



His Girl Friday
a fast paced witty show

Description

Snowglobe Theatre presents a new take on a great screwball comedy

By **Byron Toben**

Back in February, the newly formed **Snowglobe Theatre** entered the ranks of small local groups with a decent production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. It didn't hurt to have clever writing by a proven guy named Will Shakespeare.

Now it has followed up with a second production taking advantage of the all time Hollywood script doctor, Ben Hecht.

Hecht, who had worked as a journalist, teamed up with fellow journalist Charles MacArthur, to write the 1928 hit play *The Front Page* based on a Chicago murder trial. That play generated several movie versions, culminating in Howard Hawks' 1940 film adaptation retitled **His Girl Friday**.

Peter Giser... has made his own adaptation to the stage of the film *His Girl Friday*, re-introducing elements of the original play *The Front Page*.



The

reason is that they had changed the star reporter in the play into a woman. Film stars of the day Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant played the leads and Hecht himself joined the adaptation team.

That film, one of the greatest 'screwball' comedies of the time, is now in a list of the best 100 ever.

And now **Peter Giser**, the Artistic director of Snowglobe, has made his own adaptation to the stage of the film *His Girl Friday*, re-introducing elements of the original play *The Front Page*.



To boot, Mr. Giser plays the lead role of newspaper publisher,

Walter Burns, who uses every trick in the book (and some not in the book) to keep his star reporter, Hildy Johnson (**Sandra D'Angelo**), from giving up journalism to have a normal life in a small town with drab insurance agent fiancé Bruce Baldwin (**Zach Sykes**). Things are further complicated by the fact that Hildy is also Walter's ex wife.

Lots of reporters based in the pressroom of the local jail play poker, drink and wisecrack as they await the execution of a convicted murderer Earl Williams (**Zag Dorison**).

The large cast of 16 handle their roles well and scene changes are quick and smooth so as not to interrupt the flow. Humour prevails even as serious events (a jail break, a suicide, a beating) affect the outcome.

Recent Irish immigrant **Niamh Power** plays the corrupt mayor and veteran actor **Scott Kettles** the corrupt Sheriff.

Nice portrayal of a local prostitute caught up as a witness by **Manouchka Elinor**.

Snowglobe is planning its third show come April, consisting of two one-act operas. Talk about variety!

His Girl Friday ends at the Mainline Theatre on **Sunday December 10** at 2 pm.

mainlinetheatre.ca

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Images: courtesy of Snowglobe Theatre

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Byron Toben is the immediate past-president of the Montreal Press Club.



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