

Century Church Theatre presents 'Always a Bridesmaid'?

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

'The story is about four good female friends who made a promise at the high school prom to go to each other's weddings,' Jim Monaghan. Director of the show outlined, 'and let the hilarity ensue. It's written by the same creative team as wrote The Golden Girls.'

He is referring to the greatly acclaimed trio of the Jones Hope Wooten Comedy team who also collectively penned the Dixie Swim Club, which Mr. Monaghan admires very much, noting that 'I did it ten years ago and Drayton is doing it this year.'

Always a Bridesmaid has a 'cast of six,' he began by telling us. 'This one's plot is a comedy with a heart, which I like. I sometimes find farce a bit hard. This is good, about friends who stay together.'

The foundation of the comedy, in large extent, is that while the four ladies have sworn and promised to be a part of each other's wedding, walking the walk each with the others down the aisle of true love discovered, there was no foresight about often that walk might be taken, as the sheen wears off the bloom all too soon. Frankly, anyone might toss off a remark after a while - some comment about a third or more 'til death do us part' running for another exception.

'Three of the main characters get married off,' said Mr. Monaghan, taking up the tale. 'The fourth scene is about Libby Ruth's daughter getting married. That is actually the thread that keeps the play together - the daughter's wedding. At the final scene ' well, come and see it - but she is the character introducing each scene.

'This play has a very touching end ' comedy funny ' very funny ' and, then a heart strings pulling ending. At least, you feel these are real people. I like the comedy mixed with thoughtfulness. This one has that.

'I feel that I've cast it well,' said he. 'One cast member is from my old Dixie Swim Club days. There's the eternal optimist, the strong willed; the miserable woman and the one who's man crazy.'

The cast of six is the four ladies: Libby Ruth, Deedra, Monette and Charlie, each off in her own spin of the world to definitely succeed ' in marriage, in life ' or fail completely but it's all life's fault...

'Each scene has its very funny moments,' Mr. Monaghan promised. 'The French themed wedding is misunderstood by them all and the confusion entails some outfits not normally associated with a wedding...'

He added to the mix: 'The other glue is Sedalia, the woman who owns the building, forever popping in and out of the action..' with objections and advice that is completely contrary to what the ladies want to hear.

'So, that's the six: the daughter, the building owner and the four friends,' he listed them.

'Rehearsal are going swimmingly. The cast is very intuitive; they know what they have to do up there. It's a joy to work with them. I'm always looking for visuals. This is such a nice piece of entertainment; this is a play you can have a good laugh and a little tear.'

We moved on to Mr. Monaghan's own involvement with theatre at large and he admitted, 'I'm a huge late comer to the theatre world, only about 15 years ago. I was a sports nut and my whole life was based on my four sons, who were all participating in sports up through their ages. But my youngest son is in the theatre. He's finding it's a tough way to make a living but he talked me into getting interested. I thought to myself, I can do as bad as some of these other clowns and this is my 7th production. Nevill [Worsnop] and Jo [Phoenix] gave me a crack at it and I'll do my best.

?I took the bull by the horns and I'm a hands on guy. I've been involved over the years, with the props, painting sets, whatever needs doing, I'm there.?

Relatively new to the theatre as he is, Mr. Monaghan's enthusiasm and keenness to do justice to the play and the actors on the stage are clear. Working with the kind of comedy he likes so much, with the added depth of tenderness and irony, he is excited to see the play come alive.

On the cast list may well be some faces you might recognize: Libby Ruth Ames is being played by Stacey Holloway. Her daughter, Kari Ames-Besette is bravely carried by Kehlar Hillyer. Sedalia Ellicott is portrayed by Nadia Comeau, while Charlie Collins is performed by Rhonda Hewitson. Deedra Wingate is aptly performed by Julie Goudie.

Finally, but never the least, Monette Gentry is brought to the stage by Michelle Salmon.

?The thing about a play is everything you do on stage ? you gotta make it like the first time.?

Always a Bridesmaid runs at the Century Church Theatre, 72 Trafalgar Road in Hillsburgh, running over the weekends of March 13 to 15 and March 20 to 22.

For tickets, call 519-855-4586 or buy them at the door.