

Becky's New Car takes aim at funny bone

By Joe Couture, Regina Leader-Post
Jan. 25, 2014

Becky's New Car, the current main stage production at Regina's Globe Theatre, is intelligently written, creatively produced and most of all, guaranteed to generate laughter, based on the opening night performance.

The comedic lines and moments come one after the other throughout the witty play and the theatre-in-the-round rang with giggles, chuckles, guffaws and chortles from the audience throughout the evening.

Thursday's opening night show was well-attended, with all but a few of the theatre's seats filled. Many of those in the audience appeared to be of the demographic to which the director, Valerie Ann Pearson, has said the show will particularly appeal - middle-aged couples.

And the show certainly did seem to appeal to them. The many funny parts clearly resonated with the audience members and there was barely a pause in the laughter during the production's two hours. Lots of audience interaction created an additional layer of amusement.

Becky's New Car stars Tracey Ferencz as Becky Foster, a middle-aged woman living a humdrum life. She finds herself being pursued by millionaire widower Walter Flood, played by Allan Morgan, who mistakenly believes her husband Joe, played by Tony Munch, is dead.

All three actors are excellent in the challenging roles, creating characters that are hilarious, but with lots of human depth.

Nathan Howe as Becky's still-living-at-home son Chris and Alexandria Hartshorn as Walter's privileged daughter Kensington also give very strong performances. And the relationship between those characters adds another funny twist to the farcical plot. Both of those actors are graduates of the Globe Theatre Conservatory, now living in Saskatoon.

Completing the cast are Neil Foster as Steve, a co-worker of Becky's and a friend of her family's, and Catherine Fitch as Ginger, an old friend of Walter's who is facing financial difficulties. Those two talented actors also give great performances full of humour. The various locations in Becky's world are brought to life very impressively and creatively through the set and costume design by Terry Gunvordahl, lighting design by Tristan Tidswell and sound design by Jeremy Sauer. Completing the artistic team led by Pearson are Lisa Russell, stage manager, and Crystal Skinner, assistant stage manager.

As Pearson says in her program notes, *Becky's New Car* - which was written by Steven Dietz and has been performed across North America since it premiered in 2008 - deals with deep questions and moral dilemmas.

Globe Theatre artistic director Ruth Smillie calls it "a smart comedy that confronts issues of marriage, fidelity and happiness." But Pearson also points out that the play approaches its subject matter with "with such charm and humour that you can't resist taking the ride in *Becky's New Car*." Definitely anyone looking for an evening filled with laughter, particularly those who can relate to the circumstances of Becky's middle-aged life, should check out *Becky's New Car*. It runs on the Globe's main stage until Feb. 9.