

Blackhorse Players forecast 'A Bad Year for Tomatoes' in latest show

By Anne Ritchie

Tomatoes are a girl's best friend, according to Myra Marlowe, the leading character in Blackhorse Village Players' current production.

However, when that idea is put to the test, problems begin sprouting in that garden, and they lead to comic disaster.

For starters, there's a distinct lack of peace and quiet in Beaverhaven thanks to nosy neighbors, a morose lumberjack, a beguiling witch and a persistent agent who won't take no for an answer. When Kate Horzempa (playing Marlowe) tries to sit down and write her book, the unex-

pected happens.

Horzempa gives a strong performance as a frustrated actress turned budding author, who becomes even more frustrated. She cannot find herself, she claims, and thus begins a search that provides laughter and applause. Grandiose plans to bury her acting career in are inspired by self talk with a tape recorder and when she creates a twin sister who could have starred on the Fear Factor, her plans go astray, and end up in high hilarity.

Brian Neale, as Myra's agent, attempts to right Myra's state of reality. Neale smoothly portrays the witty, sophisticated Tom Lamont,

and the teasing banter between the duo is highly entertaining.

However, with the entrance of Mr. Piney (played by Mark Power), the nut-cracking, skunk-hunting woodcutter, romance takes a turn for the worse. Piney is a mountain of a man whose speech is but a molehill of conversation. Yet Power puts such comic timing and expression into his three-to-four-word utterances, his performance carries the show. "Fraid so" or "Not enough" inspire laughter worth the trip to Blackhorse.

The neighbors are no less strange than Piney. Nadia Casagrande makes her stage

debut as Willa Mae, the highly strung wannabe witch. Her performance is indeed bewitching; she reads palms, casts spells, makes prophecies, and leaves chaos in her wake.

The chaos escalates when the gossip from two old biddies, Cora (Diana Crabtree) and Reba (Annie Neale), take hold and suddenly there's talk of murder and mayhem, all in the midst of Myra wanting peace and quiet. Crabtree and Neale are a fine pair, sparring partners in spreading the juiciest gossip, most agile in jumping to conclusions that leave the audience laughing.

It was the sheriff (Greg

Cebelak), who unearths the truth mid all the witchery, gossip, and the lovelorn Piney. Cebelak plays exasperation best of anyone seen at Blackhorse, and certainly there's room for plenty of it as he bounces and rebounds from the accusations and allegations focused on Myra. It's a good lesson in reality for the charming actress, and an excellent conclusion to

Myra's search for self.

Producer Cheryl Phillips and co-producer Michelle Lanoue mix Blackhorse veterans with budding talents and cultivate the fruits of success. Find out how good it is by calling (905) 880-5002 for your ticket to an enjoyable evening, even though it be "A Bad year for Tomatoes." It runs through to April 7.

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