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Theatre Orangeville brings ?Bed and Breakfast? to the Opera House

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As spring invites us back to Theatre Orangeville's next production, we are to be treated to ?Bed and Breakfast? by Mark Crawford, opening March 13 and running to March 30.

A tale of two gay guys, living in Toronto, when one of them inherits his much-loved auntie's home in small-town Ontario. Do we sell? Do we keep it as a dearly remembered property and, then, what do we do with it?

Once the math is done, they admit this city's life is too expensive. Keeping the house wins and they make their plans to move. There are many considerations and unknowns which will have to be discovered in due course. A leap of faith takes the lead.

?It's a residence in a Victorian fief,? quipped Patrick Arnott, director of the show. ?They are not able to afford Toronto any more.?

The play charts the progress of being gay in a small town ? about the adjustment, surprises and not necessarily everything they expected.

Arnott was seated in the rehearsal hall with Adrian Shepherd-Gawinski, in the role of Brett and Warren Macaulay as Drew, from where they ?Zoomed? an interview with the Citizen earlier this week.

Giving another hint about the plot, Macaulay informed us that, ?Drew is estranged from his family. Once he came out, as a young man in his small town out west, his family rejected him.?

While Brett spent plenty of his childhood days at his auntie's house, Drew is also familiar with how a small-town culture might look.

These three gentlemen have already had the pleasure of performing Bed and Breakfast at Lighthouse Theatre in Port Dover and they are excited with this second chance to bring it to another audience here in Orangeville. Gawinski is welcomed back to Theatre Orangeville after some time, following his parts in Screwball Comedy and Queen Milli of Galt.

Macaulay is making his debut here.

He said about the play. ?Mark loves addressing issues in homophobia. There is so much humour but not backing off either ? so much heart. It makes me feel seen.?

They are delighted to do ?Bed and Breakfast? again for the beauty, warmth and cleverness of how well it is written, and how thoughtfully constructed.

?This is masterful comedy,? Arnott commented, ?invested in characters we grow to know and love.?

These two characters are far from isolated in this story, for there comes a slew of others, twenty-plus in fact, whom the two actors on stage deliver all through the tale. Ten and eleven each, ?without any props or costume changes,? their director pointed out.

It is the attitudes, commentary, reactions, guidance and all the rest of this small-town population that Brett and Drew must get to know and learn how to win their approbation, at least.

Macaulay and Gawinski play them and everyone. Their director smiled like the ringmaster of any successful circus at his actors' skill to manage it all.

?Such an array of characters,? Arnott chimed, ?It's a great responsibility with the changes to go deeper into their parts. Each of them has had to be discussed and understood.?

The play challenges assumptions about people and the actors that have to portray them. They are asking the audience to think, ?how do you see people??

Yet, this play is not a simple loop, we were told. These two each have a personal journey and there is real change.

Once Brett and Drew finally move into their new home, there are discussions and opinions about what to do with the house and the long and short of it is they decide to open a bed and breakfast establishment.

How many of the multi-characters rest there? We will have to see the show to find out.

For playwright, Mark Crawford, there is always the conversation: ?It is not as simple as the guys show up and settle in ? it's much more complicated,? said Arnott.

How to manage the multi-character quick change, one person from a very different one, was a question. There are exercises to learn the energy of each role, moving the body into a different shape so that the audience is instantly aware of who that is. It is an interesting skill to develop. For Macaulay, his approach is starting slowly, over time finding each voice and shape and making them real. For both of these actors, this play presents them with more characters each than they have carried before.

?It is Virtuosic!? declared their director.

There are reasons galore to hurry and get your tickets for this show and some were listed for us.

Before everything came the idea: we could use a lot more empathy, challenging ourselves about our assumptions. There are all kinds of people in this town. The audience is taken on this journey to put themselves in the shoes of others and to understand each other better.

Gawinski tells us it is so entertaining to put all these ideas into this play.

?It is fun,? he said. ?There are incredible jokes.?

For Arnott, it is the chance to experience a beautiful example of seeing the magic of the theatre.

For more details and to purchase tickets, please see the following from Theatre Orangeville:

?Due to the recent cyber attack on the Town of Orangeville, Theatre Orangeville's emails and phone lines have been affected - BUT FEAR NOT! Their ticketing and patron data has not been affected!?

You can visit the lovely folks at the box office in person at 87 Broadway, Orangeville, or you can purchase your tickets online at www.theatreorangeville.ca as normal.

They do have a temporary phone number that you can call for tickets, which is 519-938-7584. You can also reach out via email at their temporary email which is theatreorangeville@gmail.com.