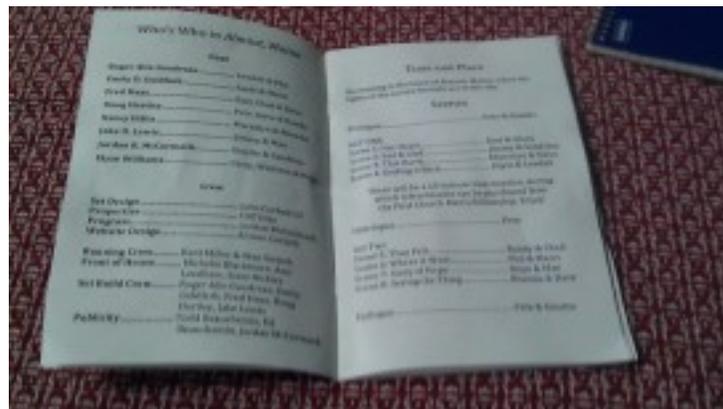


MarlboroughPatch

'Almost, Maine' Pleasantly Breaks Up a Sunday Afternoon

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The average Sunday in Marlborough can get to be a bit monotonous and drab. Sundays are a day of routine. Go to Mass, grab a grapper at Bumpy's, get yard work done, prepare dinner. We go through the motions waiting for the dreaded Monday morning alarm clock. Days like yesterday are even worse. Coming off of a week with temperatures in the high 70s and sunshine as far as the eye could see, March 25 was a gray, misty, and chilly day.

That is what made the performance of ["Almost, Maine"](#) by the Ghost Light Players such a treat. I am always looking for any reason to break up a plodding Sunday, so when I see an inexpensive chance to see local live theater, I jump on it. That is how I wound up at the First Church of Marlborough at 2 p.m. Sunday. For \$15 I was gifted with one of the most charming spectacles I could have imagined.

The Fellowship Hall, located around the side of the High Street establishment, offered a welcome shelter to the dropping temperatures and drizzling rain. A simple set-up of a hundred or so

folding chairs, a small concession table, and a dark stage with a sole lamp lit at the center; the Ghost Light. Along with a few dozen other patrons, I grabbed a seat near the center and for the ensuing two hours, took in the inaugural performance of Marlborough's newest theater troupe.

“Almost, Maine” is a series of short, mainly two-person acts that explore relationships in both serious and comical lights. The play takes place in the fictional town of Almost, located somewhere in upstate Maine. It touches on various fun stereotypes of native Mainers and through the 19 different characters we meet, we get a glimpse of love and loss in the cold winter.

The play is book-ended by the relationship of Pete and Ginette. They are featured in the Prologue as getting into a minor fight, which pushes Ginette away from Pete. She leaves him sitting alone on a park bench. In Act One, we see four scenes. The first shows us what it is like to have a broken heart and nowhere to go. Glory’s husband has died and she has trekked to Almost to see the Northern Lights and bid him a final goodbye. She finds herself on the property of East, a repairman who instantly falls in love with her and offers to repair her broken heart.

This is the type of “on the nose” dry humor that “Almost, Maine” provides. Ghost Light did a wonderful job portraying these situations.

Scene two drops the age range a bit to give me a more recognizable situation. Jimmy is drinking at the local pub, (where sad people drink for free!) when he sees Sandrine, the one who got away. Sandrine left Jimmy and was found by another, to whom she is engaged.

The final two scenes of Act One were fantastically acted by Nancy Hillia and Doug Hartley, and Roger Alix-Gaudreau and Emily D. Goldfarb. One played on the idea of a man who was born without pain sensors, but struggles to figure out what hurts and what he should fear, especially love. The second showed us a couple at a cross-roads that through an unusual circumstance, finds their way to true love.

We came to the intermission and unfortunately Pete was still sitting

along on the bench, no Ginette in sight.

Luckily, the mood changed quickly, and we were treated to a very humorous scene between Randy and Chad. The two are best friends who suddenly realize they are (literally) falling in love with one another. Hartley and Fred Haas continuously try to stand up to no avail, they are helplessly in love.

The final three scenes were an emotional rollercoaster. Gaudreau and Goldfarb starred together as a couple who this time do not seem to fix a fight and we are left questioning what happened when the scene abruptly stops when "the other shoe drops" (once again literally - from the rafters!).

Scene Eight once again featured Hillia as Rhonda, an older woman who is emotionally shut off. Dave (Haas), finally kisses her for the first time which is followed by the most hilarious part of the afternoon. As they are in a rush to get to the bedroom, they must undress. Each is wearing many layers, so for long minutes on stage they are racing to shed themselves of the winter clothing.

The play closes with an epilogue, once again we see Pete alone on the bench. However now, in the distance and walking towards him is Ginette. She has returned and the two embrace as the lights fade out.

Props go out to Kat Alix-Gaudreau and Kim Marie Beauchemin, the founders of the Players as well as the Director and Manager of Almost, Maine. Their team's efforts were well recognized by the community and I, personally cannot wait for the next performance. This Summer, they will be doing "Shakespeare in the Park" to benefit the local food pantry. For more information on auditions and tickets, visit www.ghostlightplayers.com

The overall performances of the eight actors/actresses were delightful. The sets were simple, but well established and the ambiance was definitely that of a small town in northern Maine. I'm just glad this Sunday's taste of the area came from a more pleasant place than a Stephen King novel.