

 **kanata theatre**  
presents

# Staff Room

by Joan Burrows



Directed by Jim Holmes

*Staff Room* by Joan Burrows is produced by special arrangement with the playwright.

There will be one intermission. Coffee, soft drinks and desserts will be available. Please be considerate: ensure that pagers and cellular phones are turned off. The use of cameras or tape recorders during the performance is not permitted.



## *Staff Room*

by Joan Burrows

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### CAST

#### THE COMPANY

Bob Lackey  
Brett Geddes  
Brittany Adams  
Chris Story  
Clare Flockton  
Craig Edwardson  
Gwendy Tolley  
Halia Osadca  
Johan DeSilva  
Katie Ryerson  
Sandra Wickham  
Shannan Collins-Vig  
Shelley Jean Harrison



*The director, Jim Holmes, with the playwright, Joan Burrows, on the final night of the production.*





## THEATRE REVIEW

# Cumbersome production bogs down

Retired teacher's play  
Staff Room to blame  
more than actors

BY PATRICK LANGSTON

We'll skip the strap, but that doesn't mean there will be any gold stars for Kanata Theatre's *Staff Room*, which opened Tuesday at the Ron Maslin Playhouse.

The fault is not all Kanata Theatre's. *Staff Room*, by retired high school teacher Joan Burrows, is lame, even if it did win the Best Production award in the 2004 Theatre Ontario Festival.

A series of vignettes with 14 actors playing more than 50 characters, the play plunks us into a school staff room, that mysterious place we all wondered about as students.

Turns out there's nothing at all mysterious about it: teachers, apparently, are just like the rest of us — harried, a little insecure, trying to do what's best in the face of dunderheaded bosses and the other paraphernalia of daily life.

As the play evolves (at two hours plus, director Jim Holmes should have quickened the pace), we sit in on conversations interesting and banal, learn about romances past and present, and witness, writ small, the age-old round of human dreams and failings.

Some of this Burrows and Kanata Theatre handle well. Mac, played by the very funny Bob Lackey, is a well-in-

tioned math teacher whose hilarious encounter with a student's mother speaks volumes about miscommunication.

The wholly credible and utterly humourless vice-principal Sheila (Sandra Ironmonger-Wickham) is efficient but worryingly brittle. And Chris Story is hilarious as a slimy, on-the-make photocopier repairman (although one does wonder what sort of duplicating emergency has brought him to the school at night). But with 50-plus other characters dashing off and on the stage, mostly through two doors in Jim Fritz's suitably dowdy set, the viewer longs for more depth and less action from these staff room denizens.

Playwright Burrows, perhaps overwhelmed by so many characters, also slides into stereotypes, among them Inga (Halia Osadca), the Nazi-like graduation ceremony organizer, complete with German accent, and Mr. Slodovonik (Lackey again), the English-challenged immigrant caretaker.

When things turn serious, and you can see it coming a mile away, the production bogs down big time.

Story, a dandy photocopier technician, is stilted as a second custodian forever scarred by the death of his son. Ditto Craig Edwardson as an earnest, and possibly gay (Burrows plays that card too heavily) teacher.

Lacking snap, the production also underplays many of *Staff Room's* other poignant and funny moments.

Four energetic young actors — Johan de Silva, Brett Geddes, Brittany Adams

and Katie Ryerson — add sparkle to the production.

*Staff Room* continues at the Ron Maslin Playhouse until June 3. Tickets & times: 831-4435.