

"Where You Are" brings relatable family drama to Theatre Aurora stage



No matter where you come from, your economic circumstances, or where you happen to be on your own life's journey right now, many of the rhythms of family life can be universal.

While sisters Glenda and Suzanne might live lives all their own while living together on Manitoulin Island, the growth, challenges, and journeys each undertake in the play *Where You Are*, strike a familiar chord with just about everyone and that is one of the many reasons Theatre Aurora tapped Ontario playwright Kristen da Silva's acclaimed play to be the penultimate offering of their 2025-2026 season.

Sisters Glenda and Suzanne live a quiet life on Manitoulin Island, but when the unexpected arrival of Suzanne's daughter, Beth, and a weighty secret start to shake things up, the sisters find themselves hilariously tangled in each other's business, says Theatre Aurora. Full of witty banter, touching revelations, and the kind of love that only family can bring, this charming play is a delightful mix of laughter and heart.

It was love at first read for director Judi Cragg as she and the Theatre Aurora team put together the current season, but it was a long time coming as they waited patiently to secure the rights to stage the play a process she says was well worth the wait.

About a year ago when we were putting this season together, we got an email saying it's now available, says the director of finally clearing the two-year waiting list. They asked, are you still interested? We jumped on it.

I just keep rhapsodizing about this play to everybody. The characters are absolutely real to our lives, Cragg continues, likening the play to the works of the perennially-popular playwright Norm Foster. It's a little bit in the Foster genre where it is funny, but then there are very touching moments and, perhaps in this case, heartbreaking moments. I call it the M*A*S*H effect. It was really the first television show to start the idea where you're sitting there laughing at something hilariously funny and you're right in the moment, then, all of a sudden, they will smack you between the eyes with something heartbreaking, heart-wrenching, devastating and, because you've just been laughing, it has more of an effect.

The universality of many of the themes explored in *Where You Are* was just one element that attracted Cragg to the director's chair. Adding to the attractive challenge was the chance to delve deeper into just four characters after helming productions with very large casts of 20-or-more in previous seasons.

All four characters are people I believe almost all of us have met before, she says. The audience is going to sit there and perhaps not consciously, but somewhere in their mind they're going to know they've met someone like these people, and they will understand their relationships. It's about family, but looking at love in its various forms with lots of laughter.

?It's one week in the character's lives and I want people to leave feeling as if they have spent time with friends, that they will have been with these people, they like these people, they will feel with these people, they will laugh with these people, and they will go on their way. When I read novels, my favourite ones are where there's at least one character, hopefully more, that I don't just resonate with, but I really like ? you love these characters and, when it ends, you're like, now I'm going to miss my friends. That's what I want people to feel ? that they like these people, they care about these people, and they understand these people.?

Kristen Da Silva's ?Where You Are? opened at Theatre Aurora (150 Henderson Drive) on March 20 and runs on select dates and times through the final performance this Saturday, March 28. For more information, including tickets, visit theatreaurora.com.

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