

Tongue Twister ? A Review of ?Speaking in Tongues?

By Scott Johnston

A woman goes missing, couples cheat on each other, police are involved, misunderstandings ensue, amends are attempted, subplots revolve around isolated shoes, and all of the stories and characters are linked.

This is only part of what goes on in ?Speaking in Tongues?, currently playing at Theatre Aurora.

The mystery, by Australian playwright Andrew Bovell, involves some interesting twists, not only in plot, but in how the play is performed.

First, the nine characters are portrayed by only four actors, which helps to mirror the symmetry of the various stories.

As well, in parts of the play, separate conversations are held where the dialog is spoken simultaneously. This assists in demonstrating the similarities between situations happening on opposite sides of the stage.

Part of the challenge of this approach is that even with a minor costume change, it's not always immediately clear if an actor is portraying the character you just saw, or a new one. And the overlapping dialog, while telling similar and sometimes identical stories, can be hard to follow.

Both add an interesting element to what is already a complicated story. Fortunately, the four actors, Martha Breen, Linda Stott, Tim O'Connell and Robert Magee, play their multiple parts well.

This is an entertaining and sometimes suspenseful play, but you'll need to pay attention.