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Theatre Orangeville presents ?Bed and Breakfast;? Being ?out? in a small town

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The story of ?Bed and Breakfast? begins in mild tones, a chance to meet Brett and Drew who live together as a gay couple in a tiny downtown Toronto apartment. We find them charming and amusing as they make plans for what comes next in their search to buy a house when they are interrupted by the news that one of Brett's favourite relatives ? his Aunt Maggie ? has suddenly died in a car accident.

The funeral is held near her home in a small Ontario town, where Brett spent many happy summer days as a child. After the funeral, his father informs Brett that she has left her house to him.

?Bed and Breakfast? is on at Theatre Orangeville now and running to March 30, with Adrian Shepherd-Gawinski as Brett and Warren Macaulay as Drew. Shepherd-Gawinski is returning to Theatre Orangeville after some years when he joined the cast for separate runs of Screwball Comedy and Queen Milli of Galt. Welcome to Warren Macaulay making his debut here.

The choices this inheritance opens to Brett and Drew take us on a journey to remember, whereas their latest offer to buy in Toronto was seriously outbid ? out of the blue ? they find themselves owners of their own home.

A boon they might feel yet, it is not in the city but as it is in a small town, attitudes toward their openly gay relationship might prove difficult.

Playwright Mark Crawford does not pull any punches about this; he writes the story with craft and humour, drawing us into loving this couple and accepting wholeheartedly who they are.

This very funny play is host to ? count ?em ? 21 characters whom we begin to meet as soon Brett and Drew arrive in Aunt Maggie's town. They vary in nature and approach; they are each quite comical but the magic is in the clever writing and the astonishing rapidity with which Shepherd-Gawinski and Macaulay play every one of them. From the baker arriving daily with wonderful treats to the hopeless teenager who says, ?I donno.? to everything, the scope and fun these multi-changes create have audiences ringing the hall with their laughter.

There are ladies in the cast ? one of whom is pregnant and these two actors let us know with real clarity whom we are seeing, with each individual's stance, voice and look. No props assist in this whirlwind. All they have to keep the continuity are their skill and considerable talent.

The exchanges go on as the two men and the townspeople begin to become acquainted and even friends. Yet, with honesty, the playwright admits to the mixed feelings such a blend might realize, leaving Brett and Drew to wonder, to struggle on and off, whether they can stay in their new home or be better off back in the more cosmopolitan city.

What entices them to stay, in addition to the fact of actually possessing the place outright is the idea they have of turning it into a Bed and Breakfast place. There is much to be done by way of renovations but the growing reality that this could be their new business is exciting. They are keen to establish it in this small town, which pleases nearly everyone.

Then, there is a hate crime, an attack on their home, ugly words painted across a wall.

Between Brett and Drew and within the community are anguish and anger but to learn how they all deal with this, just the two of them carrying the debate among the many is to see comic skill at its best. Best to come and see this terrific show for yourselves.

As director, Stewart Arnott, along with Shepherd-Gawinski and Macaulay brought this play originally to the Lighthouse Festival

Theatre in Port Dover. In addition to staging it this time here in Orangeville, where all the actors love to come, there is the joy of re-mounting it for Theatre Orangeville audiences, the chance to expand and even re-think some of the characters.

Bed and Breakfast is a somewhat complicated production with the large number of those characters being played only by the two actors. It is a lot to learn but doing it for the second time has given them the genuine pleasure of digging deeper into those voices, gestures and minds.

Arnott has done a tidy job of keeping the flow moving in a way that maintains cohesion while letting the comedy shine.

This time around, simple geometry encases the set of ?Aunt Maggie's Bed and Breakfast,? designed by William Chesney, whose bio tells of his creating set designs for more than 250 productions spanning a career of over forty years.

Essential to any production, the lighting for Bed and Breakfast is designed by Wendy Lundgren, returning to Theatre Orangeville, while Tim Lindsay debuted as sound designer.

If seeing is believing, be sure to get your tickets for this show, for its dazzling feat of comic acting. When viewed at Theatre Orangeville's recent Starlight Gala, at the end, the audience positively bounced to their feet for a standing ovation.

For tickets, go to www.theatreorangeville.ca or call the lovely folks at the Opera House Box Office at 519-938-7584. Please note this is a change from the box office's usual number.

They love visitors at 87 Broadway.