

TA's Tuesdays with Morrie: A Review

By Scott Johnston

Theatre Aurora kicks off its 56th season with the terrific show 'Tuesdays with Morrie.'

Based on the book by Mitch Albom, the play tells the story of the author's weekly visits with 78-year-old Morrie Schwartz, his favourite professor, whom he encounters 16 years after his graduation.

Unfortunately, by the time they reconnect, the older man is dying from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Over a series of 14 visits with his former mentor, always on Tuesdays, the author (and in turn, the audience) learns some valuable life lessons.

Despite the seemingly heavy subject matter, the play has some warm humour and a number of positive messages.

This is one of the smallest casts seen at Theatre Aurora, consisting of just the two lead characters.

This, as well as the simple set, focuses all the attention on just two people. It therefore takes incredible performances to make a show like this work well, and director Dale Sheldrake has the perfect actors up on stage to do the job.

Tom Mercer is perfect as Mitch, and carries us wonderfully through his transformation from driven workaholic to a more contemplative and thoughtful person.

Robert Ball is brilliant as Morrie. Despite the challenges of portraying a person with decreasing mobility, and therefore limited movement, he manages to command the stage.

Together the two men have terrific chemistry, whether it's subtly exposing hidden truths in each other, or exchanging witty one-liners. You can feel the strength of the relationship of their characters grow as the play progresses.

Don't be put off by what may be perceived as a depressing subject. This engaging and well-written story is wonderfully acted. The play is filled with warmth, and will make you think about your own life.

Don't miss it.

Evening performances of 'Tuesdays with Morrie' continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, August 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24, with a matinee August 18. Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.