

# 'Key for Two' big hit in the end

I was in for a pleasant surprise Friday night when my fears that the latest offering by the Milton Players Theatre Group would flop proved unfounded.

Admittedly, the first half of *Key for Two* by John Chapman and Dave Freeman was a bit slow, and during intermission I heard a few regulars explaining to apparent newcomers that the last show was much funnier.

I was already writing the lede to my story... something about "Fresh ideas and faces needed." And it's true that pretty much everything the Players puts on is an echo of a previous offering.

But sometime after the last free sandwiches were eaten (by my husband, I think) Friday night, just after the mid-way point, things started picking up.

The chemistry was there, the lines were cemented, the hilarity was more over-the-top than ever and the constant in-and-out, swapping-of-identities, tangled-web-of-lies that make up a farce came out in full force.

And suddenly I returned to a previous comment I've made when it comes to the Players' shows: Why fix what ain't broke?

*Key for Two*, directed by Susan Cranford and produced by son



with **STEPHANIE HOUNSELL**

## Back stage

Brian, follows the antics of Harriet (Eleanor Gribbon), a "kept" woman who sees two different men, Alec and Gordon (played by Tim Beddoes and Geoff Ford respectively) on different nights of the week, unbeknownst to them — and their wives (Paulette Tae and Cathy Imus).

She slyly has each man providing for her living expenses.

Naturally, the two show up at the same time and Harriet does her best to keep each none the wiser, with some help from friend Anne (played by Sharon Beddoes) and Anne's confused and comically-drunk husband (Ben McFarlane).

The Players really shine when it comes to the more physical comedic elements. Highlights from *Key for Two* include a memorable piggyback and Beddoes slipping on a halibut.

As usual, Beddoes is brilliant in the role at which he's now an

expert — the Englishman trying to either untangle a mess or keep a mess tangled.

And Gribbon makes herself perfectly unlikable as the conniving Harriet.

The set designers should be recognized for expertly building two rooms — a bedroom and a sitting room — where no detail is spared.

Because most of the shows the Players put on are so similar — British farces that follow a set formula and archetypal characters — chances are you'll love them or not care much for them. I fall somewhere in the middle and would like to see the Players venture out and try something new.

Fortunately, it seemed most of Friday's audience was more than happy with what they were being served up, and judging from their laughter, *Key for Two* was a hit.

The play continues at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, 500 Childs Dr.

Tickets cost \$20 for the 8 p.m. shows tomorrow and Friday.

Saturday's performance is a dinner theatre, with dinner at 7 p.m. and curtain call at 8:15 p.m. Tickets cost \$45 at the door and \$40 in advance.

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