

Women band together in intriguing time-travel journey

East York Mirror by Maria Tzavaras



Sometimes, what seems to be the worst thing that could happen to you turns out to be the best thing in disguise.

In East Side Players latest production *Communicating Doors*, one woman finds herself in that exact situation, but first has to travel through time — to right some past wrongs — and save some lives, including hers.

This play, written by Alan Ayckbourn, is part drama, thriller, sci-fi and even has some comedy. Mixed in with all that are some hold-your-breath moments and a situation that challenges one to think about whether they would have the courage to change the past — if given the chance.

Set in London, England, in the fancy Regal Hotel, the year is 2032 and an ailing, aged man named Reece (Donald Baker) has asked his business partner Julian (Owen Turley) to set up an appointment with a lady of the night.

When Poopay (Tammie Van Dyk) arrives, she realizes her client is too old and sickly to participate, but as it turns out she's there for a different reason.

A written confession reveals Reece's participation in the murders of his two previous wives in that very hotel room, 20 and 40 years earlier, and he wants Poopay to co-sign the confession. Shortly after she agrees, he passes out.

She calls for Julian who soon discovers what she's done for Reece. Since he's the actual murderer, he informs Poopay she's next on his hit list, so she escapes to the nearby closet.

Here's where the show gets interesting. The closet turns out to be a portal and she ends up 20 years in the past where Ruella (Lydia Kiselyk), Reece's second wife is in 2012. The meeting is met with apprehension, but after much dialogue, the women decide they're going to rewrite history to change what will occur, and subsequently save each other's lives.

First stop is 1992, to convince Reece's first wife Jessica (Kristie Paille) that she too will soon fall victim to the murderous duo.

Again, that meeting is also met with apprehension, but watching these women band together to change their destinies is a crazy, intriguing journey that will keep you guessing and rooting for their success until the end.

While the plot sounds complicated, rest-assured it's a well written play, the actors make it understandable and director, Marina Leyderman, does a fantastic job making it clear.

Also, the set, which is a beautifully furnished room with monogrammed furniture, decorative columns and floor-to-ceiling curtains, is the setting for each time zone the ladies travel to, so you'll never have to guess where you are in the story.

Van Dyk as Poopay is sweet and funny, and portrays Poopay's journey from vulnerable to brave hero, well. Kiselyk plays Ruella with amazing strength and conviction, and Paille as Jessica is great as the innocent wife turned fierce adversary.

The men also don't disappoint. Baker plays his role of Reece in a way that garners both sympathy and loathing, and Turley is both menacing and convincing as the jaded killer, Julian.

The show has a unique and thought-provoking plot, and while first act is a bit slow-going, by the second act, the show is action-packed which all leads to a satisfying ending.

Communicating Doors runs until March 9, 8 p.m., with a 2 p.m. matinee on March 3, at The Papermill Theatre, Todmorden Mills, 67 Pottery Rd. Tickets are \$22 and \$15 for students. Call 416-425-0917 or visit www.eastsideplayers.ca for tickets.