

## REVIEW: The Melville Boys a must see

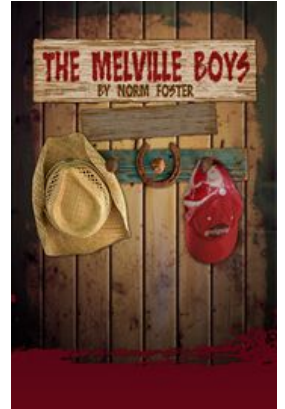
*Brampton Guardian*

BRAMPTON— It's been almost 30 years since Canadian playwright Norm Foster first brought *The Melville Boys* to the stage— and it's obvious why this play (his second of 50) put him on the map in 1984 and kept him there.

It's no wonder the Rose Theatre is presenting the play as the final installment in the Summer Theatre Series.

Foster knows how to tell a story, and it's evident that even in his early years of writing, he mastered delivering the trinity of excellent theatre: a stitch in your side, a lump in your throat and a good, hard tug at your heartstrings.

In fact, *The Melville Boys* is perhaps one of the most beautifully-executed samples of his humour-meets-humanity style of storytelling. It's raw. It's visceral. It's real. It's a snapshot of anyone's life on any given day, anywhere. And that is what makes it profound.



*The Melville boys runs until Aug. 24 at the Rose Theatre.*

This story sees brothers Lee and Owen Melville arrive at an aunt's cottage for a guys weekend. Lee, the older of the two, is a responsible family man who also has fatherly instincts for his younger, carefree, irresponsible brother.

Lee, who is dying, sees the weekend as an opportunity to get Owen to face the grim prognosis, but Owen keeps dodging the topic, and just wants to fish, drink beer and have a good time with the two sisters they just met.

What ensues is a weekend of indiscretions, confrontations and revelations— bringing a lot of laughs and tears to the audience.

Foster has an acute ability for writing dialogue. The language he uses is authentic— it's never watered-down or forced. He also easily draws out slick, punchy humour that is clever and refreshing and extremely well-timed.

But as much as the story is a success, a play also relies on direction and casting— both of which excel in the Rose Theatre's production.

Rob Woodcock has a distinct handle on Foster's intentions and this is obvious in his direction of the cast.

The cast features an amazing array of talent, including Brampton's own Scott Carmichael as older brother Lee. Erin MacKinnon plays older sister Mary, and Jamie McRoberts gives an entertaining delivery of younger sister Loretta.

But it's Jim Watson as Owen who really steals the spotlight. Watson animates Owen with just the right dose of boyish charm that even his self-centred ways are affable. But you know, all along, that there's something more under the surface.

There are moments in this play that are delivered with such intensity and conviction you forget it's a work of fiction— moments where you are holding your breath.

And that, my friends, is the hallmark of good theatre.

It runs until Aug. 24 in Studio Two. Tickets are \$29. For more, call 905-874-2800.