

Atlanta Arts Scene

A Red Plaid Shirt

Posted on September 22, 2018 by Robert Heller



A Red Plaid Shirt
Stage Door Players
through October 14, 2018

Michael G. Wilmot loves to write comedy and this one is a hoot. I am not going to give away the entire plot as there are twists and turns aplenty, and I would not want to intrude on your laugh fest.

You meet up with a couple of middle age geezers who have retired and are trying to format their coming years. It isn't always easy, for life is what happens as you wait for your plans to work out.

Marty (Michael Strauss) was a teacher and has taken his leave. He has thought deeply about buying a Harley and hitting the road some day. A lot of us may have done that in our 40's, but he's older; and his wife, Deb (Suzanne Jordan Roush), is pretty worried about his safety and wellbeing on a two wheeler.

They are friends with another couple. Fred (Steve Hudson) is a retired accountant and his wife, Gladys (Eileen Koteles). Gladys hangs out a lot with Deb, and they get involved with more activities than the guys. But, somehow the men get sucked into learning some new skills, and anything that might screw up does so with great aplomb.

This laugh-a-minute is directed by Robert Egizio and the set by Chuck Welcome works great to come off as Fred and Gladys' home, a local coffee shop, and two activity rooms at the school.

Stage Door Players is in Dunwoody, easy to get to, plenty of free parking, and every seat has a good view of the stage. It's a very pleasant local theatre starting off this 45th year with this one. More info at StageDoorPlayers.net

A Review (Dunwoody Crier, Georgia)

‘Red Plaid Shirt’ a tribute to our classic sitcoms

- By Gayle and Rob Suggs For The Crier
- Sep 25, 2018



“A Red Plaid Shirt” gives the ups and retirement a go at Stage Door Players.

Marty is over the hill—or is he? He has retired from a life of teaching English to high school students, and he wants to know: what comes next? What’s on the other side of that frightening hill? What in the world is he supposed to do with himself, other than drive his loving wife crazy?

That’s the simple premise of “A Red Plaid Shirt,” opening the 45th season of Stage Door Players as a worldwide premiere. Canadian playwright Michael G. Wilmot has given us a downhill

retirement voyage that's hilarious and heartwarming. The opening night audience adored it, and it's hard to imagine anyone who wouldn't.

At the insistence of Deb, his wife, Marty decides to take up a hobby. What will it be? Woodworking, or his latest wild hair: motorcycling? He and his buddy Fred, who has taken up the hobby of hypochondria after watching too many medical dramas on TV, set out together for the woodworking class. Their interplay is reminiscent of Ralph Kramden and Ed Norton, TV's best buds from "Honeymooners." Marty and Fred are the biggest tools in the wood shop. But what is their secret project? And does Deb have one of her own?

Michael Strauss is a wonderful Marty, adding his knack for physical comedy to a zinger-driven script. Suzanne Jordan Roush is a revelation as Deb. The best comedy always takes a comic foil, a "straight man" or woman, and breathes real life into it. That's exactly what Ms. Roush does. She holds her own during every stage moment.

As Fred, Steve Hudson, a walking medical checkup, stretches out a one-joke premise and keeps it funny—and by the end, something more. Eileen Koteles rounds out a winning cast as Gladys, who cherishes dreams of visiting Venice, germ exposure notwithstanding.

If the play is a homage to the classic sitcom, it's the sitcom in mint condition—Ralph and Ed, Lucy and Ricky, Rob and Laura. The formula can't fail, as long as it's well-written. It certainly is here, particularly for a brand new, never-seen play. But beyond the punch lines, the show takes a sharp turn into a poignant conclusion we never saw coming. Act Two, the bigger challenge for most playwrights, is letter-perfect this time, and immensely satisfying on an emotional level. We forecast a busy future across American stages for this romp. And we'll watch anything with these four actors in it.

Director Robert Egizio, the "cast-whisperer," helps his players breathe real life into their roles. Once again, Chuck Welcome excels with his set design of not one but four different sets. The talent of J.D. Williams with lighting design shines. Additional technical assistance is provided by Rial Ellsworth (Sound Design), Jim Alford (Costume Design), Kathy Ellsworth (Properties

Design), and AJ Stevenson and Bill Byrne, Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager, respectively.

“A Red Plaid Shirt” continues through Oct. 14 with performances at 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and at 2:30 p.m. on Sundays. There are additional Thursday performances on Oct. 4 and 10 at 8 p.m. Stage Door Players is located in the North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center, 5339 Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd. For more information, call 770-396-1727 or visit stagedoorplayers.net.