

Sink or Swim



Childhood stories for adults!

"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

HappyGoodThings Productions is thrilled to submit Beverley Elliott's poignant, playful and achingly relatable production of ***Sink or Swim*** for consideration for the 9th annual United Solo Festival. Voted 2016's Pick of the Vancouver Fringe Festival – and with additional, highly successful runs throughout B.C., Canada in the Fall of 2017 – this audience favourite and critically acclaimed show is a standout!

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's 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 delightful romp through her early 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, schoolroom 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 accompanies Elliott as musical director for their second official theatre show. 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 CD, *Sunday Morning*.

A truly stellar production, with a lustrous performance by Beverley Elliott, ***Sink or Swim*** will delight audiences from start to finish!

SINK OR SWIM



Beverley Elliott shines in her one-woman show, ***Sink or Swim!***
Photo credit: Tony Chamberlist

Previews:

North Shore News – Maria Spitale-Leisk:

<http://www.nsnews.com/entertainment/theatre/memories-float-through-time-in-sink-or-swim-1.23085748>

Georgia Straight:

<https://www.straight.com/arts/995126/sink-or-swim-makes-splash>

Richmond News – Daisy Xiong:

<http://www.richmond-news.com/arts/sink-or-swim-in-the-sea-of-life-1.23094727>

Richmond Sentinel – Lorraine Graves:

<http://www.richmondsentinel.ca/Lateststories/1489/gateway%E2%80%99s-sink-or-swimhopes-to-sink-into-our-hearts>

Vancouver Presents:

<https://www.vancouverpresents.com/theatre/live-beverley-elliott-company-sink-swim/>



Beverley Elliott charms the audience with her warmth and humour in ***Sink or Swim!***
Photo credit: Tony Chamberlist

SINK OR SWIM

Critics rave:

“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://merelyplayersvvr.com/2017/11/19/sink-of-swim-is-a-one-woman-win/>

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>

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/>

SINK OR SWIM

Audience feedback:

“Beverley Elliott’s *Sink or Swim* was one of the finest, most thought provoking, ‘walk down memory lane’ productions that I, along with the other two guests, have ever experienced. We conversed about it on our journey home, and have shared with others in conversations since about how entertaining her program was, yet how she punctuated it with current societal concerning issues. Well done, Beverley, how you combined visuals, lyrics, and score to tell the story. We need more of what you offer!”

“Lynda and I enjoyed the performance very much. We both related to many of the childhood experiences portrayed. This school was much more advanced to the one I experienced for most of elementary school - one room country school, no running water, no telephone, wood stove, and, the unsupervised schoolyard. Today, much of childhood experience reflects little self reliance, sharing, caring, responsibility and respect for others.”

“Both my friend and I really enjoyed the performance. Beverley has a good singing voice, also.”

“My friends and I really enjoyed the Friday night show. It was very entertaining and engaging. Great choice!”

“I loved the show. Brought back memories of so many similar experiences. Really warm and uplifting.”

“Thoroughly enjoyed the show. Beverley is so talented and a wonderful storyteller and singer. Bravo - great show.”

“*Sink or Swim* was the best show in a long time!! (Beverley) is an amazing actress/singer.”

“Loved it! Beverley is so talented...felt like I was there in that schoolroom with her.”

“Thank you to Beverley and her team for last night’s show. It was inspiring and provided many emotions from laughter to tears. Very talented! Thank you to all the volunteers and those behind the scenes for the hard work expended to make it a great performance.”

“*Sink or Swim* was a great play. We are a small group of 5 season ticket holders, and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. Regardless of the age of the audience, I think everyone could and did relate to the story. It was entertaining, fun, poignant, and so well acted, not to mention (Beverley’s) great singing voice. It was a great addition to the season ticket portfolio.”

“My wife and I thought that *Sink or Swim* was excellent. Lots of humour with a touch of reality. Kids are not always kind to each other. It certainly did bring back lots of memories. This show is definitely a must see.”

“Wonderful play. We thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. Great music, singing, slide show and comedy. Thank you for bringing this to the Gateway Theatre.”

“Beverley Elliott gave a fabulous performance. I enjoyed the stories she told and recalled memories of my early days at school. The evening was a success. Comments heard on leaving the theatre were very favourable. I am a volunteer at Gateway so am fortunate to enjoy many wonderful productions. *Sink or Swim* is certainly up at the top of the list.”

“I saw the show last night and loved it!!”

“Beverley is an extremely talented playwright, singer and actress.”

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“This was a very enjoyable show and well-suited to the intimate space. Beverley Elliott is a talented writer and performer and has a beautiful singing voice. The most powerful tool she has is her ability to wake up memories that have been stored away so that the audience is re-living those childhood moments. We were all inwardly cheering when she got away with lying! I'm sure most of the female patrons could really relate to the pantyhose incident. She has such warmth as a person that members of the audience can really feel part of it all. The projections on the screen were a good addition; otherwise, the simplicity of the set was perfect for the presentation. This was the second Gateway presentation of Beverley Elliott we have seen - and we hope she will be writing and performing another.”

“I saw the performance at the Gateway this afternoon. I had tears in my eyes sometimes. Beverley's life story was my life's story. Raised on a farm with corn, fruit trees, chickens and cows. Attending a one-room school. Riding to school on a bus. And I related to her story of the teacher. I taught in a one-room school - grades kindergarten to grade eight. So I loved the stories of Beverley's teacher. I wanted to run up to Beverley at the end of the performance and give her a hug!! Thank you Gateway!!”

“This was an absolutely wonderful show. Beverley Elliott and Bill Costin were perfect. Thanks for producing a show that the audience can connect to.”

“Our group thought ***Sink or Swim*** was very good ... and we are a tough crowd to please.”

“Just loved the show! Looking forward to your December play.”

“Enjoyed the show very much!! Both my sister & I had seen (Beverley's) previous one-woman show, too.”

“The show brought back many memories of my first years in school. Beverley Elliott has that rare ability to make you sad or pensive and then in the next breath make you laugh. She has a strong and melodic singing voice. A beautiful production that whizzes by so fast that the 75 minutes of the play seems much less. A great evening of live theatre. So much better than vegging out in front of the TV.”

“It was my husband's childhood! (Beverley) is a lovely performer and the support for her musically and visually was great!”



Beverley Elliott holds the audience in the palms of her hands in ***Sink or Swim!***

Photo credit: Tony Chamberlist