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Theatre Orangeville presents new play ?The Wedding Party,? a hilariously dysfunctional comedy running until May 3: review

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Weddings, family gatherings ? they hold the potential to reunite distant relatives, old friends, share memories, and make new ones.

They also have the ability to remind you as to why you don't speak to or see certain relatives anymore, for better or for worse.

The Wedding Party , Theatre Orangeville's most recent production, sought to put that on full display and bring some laughs to some potentially unpleasant memories, and it works in all the right ways.

The plot follows a marriage and joining of families from two very different social classes. On one side, you have the affluent family of the groom, who live and breathe money and privilege, and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on this wedding to make it exactly how they wanted it. On the other hand, the bride's family is not wealthy; they are average, working-class people who have never seen this much money on display. On the surface, it's friendly banter and smiles all around - initially, anyway.

Things quickly devolve as both families clash over how the wedding's finer details will be executed. They start to assert their own views on how the wedding should be carried out, according to their own visions of marriage and love.

The snide remarks, indirect sarcasm and insults start off extremely subtle, sometimes even flying beneath notice, and feel all too painfully relatable for those of us who have lived through similar situations.

Things continue to escalate as the play progresses, and the families begin acting against each other outright for influence and take cheap shots to satisfy their egos.

No one character is morally right, which makes it all the more immersive to see relatable, flawed human beings clash over a wedding that is not theirs because they feel inadequate or believe their way is right.

Despite the venom that you can feel coming off the stage, it's all done with great taste, as humour is close behind or layered in to make sure serious moments don't take away from the absurdity of the wedding. The story is funny, heartfelt and sometimes tough to watch, but it feels real, potentially a little too real.

What really sells the production is the extremely talented cast, who brought these characters to life in a way that sometimes you forget they are characters.

In particular, David Leyshon had a difficult role to play in portraying twins Jack Sr., the father of the groom, and Tony, the uncle. Both characters are radically different from each other: one is the rich, snobby brother, and the other is more rational and down-to-earth.

Leyshon did a phenomenal job giving these characters unique personalities, from Jack Sr's more uptight, arrogant demeanour to Tony's more grounded, casual attitude. Even when wearing the same clothing, Leyshon adjusted his posture, facial queues and voice where it was possible to almost immediately identify who was who at most points of the production.

These are characters you probably know in your own family, and despite it all, you can sympathize with both and understand their positions, flawed or not.

Another particular shoutout goes to Glynnis Ranney and her portrayal of the mother of the bride, Maddy.

Maddy is a very flawed character, and egotistical in her own way, to challenge Jack Sr. But the one thing that prevails over everything is that she is a mother who believes she hasn't done enough for her daughter, and you can see it in everything she does.

While she fights over and over to have a role in the wedding, we notice it becomes increasingly about what she thinks is right for her daughter, not what her daughter wants or needs. As she becomes more intoxicated, Jack Sr's original decision to exclude her becomes more understandable by her antics, continually drinking and making foul remarks at the reception. Maddy is not the protagonist fighting for the right to speak as she first appeared at the start of the movie. Jack Sr, by consequence, isn't entirely unsympathetic, as his choices are based on logic, though flawed.

Ranney delivers a very nuanced mother desperate to make the night go right, but her desperation only sours things further as she spirals and escalates.

Of course, the rest of the cast deserves equal praise for bringing these larger-than-life characters together, but with over a dozen characters coming across the stage, my word count couldn't sustain it. The cast, Emma Grabinsky, David Leyshon, Glynis Ranney, Tyrone Savage, Evelyn Wiebe and Kristi Woods delivered a completely immersive experience that brought with it plenty of laughs and some very believable faces.

I would be remiss if I didn't also complement the outstanding work of the set design for the production.

The production was visually stunning and looked like a perfectly recreated wedding reception. The detail was impressive, with each table furnished and set, and the room looked bigger than it was, thanks to perspective. The actors made fantastic use of the space; the room grew messier as drama unfolded and events progressed throughout the night.

Overall, The Wedding Party was a stunning wedding production that elegantly ran off the rails, reminding potentially more than a few of us about family events we'd rather forget, but at the same time, reminding us that family is precious, and that we would benefit from listening to them a little bit more.

It's funny, stressful, endearing and frustrating, and absolutely worth a viewing.

The Wedding Party is showing from April 16 to May 3 at Theatre Orangeville.