
KEY FOR TWO

**Actad Theatre Group
Promethean Theatre**
Until April 30

Review by Stephanie Johnson

“Key For Two” is classic British comedy at its best or worst – depending on whether or not British farce is your cup of tea.

It is typical British comedy in a slapstick style with a story focused on a mistress who manipulates her schedule to cater for two lovers, both married men. When her girlfriend drops in out of the blue with marriage problems things get out of hand and the inevitable “schedule clash” occurs resulting in mayhem.

“Key For Two” had a long run in London’s West End at the Vaudeville Theatre in the 1980s. In true Vaudeville style John Chapman and Dave Freeman’s writing lacks subtlety. The men are buffoons led by their sexual desires, blatantly cheating on dowdy or dowager wives and their mistresses are manipulative sirens with mercenary motives.

Neither the male nor female sexes fare well in this style of comedy and marriage is a much-maligned institution.

All of this is, of course, communicated in good fun mixed with much door slamming, tale telling and hilarity.

Director Grant Lucas and his selection of actors have supplied a good dose of laughs in true British style in this production.

Bronwyn Ruciak’s Harriett is suitably sexy as she seduces her men while also fleecing their wallets. Glenn Vallen and John Matsen are duly believable as the cheating husbands who fall prey to her wily ways. The comic timing was a little out in the first half of this play on opening night, but they all warmed to their parts in the second half.

Rose Vallen is a lot of fun as Harriett’s childhood friend Anne, particularly once she dons her “Carry On” style nurse’s outfit.

Margaretha Mooney as forceful Magda and Pat Vice as the very dowdy Mildred provide good support as the wives.

However, the star of this show is Brian Godfrey as the inebriated Richard. His delightfully disturbing drunken antics enliven the second half of this show.

If you like British humour of the bedroom farce variety then you will enjoy this production in the intimate setting of the Promethean theatre.