

Bonds between women

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ONE LAST GAME Millie (Christy Wait) and Leona (Rosalind Farotte) reminisce over the passing of one of their own in 'Exit Laughing' at the Limelight Actors Theater in Gilroy. Photo: Kevin Heath

It would be hard to find a sillier, funnier way to spend a couple of hours at the theater than by seeing Exit Laughing, presented by Limelight Actors Theater in Gilroy.

The comedy, written by Paul Elliott, is best appreciated without much knowledge of the plot beyond the basic setup: Four women in Birmingham, Alabama, have spent the last 30 years deepening their friendship around the bridge table. When one of them dies, the other three mourn her death in an unusual way, involving the “theft” of the urn containing her ashes.

Actually, there’s not much plot beyond that, but the story offers some sweet reflections of the importance of friendship (and love) within the gentle comedy.

The three surviving friends—Connie (JoAnna Evans), Leona (Rosalind Farotte) and Millie (Christy Wait)—gather at Connie’s home after the funeral. The liquor flows (with Leona happily pouring drinks) but things take an absurd turn when Millie, who is a bit of a ditsy blonde, turns up with the purloined urn for one last bridge game.

Over the course of the evening, the three women celebrate their friend’s life and their friendship. There’s some clever, sharp dialogue involving why they are all single, with some of it focused on Connie’s uptight daughter Rachel (Tina Elder-Flores), a college student bemoaning her lack of dating success after being stood up by a classmate (“That girl’s on her own private rollercoaster,” says one of the women).

Things get even sillier when a “policeman” (a charming Brennan Perry) starts knocking on the door.

The whole business has the feel of a sitcom, perhaps a mashup of *Golden Girls* and

Designing Women, but in the hands of director Kevin Heath and the entire cast, who all give performances that create the feel of real bonds between the women, the show fulfills the promise of its title.

Exit Laughing, by Paul Elliott. Directed by Kevin Heath. Presented by Limelight Actors Theater at the Gilroy Center for the Arts. Playing Nov. 11-13, 18-20 and 25-26. limelightactorstheater.com