

## 'Jeeves at Sea' sails into the Chemainus Theatre

May 10 to June 2

[Chadd Cawson](#)



BC Entertainment Hall of Fame actor Bernard Cuffling is back to play straight-man Jeeves for the fourth time alongside Brett Harris who for the first time embraces the comical role of Jeeves's feather-brained and frivolous employer Bertie.

Bertie wakes up hungover from the night before and relays on his faithful valet Jeeves for support and to keep him out of trouble. (Chadd Cawson/Citizen)

Theatre lovers will want to anchor in at the Chemainus Theatre Festival for another on stage comic adventure with *Jeeves at Sea*.

Vancouver based actor Bernard Cuffling, who originally hails from the UK, is excited to be back at Chemainus Theatre playing the straight man as he takes on the role of the lovable and loyal valet Jeeves for the fourth time as the theatre sails into its second show of their 30th anniversary season.

“Being in Chemainus is fantastic. It’s so relaxing to put on a show like this, what could be better?” said Cuffling. “I feel very comfortable because I know the character, and the lovely people who work here and he is such a fun character to play. It’s not an easy character because I have to be the straight guy and that also means that as an actor I can’t make a mistake, for instance if I were to drop a teaspoon, to me it kills the whole character, it’s like a house of cards collapsing so I really enjoy the challenge of Jeeves. This is our fourth one here, and they have all been crowd-pleasers.”

Based on the stories of P.G. Wodehouse and adapted for the stage by playwright Margaret Raether, the fourth Jeeves installment finds the devout manservant at sea aboard the Vanderley yacht tending to the needs of his employer, playful bachelor Bertie Wooster played by Brett Harris.

Harris, who also lives on the mainland, and comes from across the pond has played a myriad of roles with Chemainus Theatre in past productions such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Foreigner*, and *Million Dollar Quartet* and is excited to be embracing the role of Bertie for the first time. Harris has been acting since his early school days, and even studied at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts founded by Sir Paul McCartney.

“Bertie is a lot of fun, he’s just a frivolous and likeable guy,” said Harris. “He’s a bit daft but really nice. He’s almost like a child. He has this joy of life and is able to be in the present moment and enjoy everything that is happening around him but then ends up in situations that only get worse. At one point in the play he says ‘I’m in the soup again’ and he just keeps getting into these terrible situations. Every play that has been done with these two characters, there is always some sort of trouble that Wooster gets into and Jeeves has to save him every single time.”

This time is no exception, as Bertie wakes up feeling a little woozy after a night of carrying on and partying a tad too hard —to say Jeeves has his work cut out for him would be an understatement. Bertie and his best bud Sir Crumpworth ‘Crumpet’ (Antony Knight) take on disguises to ward off trouble on the ship. Waves of comedy ensue when Bertie, who is masquerading as a romance novelist, and Crumpet claiming to be his twin are challenged to a duel by a sinister German count (Ian Farthing). The count is out for some revenge after some late night drunken misadventures left him with a black eye.

While Jeeves does his best to keep an eye on the antics of his feather-brained aristocrat boss, Bertie has his eye on the pixieish heiress Lady Stella (Tiana Jung) who takes pleasure in stirring up trouble just for the joy of it. While Bertie ogles Stella through rose coloured glasses, Jeeves seems to see right through her, yet finds himself smitten with Stella's companion Miss Minerva Pilbeam (Erin Ormond) who has the task of keeping Stella out of trouble.

It takes a boatload of talent and all hands on deck to make sure that every Chemainus Theatre production is smooth sailing, which could not be done without its creative team which includes set designer Hans Saefkow, lighting designer Rebekah Johnson, sound design by Mark DuMez and Kraig Waye, and fight director Simon Fon.

At the helm is artistic director Mark DuMez who has been with Chemainus Theatre since 2009 .

"I've directed three [Jeeves plays], and Ian Farthing who is also in this show has directed one as well," said DuMez. "This is our fourth in the Jeeves franchise; it just seems like such a great fit with our audience, and the pre-sales indicate that they are responding to it yet again. It's also nice that Bernard who plays Jeeves has done every single show with us, and he is in the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame so it's kind of nice to have him on deck."

Will this nautical adventure end in chaos or nuptials, or will Jeeves get everything sorted and ship shape and save the day?

*Jeeves at Sea* is on stage at the Chemainus Theatre Festival from May 10 to June 2. Tickets starting from \$22 are available online at [chemainustheatre.ca](http://chemainustheatre.ca) or by calling the box office at 250-246-9820.

“I hope attendees have a great and fun connection not only with the characters, but also with the people around them that they are watching it with,” said DuMez. “It’s just a time to enjoy some hi-jinks and tomfoolery.”

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## ***About the Author: Chadd Cawson***

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