

Theatre Aurora's "Jitters": A Review



By Scott Johnston

In a live performance, there's always the possibility that nothing, or everything, will go wrong.

Fortunately for us, the latter is the focus of Theatre Aurora's latest comedy, 'Jitters' by David French, now showing at the Factory Theatre.

'Jitters' is set during final rehearsals before the opening of the fictitious play 'The Care and Treatment of Roses.' Sadly for the director, he is faced with a playwright agonizing over syllables, a stage manager with an overeager eye on the clock, and a cast that demonstrates varying degrees of unpreparedness, anxiety, animosity, tardiness, and even inebriation.

Will the director be able to overcome everything from mis-matched feet to the spectre of a noted Broadway producer to be in the audience on opening night, and bring everything together?

Probably not, but as they say in the theatre, the show must go on.

An excellent cast has been assembled for this final show of the season. Barb Jones plays Jessica, 'Canada's treasure', an actress who has gained acclaim in the U.S. and has recently returned to Canada.

This character has a rocky relationship with her co-star Patrick, played by Jeff Naworynski, who isn't as appreciative of her return from south of the border.

Also in the fictitious cast is Phil, played by Cam Lund. He is less than confident about his lines, wardrobe, and pretty much anything else.

Keith Kupsch plays overeager young actor Tom, who always seems to be there when he isn't needed, and not around when he is required.

Keeping things moving backstage through countless aborted rehearsals are temperamental stage manager Nick (Steve Wolfer), director's assistant Peggy (Anna Pelc-Draper) and Susi (Ariana Leask), who works front-of-house.

Theatre Aurora regular Mark Rival plays playwright Robert, who displays a perfect amount of angst in every potential line change, and in how his new show will be received.

Trying to bring order to the chaos is Brad Fuller as George, the director. As the central character, he has wonderful interactions with each of the players, as he copes with their various quirks and anxieties.

(Real) Director Michael Clipperton keeps things moving along at a good pace, and makes excellent use of the entire theatre for the many stage entrances and exits throughout the show.

This production will bring both smiles and laughs, and perhaps, an appreciation for the sort of things that may occur behind the scenes of a typical show.

Evening performances of *Jitters* continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, April 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26 and 27 with a matinee April 21. Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.