

HappyGoodThings Productions Presents

Sink or Swim



Childhood stories for adults!

Written & performed by: Beverley Elliott

Directed by: Lynna Goldhar Smith

Musical Direction by: Bill Costin

“Beverley Elliott is magnetic. It’s hard not to feel disappointed every time she walks off the stage.”

-Erika Thorkelson, Vancouver Sun

“... an amazingly generous performer. Icing on this cake is her gorgeous voice.”

-Jo Ledingham, Vancouver Courier

ABOUT SINK OR SWIM:

Sink or Swim, Beverley Elliott’s poignant, playful and achingly relatable journey through her early years in rural Ontario, was voted 2016’s Pick of the Vancouver Fringe Festival, and enjoyed additional, highly successful runs throughout B.C., Canada in the Fall of 2017. Acclaimed and loved by critics and audiences alike, this gem of a production is a delight from start to finish!

Known to fans around the world for her recurring role as “Granny” on ABC’s hit series, *Once Upon A Time*, Elliott’s production of ***Sink or Swim*** is the enchanting prequel to her 2014 Pick of the Vancouver Fringe Festival show, *...didn’t see that coming*. “It’s *Little House on the Prairie* meets *Lord of the Flies*,” says Elliott, as she navigates uncharted waters, first surprises, big adventures, and the betrayals and epiphanies that shape us all into the adults we become. Brimming with songs and stories, Elliott’s utterly engaging romp through her formative years reveals the fears and foibles of five year old “Smelly Elliott” and her experiences of trading the safety of the family farm for the daunting one room schoolhouse, classroom bullies and the choppy waters of Boiler Beach, Ontario.

Directing this enchanting production is multi-disciplinary theatre artist and award-winning songwriter, Lynna Goldhar Smith, founding member of Vancouver's Wet Ink Collective. Elliott met Goldhar Smith through Wet Ink over five years ago. "I was part of the collective over four years" she says. "I joined this all women group and started writing autobiographical short stories which brought them to laughter and tears. Encouraged by their responses, I decided to put on a show. I had written so many stories that they suggested I organize them by themes." One collection became ...*didn't see that coming*. Another grouping was the genesis for ***Sink or Swim***, covering experiences from the age of age five which Elliott recounts with comedic grace and cinematic clarity. Bill Costin returns to accompany Elliott as musical director. They have worked together in the cabaret/nightclub scene, including many shows at the OASIS. "In Bill, I have found my Barry Manilow," she smiles. "His theatrical instincts are impeccable." They have penned two of the production's five original songs, *Green Grass* and *Busy*. *Little Boat*, a moving ballad about the power of love, written by Elliott and Edwin Coppard, is included on Elliott's recently released CD, *Sunday Morning*.

A truly stellar production, with a lustrous performance by Beverley Elliott, ***Sink or Swim*** is a must-see!

CRITICS RAVE ABOUT ***SINK OR SWIM***:

"Beverley Elliott's ***Sink or Swim*** is a charmer. Full of warmth and humour, Elliott takes you back to a simpler time in Canada's bucolic landscape. Hers happens to be in Ontario, but it could be any rural town or farm. Even if you've never had the experience of a one-room school, you'll be brought there with Elliott's original songs and stories for adults. These are evocative tales and songs with wonderful lyrics. Add her superb singing and you know you're "in the swim" with this sweet reverie."

-*Entertainment Vancouver*

"Subtitled 'childhood stories for adults', Bev Elliott's new solo show – with onstage keyboards and vocal harmonies from Bill Costin – celebrates her childhood in rural Perth County, Ontario. Although there's a grouchy teacher and some bullies in her kindergarten and grade one classes (she's dubbed "smelly Elliott" after she pees herself in the one-room schoolhouse), this is a pretty idyllic journey and an utterly charming show. Elliott is a lovely actress and a very fine singer – and, it turns out, a damn good songwriter, too. She has co-written six of the show's seven original songs, all of them melodic, evocative and lyrically clever. Some great projections by Jordan Watkins complete the package. I would have preferred a smaller, more intimate venue. But if you want to be charmed out of your pants by a total pro, see this show."

-*Jerry Wasserman, vancouverplays.com*

Beverley Elliott's ***Sink or Swim***, produced by HappyGoodThings Productions, was a glimpse into the life of a child in rural Ontario that made me reminiscent of a time I never experienced. And it did it perfectly. The highs and lows were unexpected and evoked real emotion in the older members of the audience who seemed to be reliving their own childhoods as Beverley re-lived hers. It was lovely, and perfectly acted and sung by Beverley. Do yourself a favour and spend an hour and a bit in a simpler time, one filled with music, laughter, and the politics of riding a school bus.

- *Hannah Madden-Krasnick, Merely Players*

Read full review here: <https://merelyplayersyvr.com/2017/11/19/sink-of-swim-is-a-one-woman-win/>

Beverley Elliott's multifaceted talent brings so much to the stage. The writer, creates engaging, fun, but believable stories to tell. The actress, brilliantly makes herself ageless and any age...

-*Jay Minter, On the List*

Read full review here: <http://www.jayminter.com/sink-swim-beverley-elliott-gateway-theatre/>

This is not a play you watch. This is something you experience, with all your memories and all your heart. The quality of Elliott's creation and performance is so great that you don't notice the technique, only the story that sweeps you into her Grade 1 life. You enter a world and long-forgotten memories jump to mind as the story tugs at your heart strings and jiggles your funny bones. The universality of experiences astounded me and my fellow theatre-goers. This is stage craft at its finest. It doesn't get better than this, anywhere.
- Lorraine Graves, *Richmond Sentinel*

Read full review here: <http://www.richmondsentinel.ca/Lateststories/1547/fine-theatre-full-of-flavour-and-memories>

ABOUT HAPPYGOODTHINGS PRODUCTIONS:

HappyGoodThings Productions was formed in the summer of 2014 when Beverley Elliott was writing and rehearsing her play, *...didn't see that coming*, for the Vancouver Fringe Festival. The rehearsal room was filled with laughter, creativity, music, and inclusivity. Absolute joy. From this, the name of HappyGoodThings was born. It encompasses the feeling of working in the world this way. The company's mandate is to be happy and create good things. ***Sink or Swim*** is the second play to come out of this playful group of artists.



Beverley Elliott charms in ***Sink or Swim!***
Photo credit: Tony Chamberlist

ABOUT BEVERLEY ELLIOTT (WRITER, PERFORMER):



Beverley Elliott grew up watching *The Carol Burnett Show* and dreaming of being on TV. Born in the booming metropolis of Listowel, Ontario, famous for its Campbell's Soup factory, Beverley shocked her parents in her 20s by giving up a glamorous secretarial career to become a singer and actor.

Her path to fame and fortune began with a number of exciting opportunities, including a stint at the Pacific National Exhibition in a theatre sports show called *The Stock Report* dressed as a chicken.

For the past 30 years, Beverley has been based in Vancouver and has over 100 film and TV credits. She is well known around the world for her recurring role as "Granny" on ABC's hit series, *Once Upon A Time*. Other film credits include Clint Eastwood's Academy Award-winning *Unforgiven* (Clint personally thanked her in front of billions of people at the Oscars!), *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*, *The Santa Clause 2*, *Bye Bye Blues*, and *Who's Harry Crumb*. Beverley has also been a TV series regular in *Mysterious Ways*, *Harper's Island*, *Hope Island*, *Kingdom Hospital*, and *Bordertown*. Lately, she has starred in a string of HALLMARK and LIFETIME movies.

In addition to her film and TV work, Beverley is a successful singer and songwriter. She describes her music as earthy, inspiring folk with a pop twist. Beverley has released several CDs of original music, including: *Yellow Dress* (solo), *The Sweetest Day* (with her group, "August"), *Sunday Morning*, and two children's CDs – *Dream Child* and *Magic Carpet Ride*. Her children's CDs have been used to soothe sick kids at children's health care facilities, including Ronald McDonald House and Canuck Place. Beverley performs regularly in concert, at festivals and at benefits. She was seen at the 2010 Olympics and Paralympics bouncing around and entertaining children with her group, "Beverley and the Billionaires".

Her theatrical career has taken her across Canada to the Centaur Theatre in Montreal, the Blyth Festival in Ontario, PTE in Winnipeg, the Globe Theatre in Regina, Western Canada Theatre Company in Kamloops, The Gateway Theatre in Richmond, and the Arts Club, Firehall and Touchstone Theatres in Vancouver. She played the starring role of Canadian country music icon Lucille Starr in the musical, *Back To You, The Life and Music of Lucille Star*, and has completed 5 tours with the internationally successful *Mom's The Word*. She has written two, one-woman shows -*didn't see that coming* (2014's Pick of the Vancouver Fringe Festival) and *Sink or Swim* (2016's Pick of the Vancouver Fringe Festival). She has performed both shows at various venues in Alberta and throughout B.C.

Beverley is highly sought after as an MC. She has hosted large events including the 2014 Vancouver Leo Awards, the 2012 Ontario Practical Nurses Convention in Toronto and many others. Her comedic songs about the Vancouver film industry brought down the house for two years running at the Leo Awards.

Beverley has upcoming bookings around the world at fan conventions, promoting the show, *Once Upon A Time*, and meeting the fabulous fans.

For more information on Beverley Elliott, please visit www.beverleyelliott.com.

ABOUT LYNNA GOLDHAR SMITH (DIRECTOR, DRAMATURGE):



Lynna Goldhar Smith is an eclectic artist of mixed ancestry living and working on Coast Salish Territory. She is a painter, performer and playwright and a founding member of Wet Ink Collective – a playwright based theatre company supporting new plays by female playwrights in Vancouver. After graduating from Studio 58 and the California Institute of the Arts, Lynna worked extensively throughout North America as an actor and director. She has directed 44 plays, including 13 solo shows that toured to the UK and Europe. Her paintings have been shown in 11 countries. Lynna has written for youth and children’s television, including *Sesame Street*. She is proud to have directed three sold out Vancouver Fringe Hits – *Dirty Old Woman* by Loretta Seto, *The Distance Between Newfoundland and Toronto* by Dolores Drake, and ***Sink or Swim*** by Beverley Elliott. Lynna is always thrilled to work with Beverley and her wonderful creative team.

ABOUT BILL COSTIN (MUSICAL DIRECTOR):



This is Bill Costin’s fourth one woman show. A pianist trained in classical and jazz, Bill has worked as a musical director, arranger, composer and/or accompanist for award winning veteran actress Miriam Margoyles’, *Dickens’ Women* (The Cultch), *The Sound of Music* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Gateway Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Wang Dang Doodle*, *Billy Bishop Goes to War* (Arts Club Theatre), *Forever Plaid* (Follows Latimer) and *Bah Humbug* (Axis Theatre Company). He performs accompanying singers, musical theatre, cabarets, jazz combos, dance concerts, audition sessions, classical duets and trios, and solo. Bill is also a piano instructor and vocal coach. He has accompanied Michael Buble, Dal Richards, Ranee Lee, Ann Mortifee, Gillian Campbell, Ruth Nichol, Cailin Stadnyk, Denis Simpson, Sibel Thrasher, Susinn McFarlen, Jay Brazeau, Laurie Murdoch, Tom Pickett and Tom Arntzen. Bill thoroughly enjoys working with Beverley Elliott as every performance is truly fun.