



The cast of "Veronica's Room" — from left, Linda Ryan, Pat Petipas, Ja-clyn Phelps and Chris Boros — will leave theater-goers in suspense throughout the show.

'Veronica's Room' is an enthralling thriller

By **Chuck Poliafico**
Correspondent

Ira Levin's play "Death-trap" and film "Rosemary's Baby" gave him a reputation for creating top notch murder mystery/thriller productions. Add his little known and overlooked play "Veronica's Room" to that list.

Broadview Heights Spotlights Community Theater's production of this mystery thriller is outstanding. It is enthralling from beginning to end, with four superlative performances under the watchful eye of director Alex J. Nine.

The production keeps you absorbed from beginning to end. It moves quickly. The first act is a little more than 35 minutes and the second act is less than an hour. But within that short period is a fast moving, well-acted production.

The premise is simple. It is 1973 and Susan, a sociology major, and Larry, an attorney, are on their first date at a fancy restaurant where they meet John and Maureen Mackey, a nice older couple

that convinces them to come back to the mansion where they have been caretakers for many years. It seems Susan resembles Veronica Brabissant, the long dead daughter of the elderly woman who lives at the mansion and who still believes she is alive. Once at the mansion, the older couple induces Susan to briefly impersonate Veronica for the elderly woman to comfort her during her last remaining days.

When Susan agrees, the doors become locked; the line between madness and reality blurs, and murder and mayhem begins. Is Susan really Susan from 1973 or is she Veronica from 1935? Who are the elderly caretakers of the home, and what has happened to Larry?

The play is written for four characters, and it relies squarely on all of the actors to pull off the production. One weak link could ruin the entire play. Spotlights delivers with four outstanding performances, especially from its two female leads.

Linda Ryan has portrayed a wide range of characters in her more than 45 years of performing on stage from a stern, no-nonsense 1939 mother in "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" to the Rev. Mother in "Nun-sense II." All of her acting chops are required as Maureen Mackey in "Veronica's Room," and she delivers with a very powerful performance.

Not to be outdone is **Ja-clyn Phelps** as Susan, who is put through a wide range of emotions — respectful, innocent and confused to terror, madness and hysterics. Phelps delivers on all counts and, along with Ryan, makes this one production that shouldn't be missed.

But don't overlook the two male performers in the production. **Chris Boros** as Larry and **Pat Petipas** as John hold their own against the two powerful female performances. As a matter of fact, Boros really shines on stage, once the true Larry is revealed, and Petipas brings some humor to the production.

Kudos to Nine, his assistant director **Kendra Schaefer**, his stage manager **Renee Desantis** and to producer **Gary Marton** for taking a little known and overlooked show and giving us an exciting and thrilling production from beginning to end.

"Veronica's Room" continues through May 23 at Broadview Center, 9543 Broadview Road, Broadview Heights. Call (440) 526-4404.

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Thursday, May 14, 2009