane (Carol Doherty) and Richard (Tom Veale). Meanwhile, singletons Madeline (Ciara Larkin) and Fergus (Darren Moynihan) meet at the airport and hook up for the trip. The hotel bar is run by Carlos (Pat Power), along with his grandmother, the grandiosely titled 'Contessa' (Joan Stephenson).

Their holiday rep is Samantha (played by Siobhan Walsh) while Gunther, the German professor (Sean Lyons) has been left by his wife and finds himself besotted with 19-year-old Erica (Emma Sprice).

A holiday full of drinking, lying, partner swapping and a litany of rib-tickling incidents ensures the audience of a night's entertainment they'll happily take home with them, long after the traditional interval cuppa has been downed.



The togetherness of the Dawn Players cast has been reflected in the both the fun and commitment they've demonstrated on stage over the years.

The annual 'sold-out' signs are not achieved without good reason, but no-one involved in the production takes that support for granted. And it's to the credit of the entire production team that the school hall at Ballyduff heaves with goodwill and applause year in, year out. The parish of Portlaw and Ballyduff is fortunate to have such long standing New Year stage favourites in the respective guises of the Dawn Players production and the Portlaw Pantomime, both well established on the Waterford drama/panto calendar.

The combined commitment of set designers, prompters, committee members, the performers themselves, local schools and the business community have ensured the retention of both productions for many years, and long may that remain the case. While equally prepared to take on weightier topics, the Dawn Players also embraces whimsy, and they always bring their audience with them!

Tickets for 'The Canaries' are €12 and can be booked by calling 087-6051309 or visiting the Dawn Players Facebook page. All proceeds raised during the run will be divided between Dawn Players, Ballyduff National School Parents Association and Ballyduff Hall Redevelopment Fund. Best of luck to all the Ballyduff board treaders!

With thanks to Linda Spillane