

Wonderful Town a smash success

Review by DONNA KELL

OAKVILLE — Theatre Sheridan opened *Wonderful Town* last Thursday at the Oakville campus to an enthusiastic and amused audience.

The play, directed by Rod Maxwell, is based on a book by Joseph Fields and James Chodorov. The two lead characters, Eileen (Catherine Russell) and Ruth (Michelle Berting) set out from Ohio to New York, with the intention of being famous.

Ruth is a writer sent on a wild goosechase to interview Portuguese sailors. They know no English except for their singing of *La Conga*. This scene is superb. The dancing is professional and the actors are quite humorous.

Christopher Street is the place of self destruction, as the tour guide (Mandy Snape) sings at the play's beginning. It is where Ruth and sister Eileen meet all sorts of unusual characters.

Lippincott, a soda parlor dandy played by Barry Higgins, is outrageously funny as the clutzy but vain suitor for Eileen. Chick Clark (David Connolly) another of Eileen's admirers, is one the audience can love to hate. Clark is a sleazy journalist who cannot keep his hands off Eileen.

Ruth meets Robert Baker (Ian Simpson) at the Manhattener where she submits her writing. This journalist falls in love with Ruth. Simpson has a wonderful voice, worthy of his role as Ruth's Romeo.

Some other high points of the play include Michele Berting's rendition of *100 Ways to Lose a Man*; the Irish police ensembled as a quartet; *Wreck* (played by James Woods) singing a song about football; and of course the *La Conga* sequence which combines humor and musical talent.

Wonderful Town is playing until December 5 at the theatre in Sheridan Oakville. Tickets are available at the box office.



A romantic moment in *Wonderful Town*. Left to right are Michelle Berting, Ian Simpson, Barry Higgins and Catherine Russell.

Photo by Maria Pereira