



‘Cemetery Club’ brings long-time friends together

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By Carol Harris

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“The Cemetery Club,” Limelight Theater’s current offering is a bittersweet comedy about three friends who meet once a month to celebrate the past and the present. The three widows are the surviving half of three sets of long time best friends. Although each woman is in a different stage of healing, they continue their once-a-month meetings for tea followed by a visit to the local cemetery to pay respects to their husbands.

Visiting the grave of his wife in the same cemetery is Sam, the shy, local butcher, who turns out to be the most sought after bachelor. When the three widowed friends are invited to be bridesmaids at another friend’s wedding and Sam shows up with a younger and glamorous acquaintance, their rivalry surfaces but is eventually tamed by their love for each other.

Kevin Heath, owner of Limelight Actors Theater and director of “The Cemetery Club” has once again enlisted scenic artist Glynis Crabb to enhance his set with her brilliant art work. Heath’s true genius, however, is his selection of veteran actors who portray the characters with the sensitivity and emotional strength needed to make them believable.

Ruth E. Stein is cast as the even-tempered, sensitive Ida; Rosalind Farotte plays the feisty, fun loving Lucille (wait until you see her costumes!); and Betsy Andrade portrays the judgmental, priggish Doris who resists change. The show’s lone male, Tom Hepner, is perfect in the role of the unassuming, shy and perhaps a bit clumsy Sam. In addition, Carol Harris (yours truly) is Mildred, Sam’s date for the wedding. Although having only a very small, brief part in Act II, Mildred makes a huge impact on the relationships of the other characters. Unfortunately, I took an unplanned tumble down the stairs, broke my leg and had to be replaced. Thankfully, the talented Christine McElroy graciously stepped into the role of the vixen and promises to stir up a little tension within the “Club”.

Interestingly, Betsy Andrade, Roz Farotte, Tom Hepner, Ruth E. Stein and I have been friends for close to 30 years and have not been in the same show until “The Cemetery Club”.

Back in the days of Gilroy Community Theatre (renamed South Valley Civic Theatre in the mid-80s) Betsy, Roz and Ruth E. appeared together in "Rogers Ala Carte" under the direction of George Costa. In 1984, Tom made his Gilroy Community Theatre debut in "South Pacific" with Ruth E. playing Nellie Forbush. Not long after Tom, Betsy, Ruth E. and I were all in "Company." A few years later, Roz and Tom's wife Anne produced "Cole" with Tom, Betsy and me. Other shows include: "The Music Man" with Roz, Tom and I; "Blithe Spirit" with Roz and me, and directed by Ruth E.; "Nunsense" with Roz Betsy and myself. At Pintello Comedy Theater, Tom and Roz appeared in "Holiday Snap," Roz and Ruth E. in "Kitchen Witches" and Betsy and Roz in Limelight Theater's "Mamalogues." Christine McElroy has appeared with Ruth E. in "A Day In Hollywood, A Night in the Ukraine" directed by Roz and Betsy, and in 2009 with Tom in "You Can't Take it with You." There couldn't be a better addition to the cast of "The Cemetery Club."