Between The Lines

The Members of 4th Line Theatre Newsletter
Fall 2025

Managing Artistic Director's Message



IF YOU JOINED US at the Winslow Farm this summer—thank you! I am deeply grateful to everyone who came out to support Canadian theatre in 2025. It was another unforgettable season of storytelling, connection, and shared experience. The weather was kind to us—warm evenings, soft breezes, and those golden sunsets that seem to last forever. Yet we remain mindful of the farmers around us, facing the hardship of too little rain. Their resilience reminds us daily of how closely the arts and the land are intertwined here.

This summer, we proudly produced two world premieres—numbers 33 and 34 in 4th Line Theatre's remarkable history of original Canadian works. We opened with *The Housekeeper* by Robert Winslow and Ian McLachlan, a gothic small-town mystery that drew audiences into a world of secrets and long-buried regrets. It asked us to consider what happens when we keep too much hidden—and how redemption can emerge from unexpected places. Watching our cast bring such nuance and depth to the story was a joy.

In August, we premiered Megan Murphy's *Wild Irish Geese*, a sweeping, emotional epic marking the 200th anniversary of the Peter Robinson settlers—2,000 Irish immigrants who crossed the Atlantic to begin new lives in this very region. With a cast of 27 and an extraordinary team of designers, musicians, and technicians, each performance felt like an act of remembrance. Descendants of the original settlers joined us from across Canada, the U.S., and beyond to witness their ancestors' stories come to life under the open sky. The show was a complete sell-out—audiences laughed, cried, and rose to their feet night after night.

I am profoundly proud of the plays we produced and the remarkable people who brought them to life. From professional artists to volunteers, musicians, crew, and front-of-house teams, every person contributed to something larger than themselves. Together, we created a space where stories could breathe and where audiences could feel seen and connected.

Each season reminds me how vital community is to our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Theatre is more than entertainment—it is empathy in motion, a space for reflection and belonging. In an uncertain world, gathering together to celebrate what makes us uniquely Canadian feels more essential than ever.

This year we also welcomed 20 volunteer actors to our artistic teams, many through our Emerging VOICES program. Each summer I am moved by their transformation—how they arrive tentative and, through the process, become confident artists and engaged citizens. Watching these young performers find their voices is a reminder of why 4th Line exists: not only to tell Canadian stories, but to nurture the next generation of storytellers.

As autumn settles in and the last warmth of summer lingers, my attention turns to the future—the planning and dreaming that shape every new season. I am thrilled to announce that in 2026, our 34th summer season, we will bring back two beloved productions.

In July, we'll remount Leanna Brodie's *Schoolhouse* (2007, 2008), one of the most cherished plays ever to grace our stage. Set in 1938 in a one-room schoolhouse just outside the fictional Baker's Creek, it follows 18-year-old Miss Linton, a new teacher facing a lively class and a wary community. The play's humour, heart, and humanity continue to resonate with audiences of all ages.

Then, in August, by popular demand, *Wild Irish Geese* will return. We're delighted to welcome back much of the original cast to once again fill the fields with song, laughter, and the indomitable spirit of those who crossed the sea two centuries ago. The response to its premiere was overwhelming, and it feels right to share it again—with those who missed it and those who wish to experience its power anew.

Theatre is a precious space—a meeting ground between artists and audiences, past and present, imagination and reality. It invites us to see ourselves and one another with compassion and curiosity. That relationship between storyteller and listener lies at the heart of everything we do at 4th Line Theatre.

Thank you for being part of our community—for believing in the power of Canadian stories and helping us continue this extraordinary tradition. I hope you'll join us again in the barnyard in 2026—under a beautiful Ontario sky—to share in the stories that remind us who we are and where we come from.

- Kim Blackwell



Justin Hiscox & Friends Productions presents:

Abide With Me

An evening of old-tyme hymns

Sunday, December 7th at 7 PM

St. John's Anglican Church in Ida

Tickets are $25

Contact us for more information at 705-932-4445

2025 Season Feedback

"4th Line blesses its audiences with its uniquely original, lovingly crafted productions that bring our shared history to tangible life before our very eyes."

- John Arkelian, ArtsForum.ca

Wild Irish Geese

"*Wild Irish Geese* is an epic and deeply moving story. The gorgeous writing by Megan Murphy and creative direction by Kim Blackwell had me engrossed from beginning to end."

- Anonymous Audience Member

MAKE A DONATION TO 4TH LINE THEATRE'S 30 TO THE FUTURE ENDOWMENT FUND TO SUPPORT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF 4TH LINE YOUTH TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

All donations made before December 25, 2025 will be matched by the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough, up to $5,000! To learn more, contact the box office at 705-932-4445.



Wild Irish Geese, 2025. Photo by Wayne Eardley, Brookside Studio.

Become a Volunteer! 4th Line Theatre is where Art and Community meet



"2025 was my first summer season working at the Farm on a 4th Line show. In 2024, I appeared in The Verandah Society: Up to Snow Good *but* Wild Irish Geese *was my first mainstage show with the company. Working as a volunteer actor and young company member is really fun and fascinating. Volunteers at 4th Line get to access professional experiences, like, for example, above and beyond script work, direction and choreography, we had sessions with a dialect coach and breath coach which helped us to learn how to do accents and project when on stage. The playwright and lead actor in* Wild Irish Geese *is my aunt Megan Murphy. It was amazing to be a part of bringing Megan's words to life in the barnyard. I have made a lot of new friends and gained a lot of valuable skills. As a young person, it is great to have older actors help the younger kids out by giving them advice which I really appreciated. I would recommend anyone volunteer as an actor in a show at 4th Line – it is a lot of fun, even though it's hot, and an unforgettable experience!"*

~ Poppy Alderson

AREAS FOR WHICH volunteers are needed include acting, backstage, front of house, bingo, regional ambassadors and administrative support.

- At Delta Bingo in Peterborough. (This position is only open to volunteers 18 years of age and over).
- For those with creative talents we require back stage costume and set building.
- Regional ambassadors promote 4th Line Theatre in their local towns and areas distributing posters and other promotional materials.
- Administrative support is needed year round in our office, including reception duties and assisting with campaigns.

Please contact our Box Office for details. If you are interested in learning new skills, applying existing ones or getting more involved with 4th Line Theatre activities, please email Emma, Artistic Administrator, at emma@4thlinetheatre.on.ca

Finally, we would like to thank all our volunteers whose dedication and commitment helped make our 2025 Season a great success.

4th Line Theatre Presents a screening of

We Lend a Hand:
The Forgotten Story of Ontario Farmerettes

Wednesday, November 26, 2025 at 7 PM

Bryan Jones Theatre, Lakefield College School

Tickets are $25
and available for purchase through the 4th Line Theatre box office.



Amplifying Voices: A New Era of Sound at 4th Line Theatre

ONE OF THE MOST NOTABLE and transformative changes during our 2025 summer season was the introduction of microphones for every actor on stage. For the first time in our history, every performer wore a body mic to ensure their voices carried clearly to every corner of the Winslow Farm.

This monumental shift was made possible through the incredible generosity of our donors and sponsors, whose support allowed us to undertake this ambitious accessibility project.

For years, we have heard from patrons who were finding it increasingly difficult to hear the actors, especially during scenes performed in the fields or when actors turned away from the audience. Some long-time theatre-goers even told us, with great regret, that they had stopped attending performances for this reason.

We also recognized that theatre training has evolved—many young actors now graduate with less vocal projection experience, as amplified performance has become the norm across the industry.

In 2024, we began carefully planning to bring this technology to 4th Line. It was a major decision, but one we embraced wholeheartedly from an accessibility standpoint. Just as we ensure accessible seating, pathways, washrooms, and ASL-interpreted performances, amplified sound ensures that everyone in our audience—regardless of hearing ability or seating location—can share the same rich, emotional experience.

The learning curve was steep. Our team experimented with speaker placement to achieve optimal sound coverage, managed feedback issues, dealt with broken wires, and learned to mix 20 live voices through a soundboard in real time. It was complex, detailed work that required patience, technical skill, and adaptability.

But the results have been extraordinary. Audiences have expressed overwhelming appreciation for the clarity and intimacy that amplified sound has brought to our productions. It has allowed the artistry of our actors—the nuance, humour, and heart—to reach every listener.

Thanks to this investment, the voices of our storytellers now carry farther and more faithfully than ever before. It's a change that not only honours accessibility but also deepens the shared experience that is at the heart of 4th Line Theatre.

- Kim Blackwell & Lindy Finlan

Save the Date!

FALL

- **November 3, 2025:** Box Office Opens for 2026 Gift Certificate Sales

WINTER

- **November 26, 2025:** *We Lend a Hand* Farmerettes documentary screening at Lakefield College School
- **December 7, 2025:** *Abide With Me* hymn concert at St. John's Anglican Church
- **December 24, 2025 at 12 PM:** Office closure for Christmas holiday
- **January 5, 2026:** Box office opens after Christmas holiday closure
- **January 2026**—Date TBD: Breaking Ground: *The World of Pearl Hart* by Maja Ardal
- **January 24, 2026:** Community Volunteer Auditions for 2026 Season
- **February 2, 2026:** Box office opens to MEMBERS ONLY for ticket sales and gift certificate redemptions
- **February 9, 2026:** Box office opens to public for ticket sales and gift certificate redemptions

SPRING

- **April 2026**—Dates TBD: Artist Talks – *Kim Blackwell in Conversation With...*
- **June 24, 2026:** Annual General Meeting

SUMMER

- **June 30 – July 25, 2026:** *Schoolhouse* written by Leanna Brodie
- **July 2, 2026:** *Schoolhouse* Opening Night Party
- **July & August 2026:** Local Music Showcase Wednesdays at the Farm
- **July & August 2026:** Artist Talks & Festival Fridays at the Farm
- **August 1, 2026:** Members' Invited Dress Rehearsal
- **August 1-29, 2026:** *Wild Irish Geese* written by Megan Murphy
- **August 6, 2026:** *Wild Irish Geese* Opening Night Party

Updates available at **4thlinetheatre.on.ca**

GIVE THE GIFT OF SUMMER!



Schoolhouse, 2007. Photo by Wayne Eardley, Brookside Studio.

Schoolhouse
Written by Leanna Brodie, Directed by Monica Dottor
June 30 – July 25



Wild Irish Geese, 2025. Photo by Wayne Eardley, Brookside Studio.

Wild Irish Geese
Written by Megan Murphy, Directed by Kim Blackwell
August 4 - August 29

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, SHARE THE 4TH LINE THEATRE EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR LOVED ONES!

Purchase a 2026 summer season **gift certificate** before **December 25th, 2025** and save $2 per ticket (applies to single ticket gift certificates for regular performance nights only)!

Save even more with a 2026 Season Subscription ($12 savings overall)
when you purchase gift certificates for both summer season shows at the same time.

Ensure your preferred choice of dates when the box office opens for MEMBERS ONLY between February 2nd – February 5th, 2026.

Call the box office at: **705-932-4445** or **1-800-814-0055.** Or visit us online at: **www.4thlinetheatre.on.ca**

A round of applause! Sponsors and funding agencies play an important role in 4th Line Theatre's activities. We could not do what we do without their financial support.

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