

Conference. Event brings together immigrant job seekers and employers

The spotlight will shine Tuesday on Ottawa's population of highly skilled immigrant workers and their importance to the city's economy.

The seventh annual Employer Council of Champions Summit, hosted by Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) takes place March 18-19 at the National Arts Centre.

"HIO was created in 2006 in response to a growing need to address the use of immigrant talent," says Henry Akanko, head of HIO. Akanko explains that the focus of the organization is to look at why there are gaps in the workforce between highly trained individuals and employers who need certain highly valued skill sets.

"The summit is to bring together employers and other stakeholder to exchange info about the integration of skilled immigrants into the workforce," says Akanko.

There will be a panel discussion at the summit focusing on the theme of "Leveraging Immigrant Talent to Grow and



Kelly McGahey, senior manager, stakeholder relations, for Hire Immigrants Ottawa

NEIL VALOIS PHOTOGRAPHY/CONTRIBUTED

Diversify Ottawa's Economy." After, a reception will provide the opportunity for 50 skilled immigrants to network with potential employers.

"Our purpose is to recognize promising practices that organizations are implementing to make use of the skills that immigrants are bringing to the workforce," says Akanko. An award ceremony, happening on Wednesday, will celebrate organizations that promote diversity in their workplace.

TANYA KIRNISHNI/FOR METRO

Glebe theatre to put modern twist on *The Dumb Waiter*

On stage. Surrealist suspense thriller-comedy gets a gender swap

When Harold Pinter wrote *The Dumb Waiter* in 1957, he tailored its only two roles for male actors.

But Third Wall, a theatre company in the Glebe, is known to add a modern twist to classic plays. So its version of the dark comedy will star two women when it hits the stage on March 21.

It's a twist that's less planned and more to do with a decision to pick two "very talented" actors, explains Jillian Keene, who does media relations for Third Wall.

"The play is not a statement," she said. "It's just that the two characters in this play happen to be women."

So apart from the characters' genders, Keene is stay-



Kristina Watt, left, and Mary Ellis will star in *The Dumb Waiter* from March 21-30. RICHARD ELLIS/CONTRIBUTED

ing tight-lipped about the nature of the play.

All she will say is the roughly hour-long production centres on two people who are staying underground someplace in Birmingham, England, and they are awaiting orders.

"The characters are fascinating and Pinter's got this

amazing ability to leave a lot of questions hanging in the air," added Mary Ellis, who is co-starring in the production with Kristina Watt, "which makes it additionally challenging because there's a lot of stuff that he doesn't really answer for you and you have to kind of find your way through it."

Third Wall is partnering with 100 Watt Productions and The Acting Company to bring this play to the Avalon Studio from March 21-30.

It starts at 7:30 p.m., with additional 5 p.m. showings on Saturdays.

Tickets start at \$25 and are available at thirdwall.com. LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

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