

Director brings timely issues to Theatre Aurora with Next Fall



By Brock Weir

In bringing a play to life, Melanie Hargan set out to let the characters do the talking ? and, as the curtain rises on Theatre Aurora's production of next fall, the director will be measuring success by the conversations that take place among the audience members as they go back home.

Next Fall, written by Geoffrey Nauffts, is the story of Luke and Adam, a couple in a committed five year relationship. While Luke believes in God, Adam believes in everything else, and an accident serves as a catalyst for questions about commitment, love and faith, themes all explored with equal dashes of humour and honesty.

?Luke has not come out to his family yet, so it really transcends what is going on in the world and how hard it is for gays and lesbians to come out,? says Ms. Hargan. ?It is a lot easier now, but when this play was written 10 or 15 years ago, it resonated with a lot of people. I have a lot of gay and lesbian friends and I saw their struggle growing up so, when I read this play, I knew I just had to do it and tell their story.?

Her vision for the story was a simple one ? a clean stage, with just walls and a couch. There is nothing to get in the way of the characters telling their stories, and that is very much by design.

So, the main story tellers here are Luke, played by Joey Ferguson, and Darren Fletcher as Adam.

The duo, Hargan says, came into the audition not knowing each other but auditioned together.

?I was looking for specific people who were comfortable with each other,? she says. ?They had to have chemistry; it is terrible when a romantic couple on stage has no chemistry. As soon as they got up and did a scene, that was it. They were Luke and Adam.?

In addition to those questions about commitment, love and faith, Next Fall delves deep into the family dynamic, particularly in the form of Luke's relationship with his strict father. Luke is afraid to tell his father he's gay out of fear he would never see his little brother again. His father drilled into him that Luke was gay he would be cast out of the family.

?If someone comes out of this play and has a conversation with their loved ones, if parents go home and have a conversation with their kids and talk about their sexuality and to know that those kids can come out to them if they need to, then this will be a success,? says Hargan. ?Even if they are straight, talk to them about their relationships and be there for them. I want parents, grandparents and friends just to come out and say, ?You know what? I am going to be there for my loved ones.?

Next Fall opens at Theatre Aurora this Thursday, March 1, and runs on select dates and times through Saturday, March 10. For more information, including tickets, visit www.theatreaurora.ca or call 905-727-3669.