



Caroline Bell (Mary), Kenzie Delo (Charlie), and a horse named Blaze. The photo is a promo shot taken at the Shining Horizons Therapeutic Riding Association. The two actors are leading the play *Mary's Wedding*, opening in Saint John on Oct. 9. PHOTO: SUBMITTED

From Quispamsis to Germany: Quispamsis actor turning heads

JOSHUA FISCHLIN
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SAINT JOHN • When actress Caroline Bell was very young, she fell in love with “making people feel things,” so much so that it became an addiction.

“I get to feel them on stage, and share them with someone else, and have that resonate with them,” the 23-year-old said.

A Quispamsis product, Bell is gearing up for the opening night of the play, *Mary's Wedding*, in which she will be leading the theatrical charge as Mary. The production, put on by Atlantic Repertory Company (ARC) and directed by Stephen Tobias, is a “gorgeous, classic play,” Bell said, adding that it’s almost “Alice in Wonderland-y.”

Written by Stephen Massicotte, the tale takes place in Mary’s dreams, the night before her wedding to Charlie, who is played by Kenzie Delo of Nova Scotia – Bell said he is an amazing actor. It tells a story of their love, which she called “very sweet and relatable.” But, on top of that, there is a dark theme, as it takes place around the First World War, when many young men went off to fight, leaving loved ones behind, Bell said.

“You see gunfire, you see battles, you see all this,” she said, adding that in

between, they’re at tea parties and riding horses and falling in love.

She said it’s easy to step into the role of Mary, because she’s in a nightgown the entire time, and so Bell got to wear a “nighty” for most of the experience.

“Falling in love on stage, that’s one of the most fun things to do.”

Following its Saint John opening, *Mary's Wedding* will tour through the province, before heading to three German cities “and a triumphant final performance at the Canadian embassy in Paris,” a press release says.

When Tobias offered her the role of Mary, he started by asking if she had a passport, and if she’s ever left the country.

She answered “yes” to the first question, and “no” to the second.

“Then he’s just like, ‘you’re going to Germany.’”

Bell then sat in her bed at 3 a.m. reading the whole play, and cried her eyes out – it’s a little bit sad, she said.

“And then just freaked out that I was going to get to go places,” she said, adding that the Canadian Embassy show in Paris will be “next level.”

Bell said she was “really loud as a child,” and that acting was a way to funnel that energy.

“I always wanted to share things, do voices, and make people laugh... I was

a big jokester, for sure.”

She began dabbling in theatre at age nine or 10, at InterAction School of Performing Arts in Saint John. She acted throughout her time at Quispamsis Middle School and Kennebecasis Valley High School. She’s also been in the Saint John Theatre Company production of *Romeo and Juliette*, playing the female protagonist at the age of 14, she said.

Bell graduated from George Brown Theatre School in Toronto more than two years ago, and describes herself as a “fresh actress.”

“Going to theatre school is a risk, choosing the acting thing is a risk, but then after that, it’s like, every day is rejection, every day is working as a waitress at the old spaghetti factory, smelling like tomato sauce, and feeling like you’re not going to get to do anything.”

Now, she gets the chance to do something she loves, in a place that she loves, with people she has respected for years, which she said never happens to actors this young in their experience.

“It’s so lovely to be doing something that I would do for free, but it’s my job.

“I’m going to remember this for the rest of my life.”

Mary's Wedding is opening at the BMO Studio Theatre and will run from Oct. 9 to 11 at 7:30 p.m.