

Theatre Orangeville opens its 30th Anniversary with The View from Here

By Constance Scrafield

Jamie Williams, author of the play, *The View from Here*, says it is the "most intimate and real-life play" of his so far and he is also starring in it with Melanie Janzen, his own wife of twenty-plus years.

The View from Here opens October 12 and runs until October 29 at Theatre Orangeville.

In brief, the play takes us through a year in the lives of Michael and Mary, who have been married for 32 years. Their lives so far are not exactly what they had imagined when they first married all those years ago.

"The story begins on New Year's Eve," Mr. Williams noted, "and ends on the following New Year's Eve. It's a love letter to those in long term relationships."

It's also a humorous invitation to others in the earlier relationships to see how facing the "storms" can be successfully handled together and with love.

"It's always an honour to have the playwright in the room when rehearsing and better when they are acting in it too," said David Nairn. "Anyone in a long-term relationship coming to see this show, will see themselves on the stage. This is funny, touching, from heart to heart."

The creative interest for this production "sets, lights and more" centred specifically on design sequentially through the year, a chance for unique sets and skillful lighting.

"When Beckie [Morris, Theatre Orangeville's Production Manager and set designer for this show] and I started talking about it, I said it feels like moving," said Nairn. "So, now we physically move."

This is accomplished by the use of a revolve, usually round. However, Morris had another idea: a revolve that is square. She saw it as a different shape, but the math and the geometrics to construct it have been interesting.

"Lots of neat theatre tricks," Nairn commented with satisfaction. "This is a first" for the 30th season.

They are thrilled to have Louise Guinand as lighting designer, one of the most sought-after lighting designers in Canada. This production will be Guinand's 600th professional lighting design.

In *The View from Here*, Mary is considerably Michael's "better half." She is more creative, a producer. Yet Nairn reminded us, "The words are what matter" everything else is bells and whistles. And this is a very funny play.

That the stars portraying a long-time married couple are themselves a married couple means they bring that "short hand of communication" with them.

Nairn informed us, "There is no need for an intimacy coach. There is a tremendous ease between them."

They are trying to tell stories that matter. The play reaches the whole audience by showing our lives, or aspects of our lives, on stage.

Nairn summed up the charm of the play: "There will be tears of laughter but there could also be tears of connection."

The View from Here opens October 12 and runs to October 29. For more information, or to purchase tickets and subscriptions go to www.theatreorangeville.ca .

You can call the Box Office on 519-942-3423 or visit them at 87 Broadway.

Be sure to see this wonderful first show of Theatre Orangeville's 30th Anniversary Season.