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East Side Players' hit show concludes this weekend

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The East Side Players' run of *Rapture* concludes this weekend, with shows tonight (Thursday) through Saturday night at 8 p.m., at the Papermill Theatre on Pottery Road.

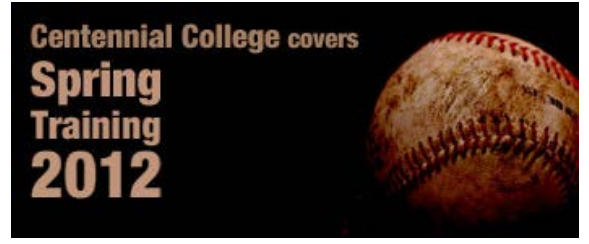
Following a successful season opener with the Tony Award-winning play *Lettice and Lovage*, the East Side Players are once again satiating the theatre appetite of East Yorkers with a sleek adaptation of *Rapture*.

The play, written by Australian playwright Joanna Murray-Smith, provides a snapshot of the lives of six close-knit friends. It unfolds as two couples find out their friends, Harry and Henny, stayed in the local Hyatt for seven months after their house burned down, instead of travelling overseas as they thought. This revelation turns the homecoming celebration into a night of confession and contention. Everything they know about friendship, marriage, career and life are challenged in this mixed tale of emotional vulnerability and powerful faith.

Murray-Smith, one of Australia's leading playwrights, offers her best in this 2002 play, recreating the intricacies and moral quandaries of middle-class life. Director Heather Roberts, with 25 years' experience both backstage and on stage, handles the nuances of the play with precision and deftness.

The cast is filled with familiar faces from local theatre, including Alyssa Quarts, Sean Killackey, Stephanie Morson and Paul Cotton. Theatre student Marianne Busion is radiant as Henny, a charming and compassionate wife with a promising career. Noteworthy is Chris Coculuzzi, who commands the stage with wide-eyed energy and flair playing Tom, a cynical, unsympathetic writer who fails to win the hearts of his wife and friends with his literary awards.

Although the characters are all in their 40s, Roberts said all audiences can relate to the



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universality of the play and its themes.

"If people are older, they'll identify having been there at some point in their life. For people who may not yet be there, it might make them think how they are living their life now," she said. "It's about the people, the choices you make, and what's meaningful to you as a person."

Roberts also gave ample credit to the cast and crew who, like herself, contribute to the play as volunteers.

"They offered a lot and they were open to suggestions," she said. "It was a real joy."

Rapture opened on Feb. 23 at the Papermill Theatre, on Pottery Road between Bayview and Broadview avenues. It concludes this coming Saturday, March 10. Performances run tonight/Thursday, tomorrow/Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m..

Tickets are \$20, and \$15 for students. The box office is at 416-425-0917. For more information or online ticketing, go to www.eastsideplayers.ca and follow the links.



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