

REVIEW

The Two Timers

St. Albert Dinner Theatre

April 21 to 23

Kinsmen Banquet Centre, 47 Riel Drive

Tickets: \$60 single, senior/student/group \$55 plus GST. Call 780-222-0102 or visit www.stalberttheatre.com

If you have ever been in a long relationship that has endured a few struggles, you will feel an instant connection to St. Albert Dinner's Theatre's sex farce which opened April 14 at the Kinsmen Banquet Centre.

In Rob Wheeler's charming *The Two Timers*, the Ontario playwright paints an over-the-top scenario of two couples whose communication skills need a lot of work. What makes the play so relatable is the hilarious disconnect men and women experience in interpreting the other sex's actions.

The Two Timers' first few pages of the script took too long to get rolling and provided little substance. However, once the actors warmed up, non-stop laughter reverberated throughout the hall.

Anne/Allan and Bev/Brian have enjoyed a couples' friendship for years. When Brian finds a bee nest under his deck, Allan offers to help with disastrous results. During a gasoline explosion, the deck turns into a fiery inferno and the house is unlivable for three months.

The insurance will cover all repair costs, except for accommodation. Feeling guilty about setting the fire, Allan invites the artsy couple to live at their three-bedroom penthouse apartment.

During the enforced domesticity, the husbands secretly take up dancing to impress the wives. When the two women see them practicing, they mistakenly believe the men are having a gay affair. To keep their marriage intact, Anne and Bev turn up the bedroom heat, but the results are not what they expected.

Although Brian likes to boast "too much is never enough," the husbands reach a point where they cannot handle their sex-crazed wives. Allan even posits a theory the women are trying to knock them off for the mens' \$1-million insurance. As the wheels fly off the cart, the humour escalates.

Wheeler's characters are dated stereotypes (the men are completely clueless and the women die-hard shoppers). Despite these restrictions, the foursome presents a tight-knit cast that builds empathetic characters while punching out one-liners, anecdotes, and jokes.

Tim Kubasek crafts Allan as a passive softie who loves his wife and reading books in a quiet corner. At first, he enjoys all the attention until he sprains a muscle. Jack Morrison as Brian is a more brash, randy character reduced to tiredly crawling around on all fours from the attention.

Although the script is not top drawer, it is flexible enough to allow for improvised scenes. One of the play's funniest, improvised scenes occurred when Allan threw an exhausted Brian a banana. Brian missed and the banana flew out of his hand. Without missing a beat, Kubasek leapt into action using improvised dialogue and exaggerated mugging. And the audience lapped it up.

Shelby Murray as Anne delivers one of her best performances yet for the theatre troupe. As Anne, she appears relaxed and confident in the role of a woman who maintains control in her life as a super-clean freak only to discover relationships cannot be controlled.

Sarah Gibson, who does double duty as both Bev and the play's director, carries the biggest load. As Bev, she's fun and bubbly, and as the director, she keeps the pace moving briskly.

And hats off to St. Albert dance instructor Sabrina Thieven for stepping in to give the guys a few pointers on the fine art of couple's dancing.

The Two Timers is one of the strongest productions St. Albert Dinner Theatre has mounted. After enjoying a savoury and diverse buffet dinner, the relaxed laughter was just what many needed. *The Two Timers* runs April 21 to 23.



***About the Author:* Anna Borowiecki**