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?The Wonder of It All? opens theatre season with laughter, heart and honesty

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The Wonder of It All returned to Theatre Orangeville last week with a resounding success, kicking off the 2025 season with a full house. Originally a one-act production, the show has been expanded into two acts, and the extra depth only strengthens its emotional impact. The story follows Kingsley, played by Mark Weatherley, and Charmaine, played by Monique Lund ? two people from completely different worlds who meet by chance.

Kingsley is a laid-back musician who performs at house parties, while Charmaine is a driven scientist and activist, defined by her ambition and structure. They are opposites in so many ways - and yet, as fate would have it, they fall in love. One ukulele serenade turns into many, and soon they're living a fantasy-perfect love story that feels like a dream come true.

But dreams can burn out.

As their children grow up and their marriage turns into routine, the spark they have begins to dim. Kingsley and Charmaine, stop listening, and stop trying. The warmth of their connection turns to quiet resentment and open hostility as both question who they've become ? and whether their marriage can survive the distance between them.

At the heart of the play is a heartfelt message we should all remember: nothing in life blooms without care. Kingsley's attempt at gardening becomes a metaphor for their relationship. His struggling rose bush, neglected and dying, is a metaphor for the love he's stopped nurturing with Charmaine. With some perfectly timed neighborly advice, Kingsley realizes that his problem is his own belief that he doesn't deserve her. Like his roses, his marriage has suffered from neglect, not incompatibility.

This revelation is the emotional centerpiece of the play.

The Wonder of It All delivers this emotion with blends of heartfelt emotion and sharp, genuine humour. The script is filled with moments that get the audience laughing. Kingsley's awkward charm, Charmaine's exasperated precision, and their clashing personalities create a dynamic that feels believable and earned as their marriage continues.

When the play takes a serious turn, it does so with grace. The tone deepens without ever feeling too heavy to take in, and the laughter gives way to an honest reflection on love, aging, and self-worth. By the time the couple's relationship reaches its breaking point, the shift from comedy to poignancy feels entirely natural ? like watching a long conversation that suddenly turns quiet when the truth hits home.

What makes this production shine is its performances. Weatherley and Lund bring authenticity and depth to their roles, capturing both the humor and heartbreak of a long marriage.

Weatherley's Kingsley is refreshingly real. He's awkward, self-conscious, and often lost for words at the worst possible moments, which makes him compelling to watch on stage. He's not some cool romantic lead; he's a vulnerable man stumbling through his emotions. Weatherley portrays this with honesty and restraint, giving the audience someone they can truly relate to. When Kingsley falters, the audience hurts with him, and when he finally opens up, we can feel the release with him.

Lund's Charmaine, in opposite fashion, commands the stage with energy and precision. Every movement and line carries deliberate intention. Her performance is confidence and drive ? the restless energy of someone who needs to be moving forward. Lund captures Charmaine's frustration at feeling stuck, her instinct to fix things even when that instinct can cause more harm than good. She's not always right, but she's always believable.

The contrast between Kingsley and Charmaine extends into their costume design. Kingsley's simple outfits mirror his insecurities

and self-doubt, while Charmaine's varied wardrobe ? from a green vest covered in colorful buttons to a striking white leather jacket ? reflects her individuality and confidence. Even before they speak, their clothing tells their story.

Through it all, the performance is grounded by a beautifully designed set. Front and center is a gigantic Ukulele, taking up a third of the stage. This instrument is the grounding element of the story. It's how Kingsley and Charmain met, and it's a center point to Kingsley's character and self-esteem. For Charmaine, it's the symbol of the man she fell in love with, and a reminder of what their marriage has lost.

Flanked on both sides are giant flowers and other plants that, at first, don't have a clear meaning. But as the story progresses, they become a new center point for Kingsley as he takes up gardening. He tends to them instead of his marriage, not realizing he should be nurturing both.

The set design is used by the actors on stage instead of just being background pieces, making everything pop much more to audiences, and makes the entire theatre feel like a fantasy.

Together, these performances create something genuine. The Wonder of It All balances laughter and heartbreak with grace, delivering a story that feels personal. It's a story about what happens after ?happily ever after,? and the work it takes to keep that promise alive.

The Wonder of It All is playing at Theatre Orangeville until Oct. 26. Tickets can be found online at https://www.theatreorangeville.ca.