

Home sweet home rings true in Hilda's Yard at Blackhorse

By Anne Ritchie

'Home sweet home' it's called, and for the eccentric Flucks, it holds true in Hilda's Yard, Norm Foster's newest success now playing at The Blackhorse Village Players.

With a name like Fluck, and one can only hope it's not mispronounced, there'll be potential for going askew. There is the cozy cottage-like exterior, clothesline and wooden fence, not as peaceful as it appears, even with the invisible Mrs. Linstrom, a seemingly sweet next door neighbor. There is also a charming, or is it threatening, bookie and a firecracker of a lady that sets hearts on fire. There are befuddled empty nesters whose house is suddenly immersed in their endearing children, with troubles of their own. In typical Norm Foster style, there flows an undercurrent of truth, a turning point in lifelong relationships, and quirky characters the likes of which we all have met, and possibly loved, in our own lives. Director Margaret Phillips, assistant director Jim Gillies and producer Cheryl Phillips bring it all together and, with an enthusiastic cast and crew, merit heartfelt applause.

As Hilda Fluck, the mother all of us want, Jane Bolton brims with sweetness and light. Her role requires a resourceful nature, a dry wit, and a twist of imagination reflected in her conversations with Mrs. Lindstrom. There's no doubt in why Hilda is well loved. Janey Fluck (Victoria Tokarski) does not fare as well. At love, she is both winner and loser, and thanks to a great performance, both situations are convincingly true. Tokarski is stunning when Janey flames in anger and frustration, confronting injustice in an otherwise loving father, Sam Fluck.

The audience does not know whether to commiserate or be frustrated with Sam Fluck (Vincent Ursini). Sam is a study in contrasts: an aggrieved, but somewhat whiney worker, a family man who craves an empty nest, a man who lies to the boss but entertains a bookie. Ursini brings him to life, especially when Janey jolts him into action.

Action is best played by the suave bookie, Beverly Woytowich (Mark Hayward). Only an actor like Hayward could make a man named Beverly suave and sophisticated. To some Flucks, he is dangerous, maybe stupid, even a friend. Hayward plays them all as any good bookie would.

The star-crossed lovers, Gary Fluck (Julian Bachlow) and Bobbie Jakes (Mary Graham) are also in contrast to what they seem. Bachlow plays 'hapless' to a T. Haplessly in love, haplessly in debt, haplessly helpless; it's up to Bobbie to set him on the right path. Graham plays a firecracker of a role, especially when she steers Gary expertly into the right course: Not marriage!

Everything appears to be a delicious contrast in Hilda's Yard, playing weekends with a Sunday matinee until June 21.

Call Blackhorse Village Players at 905-880-5002 to reserve your seat and sit back and enjoy Hilda's Yard.