

Caledon Town Hall Players present 'The Wild Women of Winedale'

By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

There is still time to catch performances of the wonderfully funny 'Wild Women of Winedale', on now at the Caledon Town Hall Players (CTHP) Theatre in Caledon Village, this weekend on February 21 and 22.

This hilarious play is about two sisters, Fanny and Willa, and their 'quirky sister-in-law,' Johnnie-Fey or Jeff as she is called.

Up to now, they have cheered and nursed each other through the deaths of two of their husbands, as well as dealing with the highs and lows of their daily lives. Still, the hands on the eternal clock keep moving and a person 'three persons' appear to have come at what might be considered their simultaneous but individual mid-life crises.

Perhaps relatable to many, Fanny is suffering from a hilariously inappropriate reaction to her 60th birthday, while Willa is seeking vodka and 'speed knitting' as comforts from the stress of her nursing job.

Jeff is rebelling after her tough year of widowhood and is determined to find a man, preferably with a house, as hers has somehow landed down a Florida sinkhole.

Written by well-known comedy playwright trio Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope and Jamie Wooten 'or Jones Hope Wooten' as they are now. This very funny combination of lives changing a little too much brings the characters together as their wild needs demand.

Added to all that, which life loves to do, is a new responsibility to care for their ailing but free-spirited aunt and realize a load of stuff coming to them from the ages of family collecting is all theirs.

So much scope for laughs and this play and this cast truly deliver.

In an interview with director Stephanie Bailey, she told the Citizen that she has directed plays for the company 'lots of times,' as she has been with CTHP since 2014.

As any of us might experience the same problem, she told us, 'The characters are overwhelmed with stuff and don't know what to do with it. But they come up with some very funny solutions.'

The Town of Winedale had been home to the sisters, age 'sixty-ish,' who have led comfortable lives. That is okay, but what makes them happy, Bailey put the question, saying, 'Really, the three of them moved to be close to each other.'

She commented that they don't need to continue living as they were because the reasons aren't there anymore. They think to shed the weight and do what makes them happy.

What makes them happy? Deep-rooted dreams, which now they can chase.

'But for Jeff, she is looking to find more and finds surprises,' Bailey hinted.

What struck the director about this play is that it is very relationship-based.

'Why do we care about these women and how does it all influence them?'

She told us that the actors find themselves doing that, finding a balance between work and life, deciding what really does matter.

A community theatre engages members of the community in all aspects of the theatre's production and every production balances what is asked of each.

'We balance no males in the show with a creative stage manager on the deck since day one and the men can bring other perspectives about what might have an influence on a situation in the play,' said Bailey. 'Sometimes you have to work around ideas to keep it natural. It is a great [play] where the audience feels as though they are watching the show in real-time.'

How is it going? With a well-seasoned cast, there is a brand-new actress who has never been on stage. This time she wanted to try it with a smaller role. Audiences are loving them and really enjoying the show.

At well over 60 years of community theatre, we asked for the secret of keeping CTHP going.

'It's a couple of things,' Bailey remarked. 'As a group that engages people in ways that feel comfortable to them ? an actress who has been away for years, it's meaningful for them. Volunteering is good to take home and picking shows for members to play and audiences to watch that they all really enjoy.'

'There's a universality in the shows we pick, she said.

Why come to this fabulously funny play? There are five lovely ladies bringing really fun characters to life, with a lot of jokes and gags that are very relatable. There are a lot of moments that scream everyday life; and make us look at ourselves.

Stephanie Bailey says she likes doing everything in the theatre that is off-stage.

'Everything but acting,' she laughed.

For details and to purchase tickets go to caledontownhallplayers.com/the-wild-women-of-winedale/ or call the Box Office at 519-927-5460.