

A Few Good Years

A Review

By Mary Winsky

Perhaps all of us here at Heritage Hunt are hoping to be granted *A Few Good Years* to enjoy this chapter of our lives. So how fortuitous that the Heritage Hunt Little Theater offered us just that in its fall production November 9, 10 and 11.

From the moment M. J. Brickach stepped forward with regal dignity, a face painted white and body clothed in black in classic mime tradition, we knew we were in for an eclectic evening of entertainment. In rhymed verse that began, "What is life? Why are we here?" we were posed the challenge of answering profound questions with the promptings of good theater.

Immediately we are hooked by two conniving daughters into their plot to maneuver their widowed mother and father into romance. Grace, played by Gayle Chisholm, the daughter of Libbi, Dot Schuetze, widowed for seven years, is eager for her to connect with Dolores's, Mary Glascock's, widower father Larry, Jack Merelman. Everyone in the audience of course hopes this works. When we soon realize the action will be helped along by intervening mimes, we sit forward, hopes high. But though busy mimes Goldie Grandy, Helen Esposito, and Jean Gentry dance, hand, open and shut convenience before our unsuspecting hero and heroine, the plot thickens.

When Libbi gets cold feet, the desperate daughters hire Harold, played by Gene Schmiel and Gretchen, Joyce Mancini, two bungling community theater actors to scare Libbi into needing Larry's protection. Daughter Grace writes them a check for \$600 of her husband Don's, played by Walt Meyer's, money. This splits their marriage when discovered and Don moves out. Whoops. Even consolation by his friend and Dolores's husband Steve, played by Don Jewel, doesn't help.

So Libbi does need Larry. Just when she is finally willing though, he turns doubtful. This romance is HARD work! Now the good-guy actors confess their part in the burglary, Larry and Libby and even Don reconsider, and FINALLY love conquers all. As the curtain call brought all twelve wonderful thespians forward, I felt like I had really participated in interactive theater. What had I just experienced? A morality play? A comedy? Tragedy? The mixture was great, but could I name it? I didn't have to. Joyce Mancini called it "Dramady." Isn't that perfect?

But perfection doesn't come easy. Behind the many scene changes and artistic signs that announced them, sparse black set design, great props, sound and lights, costumes and makeup were Joey Wagner, Bill Whyte, Sandy Thompson, Sandy Mills, Sandy Iasiello, Treva Whyte, Jean Herr, Margaret Gorzka, Phyllis Schrader and Kathryn Schmiel. Then of course there were the ticket sales by Treva Whyte, the advertising and publicity by Joyce Mancini and Goldie Grandy, the posters by Ed and Bets Knepley, the tri-fold programs by Bill Harrison, and even a videographer, Alan Skerker.

And who directed all this to its very fine finish? Why the co-directors Ina Mayer and Bill Harrison. And who produced *A Few Good Years* for our fall theatrical renewal? Why the ever-smiling Denny Cumber. For their many and on-going gifts to this community and for the contributions and talents of every single person involved, we thank you for this gift of time, hope and entertainment.