

**Amherst Leisure Services Community Theater is excited to announce *Peter Pan* for our January 2019 musical production. We invite you to read below for our thoughts about making this choice for our 26<sup>th</sup> major production.**

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**A Message to the Community about our choice of *Peter Pan* for our 2019 Production**

When the ALSCT board began discussing the possibility of choosing *Peter Pan* for our 2019 show, we found ourselves in a quandary. On the surface, *Peter Pan* is an ideal choice for us. It has lead and ensemble parts for children, teens, and adults. It is a classic theater work that appeals to audiences of all ages. It has beautiful music, poignant moments, and plenty of humor. Yet it also has the truly problematic element of including characters described as ‘Indians’ who are portrayed in ways that are condescending, racist, and unacceptable. While many of us grew up cherishing *Peter Pan* for its many wonderful components, we realized that we could not feel comfortable presenting it as written. We made the decision to present *Peter Pan* in 2019 but agreed that we would make whatever adaptations are necessary for us to be proud to present this classic.

ALSCT has an interesting history with *Peter Pan*. We first produced it in January 1996 as our first major musical to be performed at Bowker Auditorium at UMass. For that production a decision was made to remove all references to ‘Indians’ and to substitute instead the make-believe, fairy-like creatures called Spriggans. Below you can read an excerpt from our 1996 playbill explaining that choice. Seven years later, in January 2003, we presented the show again – this time as originally written. Both productions had successful runs and were enjoyed by our audiences.

Sixteen years after our second production of *Peter Pan*, and twenty-two years after first presenting it, ALSCT finds itself full-circle in its philosophy about how to present this show. Our 2019 production will not include ‘Indians’, although we do not know yet exactly what will be in their stead. We are confident that our creative team will develop a production that we, and our audiences, can be proud of. We are grateful for the continued support of all who love and appreciate the theatrical arts and who cherish the ways in which theater challenges us to think, to create, and to grow.

ALSCT Board of Directors

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***A Note on the Spriggans from the 1996 ALSCT Peter Pan Playbill***

*by David Marks, Director and Halina Radosz, Dramaturg*

*At the time the play was first performed in 1904, the use of pirates and ‘Indians’ was merely a response to the games of fancy and make-believe that the [Davies]\* boys, and many other British children, would engage in. The purpose that they serve, that of fanciful characters who add to the Lost Children’s games and adventures, is an important factor. In an effort to return these characters closer to how they were envisioned by Barrie, yet that will work today in America, the ‘Indians’ have become Spriggans.*

*Spriggans, as described in the Encyclopedia of Fairies by Katherine Briggs, are members of the Elfin-tribe and serve as the protectors of the Fairies. Spriggans are believed to be ‘the ghosts of*

*the old giants and though they are usually very small, they can swell to enormous size'. Like many supernatural creatures, they are more mischievous than dangerous and enjoy frightening humans, affecting the weather, and also engage in 'stealing' children – a game at which they and the Lost Children play. Spriggans become a crafty nemesis for the bumbling pirates and wonderful playmates for the Children. It is this spirit of children's games that they recreate.*

*\* The Davies boys were the children with whom James Barrie spent a lot of time and for whom, and partly about whom, 'Peter Pan' was written.*