

# WAIPUKURAU LITTLE THEATRE



Presents

# JOHNNY BELINDA

A play by **ELMER HARRIS**

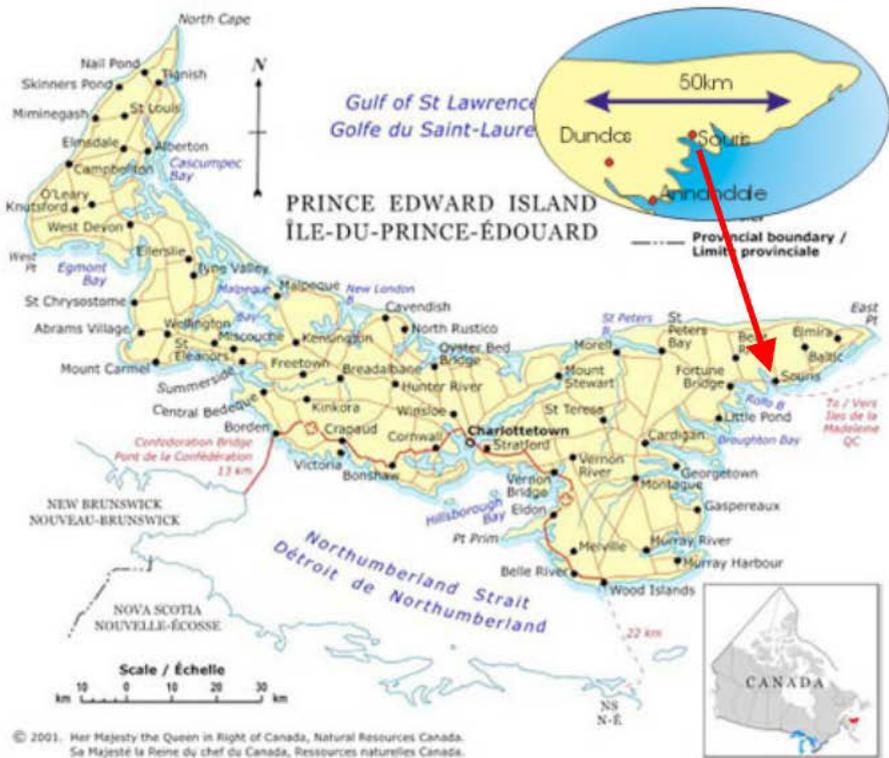
Directed by **NEVILLE BAKER**

Friday 12 August to Saturday 20 August

Tickets from PEARSONS BOOKSHOP

## Background of Play.

The scene is set in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century on Canada's bleak north east. Prince Edward Island is a splinter of land just south of Newfoundland and north-west of Nova Scotia.



The immigrants from Scotland, England and Ireland eke out a living as best they can. The unforgiving climate with long harsh winters and a short summer breed a tough, hard-bitten race of farmers who divide their time between fishing and tilling the stubborn soil.

The play is laid on the eastern end of the island near a town called Souris. A bleak little village set in the hills with a winding road down to the wharf where the cod and lobster fishermen land their catch. In May for six weeks, the farmers with boats lay upwards of 100 fish traps each a day to supplement their income. Each farmer has his pigs, sheep, geese and cattle, the whole family



sharing in the labour of the farm, from the grandmother who spins and works at her loom, to the children who help with the chores around the farm. Rail fences must be repaired, roofs shingled, and barn doors painted the customary red-brick. The island is beset by furious summer

storms. As the skies clear, red wheeled one horse carts can be seen winding down to the shore to gather kelp to fertilize the land.

Once the fishing is over and the crops planted, these Scottish-Irish farmers can relax with such diversions as the Sunday-school picnic, or a dance at the school-house, the local fiddler providing the music. Young and old join in the square dances with the fiddler tapping his heel in time with the music. Life though is generally fairly austere where the country folk wear homespun clothes, live in primitive shacks. Tumbledown grist mills grind the wheat and

barley into flour. A highly religious community, where church going is all but compulsory, and where desecration of the Sabbath can mean gaol.



The play takes place in Black McDonald's living room and Grist Mill. McDonald, a tough and hardy farmer, lost his wife in childbirth many years ago. He no longer attends church over an incident during his wife's death. The surviving daughter Belinda, now 17 and growing into womanhood, is a deaf mute who is treated little better than a working animal. Condemned to a life of virtual slavery, Belinda (dummy) runs the mill and grinds the flour. Black McDonald and his daughter struggle to eke out a living in the harsh conditions. Crops fail because they cannot keep up with the work. They rely on a tab at the local store to carry them through harsh times. The mill is a focal point for the community with many farmers coming and going. A hand bell sits on the bench outside the main door, which Belinda uses to summon help when someone comes.

## CAST

### DIRECTOR

**Neville Baker**

**Belinda McDonald** (a deaf mute)

**Courtney Sciascia**

**Dr Jack Davidson** (young doctor)

**Micheal Fleming**

**Black McDonald** (grist mill owner, Belinda's father)

**Don Donner**

**Locky McCormick** (neighbouring farmer)

**Lindsey Bishop**

**Stella McGuire** (Marries Locky McCormick)

**Niki Rodda**

**Maggie McDonald** (Black McDonald's sister)

**Sue Coppinger**

**Jimmy Dingwall** (Butcher and fiddler)

**Kim Tolhurst**

**The Reverend Tidmarsh** (District Parson)

**Derek Prior**

**Mrs McKee**

**Prue Gibson**

**Mrs Lutz**

(Village Gossips)

**Ella Parker**



## CREW.

### Production Secretary

Sue Marshall and Marg Hewitt

### Stage Manager

Chris Mills

### Lighting /Sound

Michael Nairn

### Set Builders

Todd Bray

Bruce Poole

Derek Prior

John Marshall

Jamieson and Davies

### Set Painters

Hazel Knight (scenery)

Kate Worsnop

### Properties

Sue Marshall

Marg Hewitt

Ian Walker

### Wardrobe

Christine Dooney

Sue Marshall

Marg Hewitt

Kathryn Gunson

### Prompt

Mary Knight

### Poster Design

Lindsey Bishop

### Publicity

Marg Hewitt

### Programmes

Lindsey Bishop

### Tickets

Lindsey Bishop

Pearson's Bookshop

## **Synopsis of Scenes**

### **ACT 1.**

- Scene 1: Autumn – the living room of Black McDonald’s Grist Mill.
- Scene 2: The same autumn – the villagers gather for a dance.
- Scene 3: One evening the same autumn – Maggie McDonald sits working at her spinning wheel.

### **ACT 2.**

- Scene 1: The next spring – Black McDonald’s living room – the plot thickens.
- Scene 2: The next autumn – rumours.

## **INTERVAL**

### **ACT 3.**

- Scene 1: The following winter – Black McDonald’s living room – interference.
- Scene 2: The same winter – judgement.
- Scene 3: The same winter – justice.

---

### **Thanks To;**

- CHB Settlers Museum
- Central Hawke’s Bay College.
- Jamieson and Davies.
- Yvonne Monk
- Natalie More



# CENTRAL HAWKE'S BAY COLLEGE



Phone: (06) 858-9203

## Central Hawke's Bay College is pleased to support Waipukurau Little Theatre

Watch for the next up coming production from the  
**WAIPUKURAU LITTLE THEATRE**

### FRIENDS OF THE LITTLE THEATRE

If you are interested in becoming "A Friend of The Little Theatre"  
Please fill in this coupon and return it to the front of house or leave it on  
your table.

Name .....

Individual \$15.00

Address .....

Family \$20.00

.....

.....

Thank you for your support