

# Greystone Gossip

March 2021  
Volume 4, Issue 1

Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of *Greystone Gossip*, the newsletter for Greystone Theatre at the University of Saskatchewan.

This has certainly been a year unlike any other in recent memory. Who could have predicted that when we dimmed our lights and shut our doors nearly a year ago that they would continue to be closed today. Classes resumed in the department in the fall, delivered mainly in a virtual format. We applaud our students and professors for adapting their material to this new format and making it work the best that they could, given the circumstances.

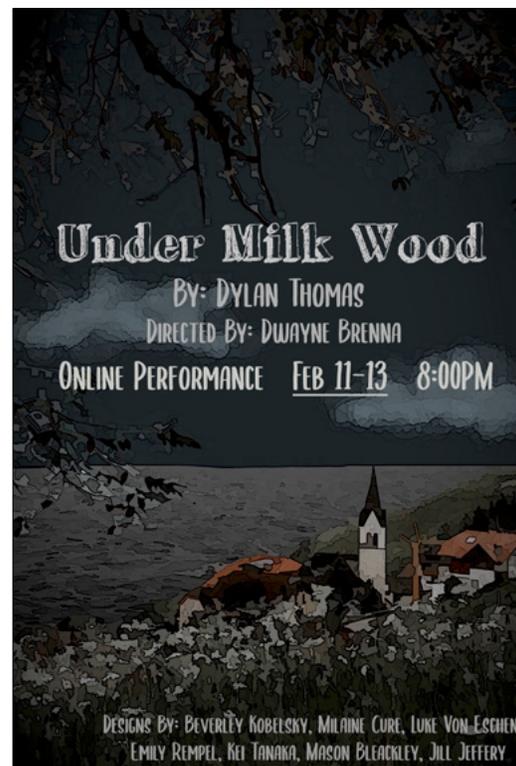
When it came to Greystone Theatre, we have also persevered and adhered to the renowned adage, "the show must go on." In January, students started working on a virtual production of Dylan Thomas's radio drama *Under Milk Wood*, which ran from February 11-13. "It's a way of working that nobody would've chosen six months ago, but like everything in theatre ... it requires some problem-solving and some inventiveness that pushes you to do your best work," director Dwayne Brenna told *The StarPhoenix* in February.

The 26-student cast rehearsed and performed the show from their own homes, employing lighting and costumes to make their characters come alive within their little Zoom windows. Student designers created a new website, [www.greystonetheatre.org](http://www.greystonetheatre.org), which served as a virtual lobby for the show and featured a 3D-model background of the play, created by fourth-year visual arts student Kei Tanaka.

"I had to make my art into a world that the actors can be like, 'Oh, yes, that one's my house.' I tried to make the houses different from each other, so it could be someone's personality," Tanaka told *The Sheaf*.

Initially, the plan was to prerecord the performance and release it to the public, but the performing rights stipulated that the show must be presented live. This prompted the technical team to figure out how to switch between the different videos of the performers for the live stream on YouTube, which was a new experience for everyone.

"Although it was really challenging, it was also really rewarding," fourth-year theatrical design student Milaine Curé said to *The Sheaf*.



Poster designed by  
Mason Bleackley & Emily Rempel



Photo of a virtual performance of  
*Under Milk Wood* by cast member  
Leze J Pewapsonias

# Department of Drama 75th Anniversary

The Department of Drama is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year with a reunion weekend on June 17-19th. Here is a statement on this notable achievement from Department Head, Moira Day:

*Under Milk Wood*, a 1954 work of Welsh poetic genius by Dylan Thomas, that magically conjures rich, imaginative worlds out of little more than words, vision and air, was also appropriately the first production of our 75th anniversary season – and a fitting tribute to the genius of another Welshman of the same era. Arguably, Emrys Maldwyn Jones conjured a similar magic in 1945 in building the first drama department in the British Commonwealth out of the words and vision of a Saskatchewan emerging from World War II. It was fittingly directed by Dwayne Brenna, not only a long-term faculty member of the department, but a former student who once graced the Greystone Theatre stage himself in the old Hangar Building.

We continue to loop back to honour the past and move forward to embrace the future with the remaining plays of our 75th anniversary Greystone season, contrasting portraits of Saskatchewan present and past: *Gordon Winter* (Kenneth T. Williams), directed by incoming WTP co-ordinator, Deneh'Cho Thompson in March and *Unity (1918)* (Kevin Kerr) directed by alumni, Skye Brandon in June. Join us in culminating this very special year with our 75th anniversary celebration (June 17-19) honouring seventy-five years of “us” at the U of S.

## James Miller is a Drama student who is digitizing the Greystone Archives, in advance of the upcoming reunion. We spoke with him about this exciting project:

### *How did you come to start working for the Drama department?*

I was approached by Department Head Moira Day, who told me about the upcoming 75th Anniversary Events. The faculty wished to develop a website celebrating 75 years of drama at the U of S, and where historic photos and programs from past productions could be viewed by the public. I had, coincidentally, just finished a similar family history project. As a design student, I have demonstrated my deep interest in local history, so I jumped at this serendipitous opportunity to dig into the department’s rich and somewhat mysterious past.

### *Tell me a bit about the nature of the work that you’re doing for the 75th anniversary.*

It might sound boring to some, but I find few things as exciting as spending hours poring through old photographs, programs, newspaper reviews and promotional materials. I am privileged to do this for every Greystone show going back to 1945. My job entails sorting these materials and scanning them, making them more easily accessible to anyone interested in Greystone Theatre’s proud history. By doing this, we’re also hoping to fill in a few gaps where information on past productions might be missing. I absolutely love the work. It’s the closest thing to time travel that I’ll likely ever experience!

### *What’s the most interesting thing that you’ve come across so far in the archives?*

Gosh! It would be impossible to choose just one. As a designer, the most rewarding and inspiring aspect is seeing the hundreds of unique sets and costume designs created over the years. As an actor, I feel a comradeship with the many theatre artists who have graced the Greystone stage. I hope fellow Greystone artists will be inspired as well. I’m profoundly honoured to bring these designs and artists back into the light where they can again be appreciated so many years later.

### *Where can people find the photos that you’ve been scanning?*

I’m currently posting a few pictures each week to the @usaskdrama Instagram page. Starting in April, there will be regular weekly posts, trivia and updates on the upcoming 75th Anniversary program and events on our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages. Photos from almost every Greystone production will soon be accessible on the Drama Department’s 75th Anniversary website, launching in April.



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# *From the Greystone Archives pt. 1*



1958 - *A Curious Savage*, directed by Emrys Jones



1960 - *The Constant Wife*, directed by Carl Hare



1961 - *As You Like It*, directed by Carl Hare



1961 - *The Love of Four Colonels*, directed by Frank Holroyd



1962 - *Rashomon*, directed by J.H. Bledsoe



1962 - *Tartuffe*, directed by George Wall

# *From the Greystone Archives pt. 2*



1963 - *The Waltz of the Toreadors*, directed by C. Phillabaum



1964 - *Twelfth Night*, directed by Walter Mills & Emrys Jones



1965 - *Candida*, directed by Emrys Jones



1965 - *Blithe Spirit*, directed by Walter Mills



1966 - *Ghosts*, directed by J.H. Bledsoe



Undated - The Stage at the Hangar Building

