

## More twists than country road

Local scene: Thumbs third play of four in the Opera House's summer season

By John Swartz Special to The Packet

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The third of the quartet of plays of this year's summer theatre season at the Opera House opened last week.

Let's just say there are so many ulterior motives floating around in Thumbs (by Rupert Holmes), you almost need a score card to keep track of who the villain might be.

Set in Vermont, with Ontario and Orillia references cleverly inserted into the dialogue by director Dave Campbell, a woman meets her ex-husband at their cabin.

She, Jane Miller, is a famous actress, with all the common vanity issues we tend to associate with actresses. He, Richard Peters is about to publish a tell-all book about her.

How do you think that is going to fly?

Interestingly, Miller and Peters are really married and this is only the second time they have been in the same play.

Then, we have the local sheriff, Robin Clipsham, who at first seems to be just this side of Barney Fyfe. Turns out she's more Columbo than she lets on.

There's a bumbling deputy sheriff, Kristi Frank, who is most definitely the other side of Barney Fyfe. Way over to the other side of Barney. When you got to see Thumbs, keep your eye on the deputy, Frank does a lot with action that is simply hilarious.

The fifth wheel is Michael Hogeveen as the actress's boyfriend/tennis coach.

There's one more character we sort of don't get to see, the serial killer, who likes to remove the thumbs of victims, hence the title.

This play has more twists, turns and dips than Teston Road, west of Highway 400, does. Holmes has written a very intriguing play that engages the audience.

Holmes calls Thumbs a comedy thriller. There is one part just after the second act gets underway that is very serious.

The sheriff makes a confession and it almost takes the play in a new direction that won't be too funny. But that gets broken up with a good funny line by Miller.

The actress and the boyfriend think they are too smart for everyone else, but you can't fool all the country hicks all the time.

Thumbs doesn't have a full bucket of laughs — the plot moves along with a fair amount of serious dialogue — but when the laughs do come, they are good ones based on a heavy dose of dark humour.

The play runs to Aug. 27 with evening performances Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and matinees Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Country weekend at Burl's Creek

Something big is about to happen in Oro-Medonte. The CMT Music Festival is happening at Burl's Creek Aug. 26 -28.

The Friday night headliner is Lady Antebellum (Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and Dave Hayward). They have a string of No.1 country hits and walked away with five Grammys this year including record and song of the year.

Also appearing Friday night are Corb Lund and Blake Shelton.

Saturday night, Rascal Flatts, who shouldn't need any introduction, even to people who know almost nothing about country music, headlines with Tara Oram, Colt Ford, Dean Brody, Sara Evans and Ronnie Dunn. Dunn is one half of Brooks and Dunn, another act that shouldn't need an introduction.

Sunday, Ryan Laird, who first appeared in this area at a Mariposa Folk Festival audition in 2002 (he made the cut) will open for George Canyon.

Also appearing at the festival (there's stuff happening in the afternoons, too) are Bush Hawg, The Treasures, Hank, The Good Family (mixes the Good Brothers and The Sadies together for brunch time show on Sunday morning), The Heartbroken, Blind River, Dry Country and Naomi Bristow.

A weekend pass is \$200, tickets for Friday only are \$99, Saturday \$119 and Sunday \$29. You can get them at Ticketmaster or by calling Burl's Creek directly at 705-487-3663. Oh yeah, there's camping on site. You can also check everything out at [burlscreek.com](http://burlscreek.com).

classic use of parking in downtown orillia

On the heels of a report showing that there appears to be plenty of parking downtown (just not in the exact spot you want a space) a massive attempt to fill Mississauga, Matchedash, Andrew and Peter Streets with cars is underway Saturday.

The 13th annual Classic Car Show normally gets more than 400 cars participating, sometimes as many as 450 depending on the weather. They take up all the parking on the street, so head for the parking lots.

But not the one across from Brewery Bay Food Company; that's where a stage will be set up and a concert by Hells Bells, an AC/DC clone band, will play at 9 p.m.

There will also be music on the street all day by Jam Space, Gospel Elvis, and the Danica Bucci Band. DJ Rudi will also be spinning discs.

There's also a Harley Davidson motorcycle display that will be part of the attractions.

Meanwhile, down at the legion, nothing goes better with old cars, older cars, and cars that have no relationship to the way they rolled off the assembly line than music. The 13th annual Legends in Orillia tribute artist weekend starts Friday and ends Sunday afternoon.

There are three divisions of competition (Elvis, everyone else and youth) and steak barbecues Friday and Saturday night. You better call the legion now at 705-325-8442 to get a meal ticket, they go fast.

Rants! Raves! Info? Write John at <mailto:watchthisproductions@encode.com%3C/p%3E%3Cp%3E>