

Gin not just to pass the time

Local scene: Moving Day at the Opera House

By John Swartz Special to The Packet

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I saw *Moving Day*, the last installment of this summer's theatre productions at the Opera House.

What do you do with a house all packed up, husband and kids already off on their cross-country trek to a new home, no television (on the night of the first lunar landing) and several travel-sized bottles of gin?

You do what everyone else does when you think there is no one looking in.

You sing, you dance, you pry open boxes still taped up from the last three moves to see what's inside and you regale yourself with witty stories about what you find.

Now that doesn't seem all that interesting to sit in a theatre and watch.

Except for the fact that the tunes aren't that bad, and the singing is pretty good; good enough to carry over the piano accompaniment very well.

But is that enough?

Well, just about the time I began to wonder what the play was about (the last third), it started to become clear.

Throughout the story, Sharon (played by the playwright Cathy Elliot) takes calls from her husband and children. Not much seems out of place until the second last call.

This is when it becomes apparent the gin on this evening is not just something used to pass the time alone. There is trouble on the home front and maybe the gin is responsible.

A dream sequence with Sharon transformed into *Godzilla* really didn't help too much with deciphering what was going on. This is the one part of the play where the lyrics were not as intelligible.

The dream seemed to give a conscious Sharon a reason for to make some realizations, but many questions remain for the audience. We know Sharon may be on the road to recovery, but what about the family? Was she even going to be joining them?

This is not the same kind of play we've come to expect from the Laughoutloud team of producers. With this, the team had little involvement with the production other than selecting it for performance. It's not a musical in the sense we might expect. It's not a comedy, though we laugh at times.

I think it's more an introspective drama with only one character to watch.

This might be daunting for many, but if you like theatre that makes you think, and you can be patient for the sense making scenes to arrive, you will probably like this.

One thing, go to the washroom before the play. It's one act, 90 minutes straight through.

Moving Day runs to Oct. 8 with Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 2 p.m. matinees; Wednesday and Thursday evening shows and Saturday evening shows Sept. 24 and Oct. 1 and 8.

GRASS SKIRTS OR NOT

Sunday's Sharing Place Food Bank fundraiser, Ashiko: Drumming Away Hunger, at the Leacock Museum was very good.

This year, the entertainment on the stage was more interactive than in the past. Cassandra Fox had some of her students on stage and she went through an exercise with the audience on how all that hip movement works.

The Hula San Village Drum and Dance Troupe got audience members on stage to learn a few dance moves — without the grass skirts like the five dancers of the group wore — and did a great job providing the background and history for the various beats they used.

Njacko Backo had a dancer with him that had more energy than I think just about everyone else who was there. In the heat of the day, and it was a very nice day to hold a festival, I might contemplate jumping up to get a beer, but I certainly wouldn't do it as high or for as prolonged a period Njacko's dancer did.

Don Evans, of the Sharing Place, told me that the final accounting is not done yet, but they expect to have raised \$15,000. On to next year.

mop-top invasion

Friday night and Saturday, it's all Beatles all the time downtown. The fifth Beatles Celebration features a performance at the Opera House by Jackie Lomax. I see you scratching your head trying to figure out who that is.

Lomax ended up recording with Apple Records and George Harrison wrote and produced a single called Sour Milk for Lomax. Ringo, Paul McCartney and Eric Clapton played on the recording.

Lomax also sang the fourth harmony part on Dear Prudence and is one of the backing voices on Hey Jude. Lomax regularly performs at the Liverpool Beatles festival.

One of the events in the festival is a showing of The Concert for Bangladesh, the first mega-charity concert of its kind which George Harrison put together. It happened 40 years ago.

It will be shown in the main stage area Saturday night at 8 p.m. followed by performances on the stage by The Rattles and Glass Onion.

Those two bands will be playing the main stage tomorrow night in the reverse order. During the day, there are four stages with action throughout the downtown.

The Orillia Community Church will again be showing films in the afternoon on Saturday. At 10 a.m. its LennonNYC, at 2 p.m., Nowhere Boy.

Some of the individual events like the movies and the stuff at the Opera House have ticket prices, but if you are going to try and take it all in, you can get a wrist band for \$28 at the Opera House box office that gets you into everything.

Rants! Raves! Info? Write John at watchthisproductions@encode.com

