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### GLT play has potential—but needs some spice

ike any fine recipe, Georgetown Little Theatre's Cookin' with Gus has potential to serve up a great dish, but could do with a little work.

The comedy, which opened last week at John Elliott Theatre, centres around the plight of Gussie Richardson, an accomplished chef, recipe book author and food columnist who has done quite well for herself.

She's fairly content, but when the offer of a syndicated television cooking show is dangled in front of her, she figures she's finally hit the big time. Only one small problem— Gussie's terrified of standing in front of a TV camera.

Walter, her live-in partner of 18 years, isn't too impressed with this new development in their lives. He'd sooner get married to Gussie, rather than continue living in sin. And complicating their lives with a syndicated cooking show is the last thing on his mind.

Gussie's agent Bernie on the other hand, is ecstatic about the possibility of his client hosting her own show. Next door neighbour, the perpetually intoxicated gypsy Carmen, is quite happy to support Gus's dreams, so long as she's a guest host on the show.

Walter has been dabbling in amateur hypnosis, so Gussie convinces him to treat her for her fear of the camera. He is successful, but at the last moment, decides to pre-program both Gus and Carmen to become a little drunker with every mention of certain words while on-camera, and in doing so, seal the fate of the show.

As a result, the duo are pretty much loaded by the end of their first show taping, much to the enjoyment of the audience.

Jennifer R. Nodar plays the easygoing Gussie. Although she presents a likeable and amiable character, her dialogue need some of that aforementioned 'spice— the fault of the playwright, not the actor. She's just too mundane.

Shane Philips plays the ever patient Walter. His character is evenkeel and relaxed, but he comes across too relaxed. He's simply too laid back— a little more energy in his character would be a plus.

Roscoe Peterson plays Gus's agent

Bernie. From his loud, gaudy clothes to his tendency to over-act, his character has the potential to give the show a real boost, but unfortunately, doesn't. In his case, less could certainly be more.

Pat Ball steals the show with her wacky portrayal of the lush gypsy Carmen. It's a challenge playing a drunk, but Ball has the part nailed down nicely, and gives some much needed comic relief.

The well-appointed set adds to the flavour of the play, with a wellthought-out layout and lots of attention to detail. Lighting was effective but occasionally a bit sudden in its changes—possibly an opening night adjustment.

The first act of Cookin' with Gus tends to move slowly, but Act 2 makes up for wait, giving the audience something to laugh about before the end of the show.

Cookin' with Gus isn't the funniest or most entertaining play GLT has produced. But it does have the potential to entertain. If only they can sprinkle a little more spice into the recipe.

—By Ted Brown, staff writer

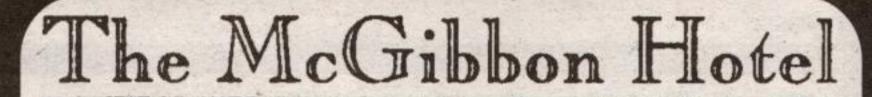
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