



No matter how messed up your life is, it does not come close to the lives of these women.

Addicted to Love heroines search for love in the 1980's

Addicted To Love
Nexus Theatre
til Nov 14.

review by Kerry Deane

In John Gregory's play we find three mature working women struggling to find love in the eighties. Giselle (Julie Bond) is searching through the nightclubs for it, taking home a different man (always younger) each night. Hero (Kirk Grayson) is trying to find it through a combination of her common law husband and her lover. Sharon (Denise Delong) has apparently found it with her latest boyfriend, a "perfect" doctor, but his perfection makes her feel insecure, and she does not trust him enough to introduce him to her friends.

Each of them has a slightly different view of love. One looks upon it as a "voyage into the unknown," another sees love as security, and the third views it as being possible if one has the correct marketing.

Intertwined with the theme of love is the relationship they share with each other. Jealousy, spite and anger are constantly present. Giselle feels that the other two were always the close friends, with her looking on from the sidelines. Sharon is always testing loyalties, setting traps for her friends and trying to divide them so they would each be only her friend, and not friends with the two, trying to please both.

The script is extremely clever, with many funny, quotable one-liners. Giselle, who always has the evening's entertainment

planned out (a tour of the night clubs) is described by Sharon as "a decadent girl guide leader." When Sharon gets pregnant by her doctor-boyfriend, it comes out that all three secretly want children and that they are afraid of becoming too old, or being infertile.

The plot has been made somewhat unbelievable, though, by the delivery of the lines. The women truly appear to dislike each other. Their delivery of the insults and arguments are angry and harsh. With friends like that to backstab you, who needs enemies. If the lines were delivered in the joking tone — but serious content — that that these women truly do care for each other. Instead, I left the theatre wondering why the women did not part company after the first scene.

The acting of the three women was sufficient for their parts, with perhaps the best performance given by Kirk Grayson (yes, she is a woman) as the vacillating, wishy-washy Hero. Least convincing was Denise Delong, who overacted the bitchy Sharon. There is some justification in this, however, as Sharon is always manipulating, and perhaps not feeling the emotions she is emitting. The actions of the women are deliberately taken to the extreme to get the point across.

Despite its flaws, this is a good night's entertainment. Leaving the theatre you have this warm feeling that no matter how messed up your life is, it does not even come close to the lives of these three women. As Sharon says, "[they are] lucky [they] put up with each other," because no one else would.

Artistic director of Nexus plans for year ahead

interview by Kerry Deane

"I subscribe to Woody Allen's theory that everything is about love or death," says John Milton Branton, the artistic director of Nexus Theatre.

Addicted to Love, the theatre's current play, follows this philosophy. This dramatic comedy by John Gregory is about three working women in the eighties, and how they balance love and relationships.

Branton has been involved with theatre since 1968. He got his start with Toronto workshops, productions, and for the next seven years worked in the Toronto area with companies such as the Toronto Free Theatre, Factory Lab and the Theatre Hour Company.

In 1974 he started freelance directing in Brockville, Ontario, and guest directed at the University of Toronto. After working in various locations across the country, he moved to California and worked casting extras in the film industry for four and a half years.

Back in Toronto, he worked with the Solar Stage, a lunch hour theatre. From there he spent two years at York University in the MFA program. During his second year there, he operated his own theatre company, Actors Alive. This is Branton's first season at Nexus.

As the artistic director of the theatre, Branton has control of "co-ordinating the look of the theatre...the style presented". He also directs most of the play (four or five) chooses the plays, directs the casting and hires set designers and the production staff. As the artistic director he is the chief executive officer of the Nexus Theatre Society. In addition to this he is the managing director.

Many people would assume that times of economic hardship would be difficult for the

theatres, but according to Branton this is not necessarily so. It is extremely difficult for a new company to start up since the governments have cut back funding, but once funding has been established it rarely gets cut off. It order to qualify for funding, the company must be a registered charitable organization and have worked for one year.

Nexus receives money from Alberta Culture, the City of Edmonton, Canada Council, and the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts. Since it is extremely difficult to get the level of funding raised, the theatre also goes to the corporate sector for funds. Their method of "soliciting corporate funds" stresses their goal of "enriching the cultural aspect of the city". Alberta Government Telephones, the Edmonton Journal, and Imperial Oil Limited are sponsors for the current play, *Addicted to Love*.

The Nexus Theatre is in its sixth season. It is a lunchtime theatre, so people working in offices can capture some culture during their lunch. More practical for university students, Nexus has evening shows on Friday and Saturday at 7 pm, and a three course dinner theatre package has been arranged with Churchill's Restaurant nearby.

What is in the Nexus' future? Branton would like to see the stage busy all the time. With this in mind, next year he would like to bring dance and other theatre companies to the Nexus for short runs. In the New Year he wants to have late night experimental theatre, a one night stand for new ideas, new directors, and economically unfeasible productions. Branton sees it as "a relaxed, non-commercial, interactive, developmental workshop". He also envisions a weekly, ongoing actors workshop, "an actor's gym where you can go to exercise your acting skills — you need feedback, an audience to play off of."

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