

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The strolling player

A strolling player is an itinerant actor. Historically, actors were always travelling because they had to earn a living and they weren't welcome to stay in the towns. In the Elizabethan age, the Great Chain of Being—the propaganda for the feudal system and the forerunner to the British class system—was the touchstone for society. God was at the top. The monarch—there by Divine Right—was just below the angels. Actors

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Richard Willis



were placed one step above thieves.

To earn my resident card to come to Canada, I was asked to list everywhere I had worked, travelled and lived from the age of 18. This was a considerable challenge: I had never stayed in one place for longer than

a few months. I'd married my Canadian and straight after the honeymoon I disappeared on tour for three months. We spent that Christmas in New York in a friend's apartment just off Central Park. It was then we decided to make Canada our home.

As I went out on tour for the spring, I started trying to remember my actor's journey through life. At the same time, I was reading the non-sequential, decade-

spanning novel *The Time Traveler's Wife*. With the book as inspiration, I began writing down the flashes of memory that came back to me on the long drives between theatre venues all across the States. My list for immigration covered four pages. My deeper dive into memory turned into a blog called *Time Ripples*.

Ultimately, I turned that blog into a solo show and performed it in Toronto, Kitchener, Port

Hope, Markstay-Warren, Stratford, Washington DC, Hastings in the UK, and in 2015 at St. Andrew's in Prescott.

Early in the pandemic, when I decided to donate my show for the Shakespeare Festival as a fundraiser, the theatre production turned into a film. Using two archive recordings of the show from Washington and Hastings, I re-filmed new sections around Prescott throughout the summer and fall. We hope to

release *Strolling Player: The Film* soon.

With a young family, I don't travel so much anymore, but I'm happy to mark my time in Prescott with this story of a life in theatre. How wonderful having this Prescott stop along the way before the "undiscovered country." I count myself lucky to run a Shakespeare Festival with the challenge of this pandemic. Life for this *Strolling Player* has always been dramatic but never dull.

Local telethon raising money for Christmas needs

By VERONICA BURCHELL

A local radio/virtual site host is pulling together several big names to produce a telethon designed to raise funds for needy families in the Prescott-Brockville area.

Brandon Brown, owner and producer of *Outlaw 97.7* is a Prescott native who experienced many disappointing Christmases himself as a child. When the idea for a telethon came to him through another radio host, he leapt at the idea of helping out.

"CKOR-DB 97.7, based out of Prescott, is inter-

net-based and can be heard around the world," explains Brown. "The *Ryan Show* based out of New York City and I are teaming up to put together a virtual telethon called 'Rap the Halls'. All the proceeds are going to the Brockville, Ontario Salvation Army."

Brown says the idea originally came from *The Ryan Show*, when host Ryan Verneuille asked him what charities in his area would benefit from a telethon. He immediately thought of *The Salvation Army*. All money which is pledged through the *Go Fund Me* page flows dir-

ectly to the charity; nothing is being retained by the two radio stations.

Brown explains that he and his fellow DJs have connections to some of the biggest names in the Rap music industry and one star who has already committed his time to the telethon is platinum-recording hip-hop artist Mr. Cheeks of *The Lost Boyz*. Audiences will also have the chance to see live performances by Cadazone, a California-based hip-hop and R&B legend.

"This telethon is similar to other ones you see, for example the annual

CHEO telethon," says Brown. "Instead of calling in and talking to whoever is on the phone, you go to the web page to make a pledge and you could get a chance to talk virtually with Mr. Cheeks or other performers."

Brown says if anyone in the Prescott area is in need, they are welcome to go to the *Salvation Army* office in Brockville to put their name on a list for help during the holidays.

"I'm familiar with the good work the *Salvation Army* does because I experienced foster homes growing

up and there were years when a T.V. dinner was Christmas dinner. Without the *Salvation Army*, many families could go hungry right here in our area," he says.

The telethon airs December 19 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Brown says there will be giveaways and a few surprises. There will be

directions on screen to take you to the page for virtual donations.

His goal is a modest \$1,000 for this first-time effort, and he says he will be happy with any participation people are willing to give.

"Even if only one family benefits, it will mean the world to me," he says.

Christmas Greetings



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WHERE?

Thursday, December 31, 2020 - 8:00pm-3:00am

Tomorrowland - A magical celebration at the end of an exceptional year. Enter a fascinating digital world, filled with music, magic and friendship. More than 25 of the planet's best artists will perform on four mesmerizing digital stages in the brand-new digital entertainment venue Naoz. More information to be found on the Facebook event.