

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

'Brooklyn Bridge' a charming metaphor of human (dis)connectedness at THT



Photos Jay Yamada

From left: Terrance Smith and Emma Curtin in "Brooklyn Bridge" at Town Hall Theatre

By Sophie Braccini

Sacha, a 10-year-old girl going on 11, must complete an essential school assignment for the next day: an essay on the Brooklyn Bridge. She is alone that evening, her mother is at work and her father is long gone ... and she can't find a pen. Living in downtown New York in an apartment building where people don't know each other, she is going to venture out of her comfort zone and reach out to her quirky and colorful neighbors, discovering many truths along the way about human connectedness, solidarity and friendship. The craftily directed play, "Brooklyn Bridge," is a pleasure for the whole family that can be appreciated at different levels.

The Brooklyn Bridge is a testimony to human resilience and vision. It was built to bring together two neighborhoods that looked at each other across the East River, and it took 14 years to be built in the later part of the 19th century. Sacha loves the bridge and is in fact in awe of it; she knows so many facts about it, but beyond the ab-

sence of the pen, she has writer's block because she has not defined yet what the bridge means to her. By meeting her neighbors – Sam, a dental student; Trudi, a businesswoman with time management issues; John, a wheelchair-bound Brooklyn Bridge buff and Talidia, a Puerto Rican single mother with many children – Sacha discovers the importance of reaching out and connecting to others, and finally her vision of the bridge.

Young actress Emma Curtin is on stage almost non-stop, portraying a charming, smart, precocious but still naive pre-teen. The young actress can already boast a long list of achievements throughout the East Bay as dancer, singer and actress. As the lead in "Brooklyn Bridge" she brings a freshness of approach as well as impeccable craftsmanship. It takes skills to perfectly deliver the very lovely language used by playwright Melissa James Gibson, who has constructed a simple, straight narrative – using the classic unity of time, place and action, studded with humor. Curtin is simply excellent and

her fellow actors also rise to the challenge.

Kudos go to the direction by Graham Smith and scenic designer Liliana Duque Piñeiro. The actors move between floors, in and out of apartments, and there is even a visual rendering of the construction of the bridge that's quite poetic and inspirational.

People of any age will appreciate the play and might even, when they return home, decide to knock on the door of that strange neighbor they have never talked to before, even though they have lived there for years, and maybe there will be something they will learn from one another.

"Brooklyn Bridge" opened at Town Hall Theatre on Feb. 28 and will run through March 23. The team offers different events such as talk-backs with the cast and director on certain nights.

Tickets and details can be found at www.townhalltheatre.com/brooklyn-bridge.



Emma Curtin and Tom Reilly in Brooklyn Bridge at Town Hall Theatre.

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