



MATT PREPROST PHOTO

Bronwyn Hall and Dennis Szalai get into a garbage-throwing fight during a brief moment of levity in Stage North's production of *Blackbird* during the Peace River Zone Theatre Festival on May 25, 2018.

# Stage North off to B.C. theatre festival

The Stage North Theatre Society will bring two plays down to B.C.'s provincial theatre festival in Vernon this summer.

The Peace River Zone Theatre Festival wrapped up last weekend, with the society's production of *Blackbird* earning the best production award. That earns it a spot in the lineup when *Mainstage 2018* opens in Vernon on June 27.

"As director of *Blackbird*, I am extremely excited and honoured for *Blackbird* to be chosen as the winning play to represent the Peace River Zone at *Mainstage* in Vernon," Rob Laventure said.

Written by David Harrower and premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2005, *Blackbird* is heavy, nerve-racking material revisited in the Me Too era.

The drama follows a young woman, Una, who confronts an older man named Ray, a man in his mid-50s who

seduced Una when she was just 12 years old. Fifteen years on, both are still trying to understand their actions in the continuing fallout from the encounter.

The play starred Dennis Szalai and Bronwyn Hall. Production support was rounded out by Clarissa Mounsey, Cynthia Vance, and Elysia Cruz.

"It is a very challenging piece that requires everyone involved to leave nothing on the table," Laventure said.

"It is raw, intense, uncomfortable in nature, but a true drama in every sense of the word. I chose this play because it was challenging, controversial, and relevant. Considering current movements of today, and taboo subjects being brought to light, this play meets all the hallmarks of contemporary theatre. My cast and crew are thrilled to be going to Mainstage and are excited about performing the best show possible."

The host Okanagan theatre zone also drew Stage North's production of Stephen Massicotte's *Mary's Wedding* as the festival's workshop play, and will be performed and studied as a mentorship opportunity for directors and potential directors.

Mainstage runs from June 27 to July 7.

## **Peace River Zone Theatre Festival Awards**

**Best Production:** Blackbird

**Runner Up:** Mary's Wedding

**Best Director:** Rob Laven-  
ture (Blackbird)

**Best Staging:** Monica Maika  
(Mary's Wedding)

**Best Ensemble:** Stop Say-  
ing Nothing: A Bullying  
Collective

**Best Actor:** Cody Macgilliv-  
ray (Mary's Wedding)

**Best Supporting Actor:** Tyler  
Pauls (Stop Saying Nothing:  
A Bullying Collective)

**Honorable mention, Best  
Supporting Actor:** Dennis  
Szalai (Blackbird)

**Best Actress:** Bronwyn Hall  
(Blackbird)

**Best Supporting Act-  
ress:** Emry Mika (Mary's  
Wedding)

**Honorable mention,  
Best Supporting Actress:**  
Elysia Cruz, Dani Paynton,  
Chandra Mahon (Stop  
Saying Nothing: A Bullying  
Collective)

**Best Set:** Blackbird

**Best Costumes:** Stop Say-  
ing Nothing: A Bullying  
Collective

**Best Technical:** Mary's  
Wedding

