

Moose currently makes the scene at Blackhorse theatre

By Anne Ritchie

Blackhorse Village Players' *Buying the Moose* is a real bargain for theatre lovers; a ricocheting romance charged with laughter and spiced with love, thanks to the talents of an excellent cast embroiled in a side-splitting comedy.

It all begins with the surprise appearance of a giant blow-up doll that Betty (Angie Sapalovsky) discovers in her husband Rob's (Vince Ursini) arms. Since Betty is not willing to discuss the matter in companionable terms, a hapless Vince accounts for his choice to his brother Greg (Mark Hayward). Greg, in turn, acting as peacekeeper, reports all that he knows (even if that is not enough) to his wife Cheryl (Jane Bolton) who bounces back the news to Betty's greatest friend and ally. The ricocheting action is a case of the game Broken Telephone multiplied four times, with the story getting more complicated and hilarious with every turn.

The two neighboring, albeit warring, home fronts, creatively designed by Wayne Leblanc, Cheryl Phillips and Susan Jalbert, set the stage for a story in missed information, fumbled phone calls and hilarious misinterpretation.

Sapalovsky is a many-faceted talent, conveying outrage, hilarity, despair or apology in rapid-fire action. Even the cake she bakes is iced with an ambiguous message. Impressions collide, converge or merge, becoming more hilarious with Sapalovsky on the hunt for the elusive truth, all based on a moose story.

Ursini complicates the proceedings with a befuddled response: leapfrogging explanations atop justifications piggybacking assertions of innocence and fumbling forgiveness, desperate to explain just how much worry of that blow-up doll is nothing but hot air. And as an actor, he does it all very well.

Hayward and Bolton march into the fray with exceptional energy and talent. They miss connections and mix messages, muddle meanings and trip over family secrets, and in the midst of their unraveling truth from misunderstandings, viewers are left helpless with laughter.

Director Morris Durante and stage manager Cindy Humenny, assisted by Jessie Gordon, has pulled off a wonderful success where laughter escalates as complications abound.

Buying the Moose offers parallel conversations of two men and two women who misunderstand each other's words so much it makes for a fun-filled evening you won't want to miss.

See it at Blackhorse, on stage to Jan. 28. Call 905-880-5002 for show times and ticket information.



Mark Hayward, Jane Bolton, Angie Sapalovski and Vince Ursini are currently appearing in the Blackhorse Village Players' production of *Buying the Moose*.