UNITY (1918)

Visual Story
for visitors at the
Relaxed Performance

Saturday, November 30, 2:00pm
The show is being performed at the Canadian College of Performing Arts.

This is a photo of the College from Elgin Road.
To get to the theatre, you can go up a ramp or a set of stairs.
The path from the ramp to the theatre takes you through a small garden.
These are the doors to the theatre.
Inside, you’ll be greeted by someone at our box office. You can buy your ticket here, or check in if you’ve already bought a ticket.

If you require a special accommodation, please contact us in advance at 250 595 9970.
These are the doors into the Performance Hall.

You can pick up a program from a volunteer outside the doors.
This set of doors leads to the hallway where the washrooms are.
Ushers will be here to help you if you have a question. They will be wearing a shirt like this, or a nametag that says “Volunteer”.
We have a quiet calm space available. You can leave the Performance Hall any time during the show to relax. The accessible washroom is in that room.
The toilet in the accessible washroom will make an unusual grinding noise when you flush it. This is normal.
These are your seats in the Performance Hall. You can stand up and move around any time during the performance. The house lights will stay on so you can see.
The show is 2 hours long. Each act is one hour. There will be one fifteen-minute intermission. This is a picture of the stage where the actors will perform. The actors will introduce themselves before the show, and you will have a chance to meet them after the performance.
About the Show

.Unity (1918) is about life in a small town in Saskatchewan during the end of World War One. Young and brave soldiers are returning from the war, but there have also been many deaths in the area due to the invasion of the Spanish Flu.

Also the subject matter of this play can be a little daunting, playwright Kevin Kerr uses humour to enlighten the story in between unfortunate tragedies. There will be more information as to what these darker moments are in the trigger warnings section of this Visual Story.

Over the course of the play, relationships develop and break apart, as the Spanish Flu affects every citizen of Unity in one way or another.
Stephie plays Beatrice.

Beatrice is a woman who always does her best to care for those around her.
Courtney plays Doris.

Doris is a telegraph operator in the town of Unity. She knows everyone in town and everything about them. She works hard to keep the town connected.
About the Show

Olive plays Rose.

Rose works as a telephone operator in Unity with her friend Dorris. Rose sometimes yells when she’s standing up for her friends or things she believes in.
About the Show

Chevy plays Glen and Gadfly’s Wife.

Glen is a young soldier returning from war, who returns back to Unity when the war ends. Gadfly’s Wife is one of the women of the town.
Alissa plays Mary.

Mary is a kind-hearted soul, and has a fiancé named Richard. She receives the news that Richard has died, and later becomes sick with the flu, convulsing and dying on stage.
About the Show

Nick is playing Michael.

Michael is a happy young boy who falls ill and comes to an unfortunate end.
About the Show

Jordan plays Hart.

Hart is a blinded war veteran who comes to Unity in search of his family.
About the Show

Daniel plays Man #1.

Man #1 has a strong presence about the town, mainly contributing to gossip.
Chelsea plays Sissy.

Sissy is Bea’s younger sister. She is bright and bubbly but experiences anger and grief at some points in the play which causes her to lash out.
Emily Rose plays Man #2.

Man #2 is a farmer who is friends with Man #1 and likes to chat and gossip.
About the Show

Ryan plays an Ensemble Townsperson.

The Townsperson lurks around the town, and makes a lot of noises, from farts to singing to baby cries. He watches the events of the show unfold, and reacts.
About the Show

Regina plays Sunna.

Sunna is a young woman who is left to manage her uncle’s mortuary. She deals with dead bodies and blood throughout the play.
About the Show

Danny plays Stan.

Stan is a farmer from Unity who has a very rough time during the play, and meets an unfortunate end.
About the Show

Things to look out for:

Unity (1918) uses many sound effects made onstage, live by the actors. Some of these include noises are made by a washboard being scratched by a brush, a bell, a train whistle, a rain drum, a thunder maker, a wind machine, a party tooter, and also by the actor’s voices. The actors make noises with their mouths, as well as singing. One song is a Ukrainian funeral song. There are also instruments which include an accordion, a guitar, and a gut bucket. A gut bucket is an instrument composed of a metal bucket, a tree branch, and a string. It creates a bass sound.

Sometimes the actors change costume offstage and come back on to play a different character.
The character of Hart is blind. The actor himself is not blind, but wears a bandage over his eyes and pretends he cannot see. He may stumble into objects on stage as if he can't see them, but this is staged stumbling and he is actually quite aware of his surroundings.

Other props seen in the play are fake cigarettes, a wheelbarrow that tips over, and farming equipment such as scythes, shovels, and pitchforks.
Unity (1918) discusses death and grief. In the play, many characters become ill with the flu. Some of the characters die, and some do not. There are dramatized on stage deaths portrayed by the actors. These deaths may be stylized or “danced” out, in order to artistically represent a death, or may be acted to look like a realistic one. One actor coughs and convulses in acting out a death. An actor may play dead, but this is just pretend and they are actually alive and well.

There are fake dead bodies covered in white, bloody sheets that are actually mannequins (also known as “dummies”), or toys. One of these is a baby doll, used to represent a dead infant. Another one of these dummies is separated into two parts: a human
body, and a human head. Both parts are covered - the body under a sheet, and the head in a bag.

One of the characters is a fifteen-year-old girl named Sunna, whose occupation is a mortician, also known as an undertaker. A mortician is one whose business is to prepare the dead for burial and to arrange funerals. The actor playing Sunna handles the dummies respectfully, as if they were recently deceased people she is preparing for burial.

As well, there are coffins, mortician’s tools, and fake blood. There is a scene in a graveyard, reference to the burning of a human body, and discussions about the end of the world.
Unity (1918) also discusses sexuality. One of the male characters, Michael, will be shirtless in one of the scenes. There are multiple kisses in the show. In one scene, the character Hart describes a sexual experience with a French prostitute. In another scene, two characters become physically intimate with each other. As well, there will be a prop wooden dildo.

Unity (1918) takes place in October and November of 1918, at the end of World War One. Two characters you will meet are Canadian soldiers. There are discussions about the war, as well as descriptions of what the fighting was like. As well, there is reference to a historic event known as the Halifax Explosion, in which a ship accidentally exploded in the Halifax harbour in 1917, killing and injuring many people.
Some characters in Unity (1918) disagree with each other and raise their voices in argument. In one scene, several people are all angry and are shouting and talking over one another to be heard. This is all acted out, none of the performers are actually angry at each other and are all quite good friends.

Video footage of World War One battles are magnified and projected onto the set at points throughout the show. You may close your eyes or turn away if it is disturbing.