



In conversation with the Cast & Crew of  
**SEAL SLIPPERS: A HALL FAMILY PANTO**

Showing at the  
**LSPU Hall**  
**Main Stage**

Dec 12 – 15, and 18-21 at 7pm

Dec 14 & 21 at 2pm\*

\*Matinees are Relaxed Performances



Chatting with actor Paul Ewan Wilson:



**What do you like about Pantomimes?**

I grew up as a kid in England, where Pantomimes are a holiday tradition. I can still remember seeing them - I love the jokes, the mixing of different fairytales with modern references thrown in, as well. I'm so glad that Rory and Nicole decided to bring Pantos to St. John's, with just enough of a Newfoundland twist, but still true to the English tradition!

**What do you like about playing the Dame?**

This is my second chance to play the Dame in the Hall Panto and I'm loving it - again! She's similar to the Widow Rhubarb in Tangly, but has some different aspects, as well. I don't want to give too much away, but getting to transform into Cinderella's Fairy Godmother is a highlight, so far!

**What's your favourite part of the holiday season?**

The holiday season for me is all about family. My family and all my in-laws basically move into my mother and father in law's house for the entire Christmas period. It's the one time of the year where we all get to spend some quality time with one another.

Chatting with actor Allison Kelly:

**What is your favourite part about being an actor?**

I love exploring the actions and feelings of someone other than myself. I also love rehearsal! I love seeing people's processes, and how the show comes together.

**What do you love about your character in the Pantomime?**

I love that Cinderella has such a massive capacity to love. She is simultaneously fierce and vulnerable. She doesn't shy away from her feelings. She also has an incredible wardrobe!

**What is your favourite part of the holiday season?**

I love looking at the lights on my Christmas tree, and eating non-stop snacks!





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### **What to you like about writing Pantomimes?**

Chatting with playwright Rory Lambert:



I love the freedom that comes with writing the Hall Family Panto. I love taking a fairy tale or folk tale, researching it to find those connections to our province, adapting it and molding it and continuing to edit and collaborate with artists in the rehearsal hall. The pace at which it needs to be performed is nearly the same in which it needs to be created, with ideas and influences flying left, right and centre (stage, that is). My major influences are the Marx Brothers, The Three Stooges, Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello and the pantomime is a perfect fit for both slapstick comedy and wit. Mostly I love the freedom to throw as many bad jokes at the wall and see which ones stick; the funny thing is, they don't turn out to be so bad after all. Most of all, I love the idea of creating a piece of theatre that is multi-generational in appeal. Telling a story that can be enjoyed by a four-year-old and an eighty-four year old. Bringing together a full house of young and old and hearing them laugh together. What could be better than that?

### **How long have you been writing?**

I've been writing for nearly twenty years. My first play, Roy Story, won the inaugural Theatre Newfoundland Labrador Playwriting Competition in 2000 and I've had works produced in Trinity (Rising Tide Theatre), Carbonear (Rebel Island Theatre), Fogo Island (World's End Theatre), the Grand Bank Theatre Festival and the Victoria Playhouse in PEI. This years Panto is my third collaboration with Nicole Rousseau and I think she'd agree, we make a pretty good team.

### **What's it like acting in a show that you wrote?**

It can be pretty surreal at times, especially in a process like this where the script is changing day to day based on the needs of rehearsal. Turning off my actor brain and turning on my writer brain can be tricky sometimes. Once in rehearsal for this panto, the director asked me why Cinderella says a particular line and the actor in me wanted to respond, "I don't know, that's not my line!" Fortunately, my writer brain had a good reason!

### **What is your favourite part of the holiday season?**

I'm a pretty big fan of Christmas. All of it. Egg nog, maybe? Christmas specials are pretty high up there. A certain friend of mine hosts a pretty awesome Christmas Eve Brunch, too. My favourite part of the holidays these days though, is seeing how much my kids love it and letting them remind me of just how magical Christmas can be. Hopefully our production can do the same for you!



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Chatting with director Nicole Rousseau:



**What do you like about directing Pantomimes?**

What I love the most about directing Pantomimes is the opportunity to be theatrical in the most expansive way, to embrace all the things that draw you to the theatre in the first place. When else are you going to get a chance to make it rain split peas or use a giant pair of scissors or choreograph a Newfoundland style set dance to your favourite 80s tune? Pantomimes let all of us embrace the magic and share it with each other, with spells and laughter and audience interaction with the characters on stage, I love it when we are all a part of that world!

**What was a fun challenge of directing this show?**

It's a pretty fun challenge to make Seal Slippers a play for the whole family to enjoy. That means you have to keep multiple generations and ages in mind when you look at the themes and the comedy in the play. Is there something for the little kids? Will another joke engage the teens? Will their Parents get caught up in the nostalgia of the 80's and will the Grandparents be drawn in by the familiar storylines and traditions of a holiday theatrical entertainment? Most importantly, I look for the points of common ground: will there be times when the whole family can laugh together? That's such a fun discovery, and brings a real sense of achievement, when I look around and see audiences of all ages recognizing a certain theme or idea expressed within the play.

**What is your favourite part of the holiday season?**

I love how everyday things get a shine to them around the Holidays, everything feels a little bit magic! Miracles don't seem particularly out of the question at this time of year, and the possibilities for unexpected joy are everywhere - running into friends, seeing family you haven't seen in a while, taking the time to enjoy each other's company and count your blessings, which are things that we could be doing all year long but seem to do most during the holiday season - that's the best part of it for me!