

PACIFIC THEATRE PRESENTS
a guest production by Gallery 7 Theatre



TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE
by Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom
Sept 14-24

MEDIA RELEASE

Please include in AUGUST, SEPTEMBER
calendar listings and announcements

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TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

a guest production by Gallery 7 Theatre
by Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom

September 14-24

“Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live.”

IN SHORT: Pacific Theatre presents Gallery 7 Theatre’s guest production of TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE by Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom, a life-changing true story about generosity of spirit in the face of death. From the NY Times best-selling novel. **Playing September 14-24th Wednesday – Saturday at 8pm with 2pm matinee on Saturday at Pacific Theatre, 1440 W 12th Ave. Artist talkback Friday, September 23rd. For tickets (\$16.50-29.50 HST not incl.) call 604.731.5518 or pacifictheatre.org.**

VANCOUVER, BC – Mitch Albom is a high-flying sports journalist who has made a name for himself as the guy who always says yes. That is, until he is stopped short by the sight of his former college professor and mentor featured on *Nightline* – because he is dying. What starts as a one-time obligatory visit to appease his conscience becomes a weekly pilgrimage for Morrie Schwartz’s master class in the meaning of life. From the New York Times best-selling autobiography originally written to help pay Schwartz’s medical bills.

Ken Hildebrandt, Gallery 7 Theatre artistic director, finds one of the most notable aspects of this play to be “the depth and intimacy of the relationship between these two men. In our culture, relationships between men don’t always scratch below the surface. Yet I believe deep within each man’s soul, there longs for connection with other men who inspire, encourage and walk-alongside us, to help us make sense of what it means to be a man intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.”

Formed in 1991, Gallery 7 Theatre is the primary source for live theatre in Abbotsford. Founded by artistic director Ken Hildebrandt, Gallery 7 Theatre strives to bring locally-grown, professional quality live theatre to residents of the Fraser Valley.

RAVE REVIEWS

“The play was exquisite. Glen Pinchin’s portrayal of Morrie Schwartz was sublime in his humour and humanity.” –UFV Cascade

“A touching, life-affirming, deeply emotional drama with a generous dose of humor.” –New York Daily News

“I found myself totally unprepared for the play’s stunningly moving and altogether eloquent depictions of abiding friendships.” –Broadway World

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| Details: | TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE by Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom |
| When: | September 14-24, Wednesdays-Saturdays at 8pm, 2pm matinees Saturdays |
| Where: | Pacific Theatre, 1420 West 12 th Ave (at Hemlock St), Vancouver, BC |
| Tickets: | \$16.50-29.50 (HST not incl.) – to reserve call 604.731.5518, or visit pacifictheatre.org . |

A Note from Ken Hildebrandt – Artistic Director of Gallery 7 Theatre

What a thrill it is to introduce our little theatre from Abbotsford to Vancouver audiences! I sometimes find myself smiling at the delightful absurdity of this opportunity to share this story here in the City. I mean, what good could come from Abbotsford, a town known for raspberries, blueberries, dairy farms and airshows, but not necessarily for a thriving arts and cultural scene? Yet, enormous talent oozes from this diamond-in-the-rough, city-in-the-country and this production showcases just a sample of some of the high calibre work being produced in the Fraser Valley as emerging and veteran artists of all disciplines find their voice through the arts. Thank you Ron for inviting us to be a part of your season here at Pacific Theatre!

Though I hadn't read Mitch Albom's book at the time, when I first read the play version of *Tuesdays with Morrie* a couple of years ago, I found it to be quite moving. The story was uplifting, humorous, sad and tragic all at the same time. After that first read, I knew this play needed to be produced on the Gallery 7 stage, and though it took a couple of years for that dream to become a reality, our recent 20th anniversary season presented the perfect opportunity.

As I've worked on this show over the past year, I've also come to realize that this story is refreshingly void of the cynicism that seems to permeate our culture today. It avoids quaint sentimentality and delves deep in to heart and soul matters in a honest and sometimes uncomfortable way. Ironically, though this play deals with death and sickness, it's really about living life to the fullest.

What stands out most, however, is the depth and intimacy of the relationship between these two men. In our culture, relationships between men don't often scratch below the surface. Yet I believe deep within each man's soul, there longs for connection with other men who inspire, encourage and walk-alongside us, to help us make sense of what it means to be a man intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. It's definitely true of my life. Albom's story celebrates the importance of healthy, intimate & meaningful relationships, which is a very good thing indeed.

This production ran with great success in Abbotsford this past Winter, and I was delighted and humbled by how this production connected with men and women in very deep and emotional ways. That experience proved once again that theatre has this amazing ability to probe even the deepest areas of our heart, soul and mind in a manner that enlightens, challenges, and entertains. There's nothing quite like live theatre. I trust you will have a similar experience as you enjoy today's performance! Be moved. Be engaged. Be encouraged. Be inspired.

A Note from Ron Reed – Artistic Director of Pacific Theatre

Welcome to our twenty-eighth season! It's been an exhilarating ride, particularly the past two seasons, and as we launch this one it feels like our theatre is in a very good place. The pieces we produce on our own - Playland, Doubt, Refuge Of Lies, A Christmas Carol, My Name Is Asher Lev - are all right at the core of what we're about, featuring artists who call Pacific Theatre their artistic home, with ever-expanding design and production values. And we find ourselves with a rich array of collaborators and co-producers among other Vancouver theatres, thrilled to be so engaged with the rest of this remarkable artistic community, bringing you productions - shows like Re:Union, Jesus Hopped The 'A' Train, Godspell, Jake's Gift, The Passion Project, The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, Danny & The Deep Blue Sea.

Gallery 7 has long been a 'sister company' to Pacific Theatre, a community theatre in the Fraser Valley with a mandate that's a lot like ours. When I saw their production of Tuesdays With Morrie this spring I was very moved - far more than I had expected to be, the piece packs a real punch - and it occurred to me that our audience would have a similar response. Ken Hildebrandt is a longtime friend and peer, and I've had the pleasure of working with Glen Pinchin on both You Can't Take It With You and You Still Can't. Both actors were absolutely at the top of their game, and it seemed an ideal opportunity to showcase not only these two artists and their company, but also a piece of theatre so close to the heart of both our theatres.

We hope you'll enjoy tonight's visit with two remarkable men - one who's lived a long life fully, soulfully, the other who is challenged to do the same. And we hope you'll come back and join us for encounters with other such lives - a Quaker whose extraordinary act of witness may have altered the course of a war; a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, clutching covetous old sinner who is challenged to transform; two lost souls in a Bronx bar; a charismatic young priest and the woman who suspects he may be preying on her students; four disciples at a memorable dinner party; a priest and a cleaning woman considering changes in vocation.

Last season was a triumph. But we think the one to come may be the best yet!

A Note from Carissa Boynton, Director

Love

In 1995, Mitch Albom reunited with his college professor, Morrie Schwartz, who had recently been diagnosed with a fatal illness. Mitch and Morrie then together journeyed to the end of Morrie's life, as student and 'coach'. This experience marked a profound shift in Mitch's career, moving him from well known sports journalist to internationally renowned author.

Tuesdays with Morrie was written with the intention of helping to pay Schwartz's medical bills, and though rejected by numerous publishing houses, once published, quickly became a success. *Tuesdays with Morrie* stayed at the top of the New York Times bestseller list for 205 weeks. The impact of the relationship chronicled in the book is so great that it has been translated into 41 languages.

I invite you to sit back and watch one man open himself up to a wise man's teaching, and begin an emotional journey of change.

About ALS

ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease is a fatal neurodegenerative disease. People living with the disease become progressively paralyzed due to degeneration of the upper and lower motor neurons in the brain and spinal cord. Eighty percent of people with ALS die within 2-5 years of diagnosis – unable to breathe or swallow. Ten per cent of those affected may live for 10 years or longer.

ALS has no known cure or effective treatment yet. For every person diagnosed with ALS, a person living with ALS dies. Approximately 2,500-3,000 Canadians currently live with this fatal disease.

(Taken from The ALS Society of Canada website <http://www.als.ca>)

Reference Guide:

We thought you might appreciate having some information on some of the references to places and names in the play:

Brandeis University: A private research university with a liberal arts focus in Boston.

Angela Davis: Born in 1944, Davis is an American political activist, educator and author. Davis was most politically active during the late 1960s through the 1970s and was associated with the [Communist Party USA](#), the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Panther Party. Prisoner rights have been among her continuing interests. Her membership in the Communist Party led to Ronald Reagan's request in 1969 to have her barred from teaching at any university in the State of California. She was twice a candidate for Vice President on the Communist Party USA ticket during the 1980s. In the early 1990s she moved from party communism to other forms of political commitment, and she has identified herself as a democratic socialist.

Jerry Rubin: Rubin was an activist, writer, lecturer, and businessman, and was best known as a leader of the counter-culture in the 1960s. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 14, 1938. He was educated at the University of Cincinnati (B.A., 1961), Hebrew University, and the University of California at Berkeley. A journalist during his student years, Rubin became a full-time agitator in response to the Vietnam War. He was an organizer of Berkeley's Vietnam Day Committee (VDC) in 1965 which held the world's largest teach-in against the war. He died in 1994.

Ted Koppel: Koppel was born February 8, 1940 and is an English-born American broadcast journalist. He is best known as the anchor for *Nightline* from the program's inception in 1980 until his retirement in late 2005. After leaving *Nightline*, Koppel worked as managing editor for the Discovery Channel before resigning in 2008. Koppel is currently as a senior news analyst for National Public Radio and as a contributing analyst to *BBC World News America*.

Ted Turner III: Turner was born November 19, 1938 and is an American media mogul and philanthropist. As a businessman, he is known as founder of the cable news network CNN, the first dedicated 24-hour cable news channel. In addition, he founded WTBS, which pioneered the superstation concept in cable television. As a philanthropist, he is known for his \$1 billion gift to support UN causes, which created the United Nations Foundation, a public charity to broaden support for the UN. Turner serves as Chairman of the United Nations Foundation board of directors.^[3]

Adlai Ewing Stevenson II: Stevenson was an American politician, noted for his intellectual demeanor, eloquent oratory, and promotion of liberal causes in the Democratic Party. He served as the 31st Governor of Illinois, and received the Democratic Party's nomination for president in 1952 and 1956; both times he was

defeated by Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower. He sought the Democratic presidential nomination for a third time in the election of 1960, but was defeated by Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. After his election, President Kennedy appointed Stevenson as the Ambassador to the United Nations; he served from 1961 to 1965. He died on July 14, 1965 in London, England after suffering a fatal heart attack at age 65.

Howard William Cosell: Cosell was born in 1918 and was an American sports journalist who was widely known for his blustery, cocksure personality. Cosell said of himself, "Arrogant, pompous, obnoxious, vain, cruel, verbose, a show off. I have been called all of these. Of course, I am." In its obituary for Cosell, the New York Times described Cosell's impact on American sports coverage: "He entered sports broadcasting in the mid-1950s, when the predominant style was unabashed adulation, [and] offered a brassy counterpoint that was first ridiculed, then copied until it became the dominant note of sports broadcasting."

Artistic Team



Joanne Abraham (Lighting Designer)

Following a brief hiatus in the Northwest Territories, Joanne is back for her 3rd season with Gallery 7. Joanne studied theatre at the University of the Fraser Valley, where she did a little bit of everything behind the scenes and onstage. When Joanne is not in a theatre, she is either drinking coffee, speaking French, or taking photos of people to make ends meet.



John Bessette (Set Designer)

John is excited to be working with Gallery 7 Theatre for the first time, especially on a piece as heart-warming as *Tuesdays with Morrie*. This past fall, John designed the sets for the premiere of *Red Letters* (Vancouver Asian Community Theatre); *What About Luv* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (DSR Productions); and *Departures and Arrials* (Lord Byng Mainstage). Previous design credits include *Opening Night*, *Dial 'M' For Murder* (The Metro Theatre); *Urine Town* (Lord Byng Secondary); *Anything Goes* (Magee Mainstage); *Evil Dead: The Musical* (DSR Productions); *Once Upon A Mattress* (St. Thomas More Collegiate); and *My Fair Lady* (Peace Arch Musical Theater Society). He also worked as assistant to the set designer for *Les Miserables* (Arts Club Theatre). John has been a theatre professional for over 14 years, working in various fields. His current incarnation is as the Arts Club Theatre Company's Stage Carpenter.



Carissa Boynton (Director)

Carissa loves giving a story to an audience. She's passionate about all aspects of theatre and has a long history working both on, and back of, the stage. Carissa studied in Vancouver to better learn how to use her mind, body, and voice in the intricacies of telling a true story, and has since progressed to directing. She enjoys directing and would like to thank Gallery 7 for the opportunity. She would also like to thank her actors for their hard work, and for putting up with her blunt and bossy ways. To my stage manager Janik, thank you for your hard work, attention to detail, and the treats you brought to share! And to the rest of the stage crew, thank you so much for helping to put up this show, all the little details are what bring it to life!



Joyce Chung (Costume Designer)

Joyce is excited to be back on Pacific Theatre's stage! It has been an exciting few years since then with directing and costume designing at Gallery 7 Theatre (*Narnia & Chickens*), VACT (*The Flower Drum Song*) and Sees Far Pictures (*Megami: Search for the Gods*). Thank you to all who have lived and breathed with me through this journey as Morrie did in Mitch's life. Enjoy the show!



Dave Farmer (Props Manager)

Dave is quite thrilled to be working with such a talented and enthusiastic cast & crew. Dave has previously worked with Fraser Valley Fine Arts and Funny Bones Productions at Heritage Valley Resort.



Bruce Havery (Sound Designer)

Bruce is the Technology & Facility Manager at Bakerview MB Church. In this role, Bruce wears two hats, coordinating/managing sound, lights & audiovisual for all events at the church and then managing the maintenance of the church facility. A big believer in community involvement, Bruce is a member of Central Fraser Valley Search & Rescue. He is on call 365 days a year and spends time providing radio communications, Emergency First Aid support

and emergency preparedness. Bruce also keeps very busy with his small business, Soundman Productions. He has provided sound for Abbotsford International Airshow, Vancouver Dixieland Jazz Festival, SkillsCanada, Lower Mainland Horticultural Growers Show and the Abbotsford Police Challenge among many more. Bruce has designed sound for *Pride & Prejudice* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* with Gallery 7 Theatre. Bruce's motto is "Preparing for the worst, hoping for the best"



Ken Hildebrandt (Artistic Director)

Ken is the founding Executive Artistic Director of Gallery 7 Theatre and is thrilled to be celebrating over 20 years with the theatre.

Select acting & directing credits include *Beau Jest* (G7), *Cotton Patch Gospel* (G7), *Driving Miss Daisy* (G7), *Lost in Yonkers* (G7), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (G7), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (G7), *Macbeth* (UFV Theatre) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (UFV).

He has also worked as a lighting designer, his other favorite theatre endeavor, on several productions, and has taught numerous drama workshops and courses. When not doing theatre, Ken enjoys announcing at airshows through-out Western Canada and Washington State, flying around the Fraser Valley in a Cessna, and relaxing at home with friends, TV and video games. He is absolutely thrilled to be working on such an inspiring show with such an amazing cast, artistic team and production crew, and to be bringing this wonderful story to the Pacific Theatre Stage.



Janik Livera (Stage Manager)

Tuesdays with Morrie marks Janik's sophomore production with Gallery 7 and it has truly been a pleasure to work with the cast and crew on Mitch Albom's personal and heart warming tale of life and relationships. Janik's previous credits include *Peter Pan* (G7), *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* and *Our Town* (MSS Theatre). When not living backstage, Janik can be found splitting his time between a chef and pursuing his Masters Degree at the Vancouver School of Theology.



Katherine McKellar (Assistant Stage Manager – Set/Props)

This is Katherine's first show with Gallery 7. She is currently studying psychology at UFV, and is an MSS Theatre Alumni. Having been an avid audience member to various G7 shows, she is thrilled to be part of this production.



Glen Pinchin (Morrie Schwartz)

This is Glen's second appearance on the Gallery 7 stage, having appeared last year as Otto Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Other recent credits include *You Can't Take It With You* and *You Still Can't* (Pacific Theatre), *The Circle* (United Players); *Halo, Schoolhouse* and various other roles at the University of the Fraser Valley where Glen completed a Theatre Arts Diploma in 2007.

Preparing for the role of Morrie in this play has been an amazing journey for Glen and he thanks Ken, Carissa and the whole crew for their vision, love and support. He would also like to

acknowledge Lisa at the ALS Society of BC, and Eva from the G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre for their assistance in researching some of the devastating aspects of ALS. Glen especially thanks Dennis, Bill, Lucy and Betty for their encouragement and courage as they fight their battles. Finally, Glen feels specially blessed by the love and support of his wonderful wife, Marla. She well understands the term "theatre widow"...and she supplied terrific rehearsal treats. Glen feels that *Tuesdays with Morrie* is like no other. He hopes it touches you as it has him...deeply, personally and permanently.



Melissa Sahlstrom (Make-Up Designer)

Melissa is a Lower Mainland Make-Up Artist. She has worked on many short films, independent feature films as well as helping on student films with many other Vancouver film schools. She also loves to work on theatre productions and to go out and do photo-shoots. She specializes in everything from high fashion to special effects and airbrushing to scary movie effects. She loves her makeup and hopes to make an impact with her work.