

# Nostalgic humour

By

[The Carillon](#)

– January 26, 2012 Posted in: [A & C](#)



Local stars the heart of the Globe's *The 39 Steps*

**Kristen McEwen**  
Contributor

*The 39 Steps*  
Globe Theatre  
Jan. 25 – Feb. 12  
Various times  
\$25 – \$67

Adaptation fever has hit Regina.

*The 39 Steps*, the Globe Theatre's latest offering, is not only a tribute to the Master of Suspense himself, Alfred Hitchcock, but an adaptation of the 1935 Hitchcock film of the same name, which itself was based on a book by John Buchan. The play draws from both the novel and the film, and will be hitting the stage at the Globe Theatre in Regina from Jan. 25 – Feb. 12.

In *The 39 Steps*, the main character, Richard Hannay, quickly finds himself in trouble soon after inviting a glamorous “femme fatale” into his apartment. Hannay is soon forced to run for his life as he is hunted by the authorities and foreign spies all wanting to discover the secret he is hiding.

The problem is that Hannay has no idea what this “secret” might be.

Any adaptation of a work to another form of media would be a difficult feat to accomplish on its own. However this play, adapted by Patrick Barlow, requires 140 characters to be portrayed by merely four actors.

Though the cast is small, the production is far from miniature. According to David Leyshon, who plays Hannay, the “stage adaptation of the film is a loving tribute to the style of acting from that period.”

Leyshon assured there will be many exciting chase scenes, a characteristic iconic to any Hitchcock masterpiece, adaptation or otherwise. In the play, Leyshon's character is constantly pursued, whether it is on a train or by a plane.

“The challenge is finding an inventive way to [portray these scenes] onstage, to overcome the limitations of theatre,” he said.

Originally from Swift Current, Leyshon is a graduate of the University of Regina Fine Arts program. Since graduating he has worked on stages all over Canada. His co-star, Andrea Runge also graduated from the U of R with a Bachelor of Fine Arts.

Leyshon said his education at the U of R “laid the groundwork” for the things he uses today.

“Acting is a continual learning process. You need a good foundation. The U of R provides you with the tools to springboard [into the profession],” he said.

The Globe Theatre Artistic Director and CEO Ruth Smillie said both Leyshon and Runge are “exceptional actors”.

“Both have exceptional skills at the end of the day,” she said.

Smillie hired director Marti Maradan and consulted on casting and with the local auditions of local artists. While Leyshon and Runge are exceptional actors, it certainly helped that they were from Saskatchewan

Smillie said that hiring local artists is always a priority when it comes to a production.

“[We] love U of R grads,” she said. “We have a fabulous and unique relationship with the U of R.”

The Globe Theatre, in partnership with the U of R Faculty of Fine Arts has the Professional Placement Program, which is designed to create a transition from a student to a professional. During this program, students spend a semester at the Globe Theatre where they are able to train in the discipline they prefer.

“Transition is important,” said Smillie. “Students are not necessarily ready [to be] professional ... It’s quite a leap [to go] from student to stage manager.”

According to Smillie, these programs are developed so that students “will be able to work everywhere”.

“We want Saskatchewan artists to work,” she said.

*The 39 Steps*, which premieres this week, is the perfect example of local artists going to work to produce something exciting, suspenseful, and hilarious.

“Part of the humour [in the play] is that [the actors] are constantly changing characters... It’s absolutely astonishing to watch,” Smillie said.

She said the actors even take on different accents to help differentiate between the multiple characters.

“The different dialects [are] absolutely hilarious,” Smillie said. “It’s really funny.”

Under normal circumstances, it’s impressive when an actor portrays more than one character in a play. It’s even more impressive when the play demands the actor to portray more than one character at the same time.

“We’re asking the audience to use their imaginations,” Leyshon said.

He said the play has its “tongue planted in its cheek” and is often a “wink to the audience”. Hitchcock also had a sense of humour; he would often subtly cast himself small roles in his films. It makes perfect sense that an adaptation of the famous director’s films would be just as clever.

“It’s a zany chase story but it has heart to it,” Leyshon said. “[The play] allows the audience to come along for the ride.”