

Langham play inspires awkward memories

By Vivian Moreau - Victoria News

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Review: Self-absorbed sisters duke it out in *The Memory of Water*

Ten years ago Shelagh Stephenson's play, *The Memory of Water*, won the Laurence Olivier award for best comedy after a successful run in London's West End. At that pre-911 time, the self-absorbed Boomer generation was fond of blaming toxic parents for everything.

In the Victoria Theatre Guild's adaptation of Stephenson's play, three sisters gather in the bedroom of their recently deceased mother. Each feels their mother and each other have failed them.

"We don't argue, we bicker," says Lorene Cammiade as Mary, the over-achieving sister who's having trouble sleeping in her mother's bed.

Others whining about how they've been done wrong include baby sister Odile Nelson as Catherine, and Melissa Blank as Teresa.

"I'm so depressed," Catherine says, climbing onto her mother's bed.

"I do everything," says Teresa, a health-food nut initially critical of Mary's drinking. One of the funniest scenes comes, however, when Teresa picks up the bottle and lets loose in a bobble-headed tirade.

On Dan Thachuk's single set – the bedroom overlooks an off-stage snowy ocean front – the sisters, Mary's lover Mike (Mur Meadows), Teresa's husband Frank (Rob Cruse) and a supremely elegant Elizabeth Brimacombe as their ghostly mom pick apart their relationships. And in true Boomer narcissism, it's not until minutes before the 135-minute play ends does anyone say they are sorry.

There were no missteps in the opening-night performance at Langham Court Theatre. The actors moved comfortably in and around each other and seemed to genuinely have fun. So too, was the mostly senior audience, who laughed heartily and applauded generously at a play that holds a mirror up to a generation that one hopes will get over itself.

The Memory of Water runs until Dec. 4 at 805 Langham Court.

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