

?Bathroom Humor? Bubbles with Laughter at Blackhorse]

A Review by Braden Wright

If you're looking for a party atmosphere, there's one already started ? and getting wilder all the way to the final shower curtain ? in the Blackhorse Village Player's current production of the ?very naughty comedy,? Bathroom Humor, on stage now through April 23.

The winning combination of a talented and committed cast including perennial audience favorites with natural chemistry, the deft direction of Cheryl Phillips. and a saucy script by the prolific comedy duo of Billy Van Zandt and Jane Milmore, makes this an invitation for a fun time, with lots of laughs.

It's the 80s. There's a party. Everyone knows everyone, for better or worse. And they all gravitate to the hub of the hosts' home ? the spacious bathroom ? for every conceivable reason.

Kicking things off with some primping and gossip are the trio of Julie Kovach as Laura, the boss' wife who projects a façade of near perfection which Kovach delightfully allows to crack and crumble in time; Melanie Burgess as Babette, the boss' assistant who harbours ? and eventually unleashes with comic intensity ? a volcanic passion for powerful men including her boss, Arthur; and Sarah Simpson, the relatable and lovelorn misfit, Peg, who captures our hearts and then delights with some sterling, side-splitting physical comedy as she wrestles with wardrobe mishaps.

Julian Bachlow plays the perpetually agreeable and increasingly frustrated Old Man (also Peg's father) who is the only one wanting to access the bathroom for a legitimate reason ? a daring and charming leap for the young Bachlow who masterfully keeps the running joke fresh throughout.

Robert Redden indulges everyone with a full-throated flashback to the decade of decadence mentality with his portrayal of Stu, making his ultimate moment of clarity as surprisingly poignant as it is funny.

Morris Durante is a gem on any stage, wielding his innate and hilarious timing, and here again it's heightened in his reunion on the Blackhorse stage with Vincent Ursini, who imbues an earnest and lovable innocence into his characters' struggle, trying to balance morals and ambition, delivering straight-laced lines and impressively athletic comedy with equal aplomb. While Durante's Sandy is seeking a raise from his boss (Ursini's Arthur), the two are dealing with romantic exploits with women they did not necessarily come to the party with. Mark Hayward, who does double duty here behind the scenes as Lighting Designer, heightens the action as he brings The Big El to life, ironically making this E-list Elvis Impersonator endearing with his own admirable and affable humility and stealthy subtlety.

It's the wonderful way these actors bring this bounty of characters into comic collision that makes this production so fun and memorable. It's also a perfect example of what we've missed about community theatre during our streaming-focused time-outs ? large cast plays that are fun, affordable and nearby, where we're close enough to the action to feel a part of it ? and a cast and crew that reflect the breadth of talent amongst us, here for our enjoyment.

Stage Manager Rachel Whipple keeps the busy traffic moving through tight timing. Michelle Lanoue-Williams' costume design along with the bursts of 80s anthems heard each time the bathroom door opens to the home's hallway reminds us when we are, as much as director Cheryl Phillips' Set Design makes us feel we're actually present? at a very fun party with some loveable and crazy friends. A date you don't want to miss.

Bathroom Humor was previously mounted by BVP in April 2001 and is one of four audience favourites selected to celebrate its 50th Anniversary, with Don't Dress For Dinner in June completing the season.

Bathroom Humor currently on stage at Blackhorse Village Players, continues after the Easter weekend, April 14-16, 21-23. Call

905-880-5002 or visit www.blackhorsetheatre.ca for ticket information.