

# History of Wingfield

On August 4, 2013, Walt Wingfield passed another milestone in his remarkable career. That day's matinee performance of *Letter From Wingfield Farm* at the Belfry Theatre in Victoria, British Columbia, was Rod Beattie's 4,500th performance of a Wingfield play in a little under 30 years.

From the Orange Hall in Rosemont, Ontario (August, 1984) to Victoria (August, 2013) with opening nights in 1985 (*Letter From Wingfield Farm*) in 1987 (*Wingfield's Progress*) in 1990 (*Wingfield's Folly*) in 1997 (*Wingfield Unbound*) in 2001 (*Wingfield On Ice*) in 2005 (*Wingfield's Inferno*) and in 2009 (*Wingfield Lost and Found*), Walt and Rod have delighted capacity audiences across Canada in most regional theatres, including Globe Theatre, Victoria's Belfry Theatre, Vancouver Playhouse, Edmonton's Citadel Theatre, Theatre Calgary, Winnipeg's Manitoba Theatre Centre, London's Grand Theatre, The Stratford Festival, Hamilton's Theatre Aquarius, Royal Alexandra Theatre and Canadian Stage Company in Toronto, Theatre New Brunswick and Halifax's Neptune Theatre, as well as hundreds of smaller venues.

They've also taken part in seasons at Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park and the Asolo Theater in Sarasota, Florida. The first three Wingfield plays were broadcast on CBC's Morningside; a TV version of *Letter From Wingfield Farm* (produced by Primedia Productions) won the 1991 Gemini Award for Best Performing Arts Program and in November, 1998, a series of 30 half-hour TV episodes, entitled *Wingfield*, produced by Norflicks Productions, made its CBC debut. The series has aired more recently on Bravo! Canada.

Rod Beattie has won three best actor awards for his stage performances in the Wingfield plays: a Sterling Award in 1988 (Edmonton), a Dora Award in 1992 (Toronto) and a Critics Award in 1995 (Sarasota).

## Previously on Wingfield Farm

### ***Letter From Wingfield Farm***

When a captain of industry trades his pinstripe suit for overalls and retreats to a hundred acre farm, the residents of Persephone Township raise their eyebrows. Weekend farmers are a common enough sight, but this man seems to think he can make a living with a broken down racehorse and a single furrow plough. *Letter From Wingfield Farm* is the story of one man's attempt to embrace a less complicated world. In a series of letters to the editor of the Larkspur weekly newspaper, Walt Wingfield tells of the people and events of his first year as a man of the soil.

### ***Wingfield's Progress***

In his second season on the farm Walt faces a new challenge. The spectre of urban development looms on the Seventh Concession, and Walt sounds the alarm. Can he mobilize the neighbourhood to save the rustic splendour of Larkspur? Does Larkspur want to be saved? *Wingfield's Progress* is the story of Walt's passionate response to a threat only he perceives. Larkspur and its residents are back at their hilarious best in this sequel to *Letter From Wingfield Farm*.

### ***Wingfield's Folly***

In his third year on the farm, after two profit-free seasons, Walt finally pinpoints the economic source of his problems and embarks on a course which brings him to his most profound crisis to date. In this sequel to *Letter From Wingfield Farm* and *Wingfield's Progress*, Walt sets up a closed economy with his neighbours, prints his own currency and falls in love.

### ***Wingfield Unbound***

In his fourth season on the farm (and his first as a married man) Walt Wingfield tries to preserve the memory of the old rural community of Persephone Township by promoting the crumbling Hollyhock Mill as a museum site. But the locals say the mill is haunted. Undaunted by such superstitious fears, Walt sets out to prove to the neighbours that there's nothing to this curse business – with near disastrous results.

### ***Wingfield On Ice***

As the first frosts come to Persephone Township, Walt and Maggie Wingfield are all set to welcome new life to the farm. She's expecting and he's nesting. But Walt is alarmed about the old feuds that divide the neighbours and disturb the tranquillity of the community. His attempts to mend other people's fences meet with a resistance as stiff and cold as the weather itself. And the biggest challenge to them all is looming on the horizon.

### ***Wingfield's Inferno***

A devastating fire at the Orange Hall in Larkpur leaves it a smouldering ruin. Walt Wingfield leads the charge to get it rebuilt, but lighting a fire under his fellow committee members proves a daunting task. Is it courage they lack, or is the devil in the details?