

Cookin' with Gus is being performed by the Caledon Town Hall Players

By Constance Scrafield

Gussie, a well-established author of several cook books, is potentially contracted to do a series of television shows. In New York! It sounds like a great deal until she confesses to her fear of public speaking. No worries! Gussie has friends who are willing and eager to help her over this minor impediment: her husband (too close for instruction?), her agent and her psychic Gypsy neighbour. Each to his or her own abilities, of course: the Gypsy will offer predictions and possible cures with hypnotism; the husband might fuss and worry and suggest, as spouses do; the agent wants her to take the contract, naturally, and will offer advice to that end? probably, no matter what!

Written by Jim Brochu, the hilarious inter-weaving dialogue and Gussie's struggle, not only with her problem but also with all the help she receives, will keep audiences laughing into their tomorrows after seeing this production of the Caledon Town Hall Players (CTHP).

Under the direction of Mike Butterworth, an old friend and associate of the Players, Cookin' is delivered with good timing and enthusiasm. In a telephone interview with Butterworth, he told us that rehearsals lasted about eight weeks for this community theatre group. It has been a while since he has worked with the CHTP, after having been with them for some years.

?I was with the group since the mid '80s,? he commented. ?I only left about 10 years ago because I moved out of the area. But they called me and asked me if I would direct this one ? I liked the script and I was happy to come back.?

?I have been involved with the Peel Panto Players in Brampton and Georgetown Middle Theatre during the time since I moved,? he added.

He talked a bit about the rehearsal process that went into the development of this production.

?Of course, the script is a safety net ? so, I call for the scripts to be gone at two weeks before performances begin. Without the scripts and the memory work done, we can really begin to work on the blocking. The advantage for this group is that their rehearsal hall is the theatre itself.?

This play features four familiar faces to the Hall's stage. Linda Smith is playing the role of Gussie with her usual panache, giving a convincing delivery of poor Gussie's dilemma and she follows and dodges the conflicting advice of which she is the beneficiary with real humour.

Gussie's husband, Walter, is portrayed by Brian Molleur, very much enjoying his role as the husband who is worried Gussie will not be able to rise above her impediment on the one hand but is determined to help her overcome it, on the other. Is he, in fact, helpful? Come and see the play.

Mike Tadic gives his rendition of Bernie, Gussie's agent. Bernie is understandably keen for her to take the contract and makes his own bumbling efforts to solve her fears about public speaking.

The ?best? advice comes from the ?psychic Gypsy,? Carmen, with Jenn Bartrum, who is whole heartedly into the part, throwing out more and more foolish pronouncements, making the theatre rock with laughter.

Cookin' with Gus is on at the Town Hall Theatre in Caledon Village. The show continues for two more performances this weekend (Friday and Saturday) both evening performances. For tickets and details, call the Box Office at 519-927-5460, or go online to www.caledontownhallplayers.com