

Theatre Aurora's 'That Summer': A Review



By Scott Johnston

Once again, Theatre Aurora ends its season with a production by Canadian playwright David French, this time with 'That Summer'.

The story is based on the recollections of Margaret, a grandmother who for the first time in many years is visiting a cottage in southern Ontario where she spent the summer of 1958 as a teenager.

Most of the story takes place as a series of flashbacks, as we relive that event-filled time in her life.

The action takes place in three main areas; the cottage, a cemetery, and at the waterfront.

To portray the latter, the Theatre Aurora stage crew have created a surprisingly effective and well lit water-filled lake, complete with dock.

This set piece plays a key role in the story, and at some point in the production all of the cast members wade or splash through it.

In fact, it's so enthusiastically used that squeegees and blowers are required to dry out the stage during the intermission.

The set is simple, employing simple fabric to hide or focus attention on the various settings.

Many of these scene transitions take place while Margaret is narrating, which saves time and keeps things moving, but which can also be a bit distracting.

Angie Sapalovski, as the older version of Margaret, is on stage much of time and has the wistful recollection look down pat, as she introduces, narrates and watches over the various vignettes that tell the story.

The best of the acting is left to the younger cast, specifically Madeline Mason as sister Daisy, Sepehr Reybod as boyfriend Paul, and especially Kayla Whelan as young Margaret, who convincingly portrays a wide range of emotions through the story.

If you get there early you will see the pre-show, which has the characters interacting silently on stage. It is calm and slow-paced, which is a bit of a foreshadowing to the production itself.

The play is written to suggest a transition from Margaret's hazier memories to those that are more clear, which may be why at times it seems to be taking a while to get to the well-written conclusion.

Evening performances of this production of ?That Summer? continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, April 9, 10, 11 & 12.
Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.