



BARRY WOJCIKOWSKI

**LOCAL INFLUENCE:** *Moose on the Loose* is playing at Magnus Theatre until April 25.

# One feisty frolic

## THEATRE REVIEW

By Linda Maehans - TB Source

**M**agnus' main-stage season closes with one feisty frolic of a play, done up in entertainingly exaggerated Italian style.

So no, nothing tepid or timid here; put simply, with *Moose on the Loose* we are served lots of animated energy, emotion and fun brought to life with gusto as only those born directly into the Italian culture can deliver. The rest of us (the tepid ones) are drawn to all the on-stage antics and passion like onlooker-moths to a flame; in this case it's an immigrant flame that nothing, not even an afternoon trip to the slammer, can douse. And betcha didn't know this: our ever-present northern climate mascot, the moose, easily identifiable as one of the most magnificent creatures in all of North America, well, he speak'a da English too!

So, yes, with *Moose on the Loose* playwright Dina Morrone (born and raised a Port Arthur girl) brings us on a contemporary lark of a ride. OK, OK. Mebee no exact-a-mente a ride. Its-a no likely anyone has successfully put a saddle on a moose and tried that. But "hey, it could happen." This from the moose. Come to think of it, he has a point, or at least his antlers do; and as the reliable Italian adage goes: ba da bing ba da boom. Anything's possible.

On gala opening night Morrone's colour-filled depiction of the lives of several generations of the Tappino's of Way Up

lane with chuckles and lumps in our throats in equal measure. Because this, our Lakehead, was built and in no insignificant way by the arrival of immigrants with steadfast work ethics and sinewy strengths to persevere. The Italians, sure; but many other European cultures too. Keeping in mind as well the original and historical cultures of the area: the First Nations; and later the British and the French. Just some of the thoughts and realisations crossing the mind of this reviewer as she watched the play.

Back to the moose, and those big highway signs indicating moose-crossings. "First of all, we're not cross at all; we're friendly. And really, when have you ever known us to cross the road exactly where those signs are?" Good point. And let's not forget: when it looks like there might be a storm on its way, we should always look out the window first. Then check the weather channel on TV.

Now, it is simply not possible to remark on the individual talents of a cast of twelve. A few stand-out's for me: Viviana Zarrillo as Maria Tappino; Paul Amato as Giuseppe Tappino; Linda Goranson as Pina Pupi; Sam Moses as Rodolfo Pupi: their vivacious and charming and curmudgeonly portrayals of the (various) heads of the family truly warmed our hearts. As did young Wesley Graham, making his professional debut on a Magnus' stage as Timothy.

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