



East Side Players kick off season with hilarious comedy

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When life throws you a curve ball you just can't reconcile, the easiest thing to do is pack up and start fresh.

In the East Side Players first show of the season, *Wonder of the World* by David Lindsay-Abaire, one woman finds herself in this situation, and leaves to recreate a new life.

A hilarious comedy that borders on the ridiculous in the best way, this show is a laugh a minute, and full of wonderfully absurd characters. It's the type of show that has the pace and comedy of a farce, the difference being that everyone has their reality to deal with, or avoid.

Set in present day, the show opens with Cass (Kearsten Johansson) packing to leave her husband Kip (Tyler Tanner), who has done something so heinous in her mind that she has to leave. When he unexpectedly comes home to find her packing, the two exchange a heated but funny dialogue that reveals nothing, and leaves Kip alone in their apartment.

Cass, now on a train to Niagara Falls, has a note pad of her life's bucket list, and seated next to a stranger decides to waste no time crossing them off. Except the stranger she incessantly babbles on to turns out to be a suicidal woman named Lois (Nicole Marie McCafferty), who is leaning on a barrel, which she plans to end her life in over the Falls.

Cass is as chipper and annoying as a five-year-old, who never stops asking questions, and decides she is going to bring Lois back to life by being roommates. The dichotomy between the alcoholic, suicidal Lois whose husband has left her and the enthusiastic Cass who gets to begin her life again, make these two the funniest odd couple to watch.

On the *Maid of the Mist*, and while Lois is puking, Cass meets Captain Mike (Chris Irving), who she immediately takes a liking to (as she can cross a few things off of her list) and turns out, he also has a bizarre back-story including a suicide attempt of his own over the Falls.

Actually, everyone in this show seems to have come from the weirdest circumstances, and how they have dealt with them is equally bizarre. This includes married couple Glen and Karla (Daryn DeWalt, Sheila Russell), who turn out to be the private detectives, formerly yarn store owners that Kip hires to find Cass.

This story is wacky yet creative, and to reveal all the plot and reasons would be giving it away. However, the writing is clever and witty, it is an adult-only show, and a comedy for those who need a head shake and a laugh.

Johansson as Cass is superb. She is the right balance of naïve and endearing, and keeps a straight face through some of the weirdest dialogue. Her scenes with McCafferty as Lois, who is amazingly talented, are some of the scene stealers in this show.

This also goes for the scenes between Russell and DeWalt, who play the dysfunctional married couple/P.I's Glen and Karla. They are so endearingly dense, while also being so entertainingly funny.

Honestly, every cast member has their moments in this show, but none more than Val Abels who plays a variety of characters including multiple waitresses in theme bars and a therapist. She is fabulous, and the group therapy session alone makes the show worth watching.

Irving as Captain Mike, and Tanner as Kip round out this zany and wonderful cast, and their comedic talent is fantastic. They too have some crazy dialogue, and it is commendable that they could keep a straight face.

This show is pure silliness and laughter. It is a great season opener that anyone with a sense of humour will enjoy.

Wonder of the World runs until Nov. 7, 8 p.m., with a 2 p.m. matinee Nov. 1, at the Papermill Theatre, 67 Pottery Rd. Tickets are \$24, and can be purchased by calling 416-425-0917 or by visiting www.eastsideplayers.ca