

Showcase

ANDREW SHACKLEY | Showcase Editor • (661) 267-4159

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Local actress takes LA stage in '4Play'

By ANDREW SHACKLEY
Showcase Editor

Originally produced in New York and coming direct from a sold-out run in Chicago, "4Play: Sex in a Series" will make its West Coast debut at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 14 at the Actors Company in West Hollywood. The show is presented by trip.la, a not-for-profit production company dedicated to reaching out to a new audience by producing original, relevant new work for live exhibition on stage. Performances continue through March 17.

Focusing on three couples — one heterosexual, one gay, one lesbian — "4Play" aims to blur the lines between art and life, gay and straight with its universal (though, "not-so-simple") tale of love as told through four interconnected acts.

"We're so excited to bring this very special show to LA," says trip. founder and artistic director Graham Brown, who created "4Play" in 2004 with Nathan Faudree and Lisa Roth.

That sentiment is echoed in local actress Kirstin Racicot, who sees the show as another opportunity to make her mark in the world of show business. Born in Lancaster, raised in Missouri and having operated a summer-stock theatre program in northwestern Iowa, Racicot always knew she wanted to return to California to pursue her career in film, television and the stage.

She made her fateful return to the High Desert in 2014 and has since worked on the production side in a handful of projects; performed onstage at the renowned Dorothy Chandler Pavilion with the Los Angeles Opera (in a production of "Pagliacci"); and even appeared on the small screen in shows like HBO's "Big Little Lies" and "Sharp Objects."

In search of her next challenge, Racicot went into her audition for "4Play" like any other gig — but it wasn't until she was called back that she realized this project was amounting to something special.

"When we dove-in and really found out what we were doing, (I realized that) it's different from anything I've ever done and ever seen," Racicot, who was



Kirstin Racicot
(Contributed)

If You Go

WHEN: 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14; 8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, Feb. 15 through March 17.

WHERE: trip. @ The Actors Company, 916 A North Formosa Ave., Los Angeles

COST: \$25; \$70, "Lover's Package" (includes two tickets, champagne, chocolates and a naughty/nice surprise).

DETAILS: (800) 838-3006; www.tripnyc.org.

cast in an ensemble role, said. "I'm excited and anxious to see what people in Los Angeles will think."

On opening night, Racicot will perform an opening monologue as Jessica, a minor character that sets the stage for what's to come. By the show's second performance, Racicot will portray Alexa, a struggling actress who provides plenty of the play's comic relief. Her roles will alternate in subsequent performances, though her affinity for Alexa is clear.

"Graham suggested that he wants (Alexa) to feel a little bit like Carol Burnett. For any actor, anyone in the business, Alexa is the one who constantly gives bad auditions," the 27 year old said of her role, which incorporates a good amount of improv. "You get to have fun with it; you can play her multiple ways. ... It's been fun to play a silly role like that."

Because there are no audience expectations as to what either of her characters should be, Racicot notes a willingness to try new things and break free from her comfort zone.

"It's good to stay on your toes and keep it interesting," she said. "As actors, we're all trying to be someone else, so it's fun to make these choices."

"People want to see different things. There's the classic plays ... and those are great, but people like different."

This show is certainly that.

A meta-theatrical play-within-a-play, "4Play" takes advantage of The Actor's Company's flexible "Other Space" and will feature cocktail tables in lieu of traditional stage seating. The breezy and brief performance will happen all around the auditorium with the audience intermingled with the cast. Racicot says that audiences will feel "completely involved and apart of (the play)." The production design is minimalism to the max and features no sets or outlandish costuming — just actors in their space, acting. A fun challenge for any hungry thespian, according to Racicot.

"trip. has developed a reputation for our highly realistic style," explained Brown in a statement. "Because the action takes place in the audience, the show is constantly evolving and adapting itself to its surroundings. In a sense, the actors never really stop rehearsing, even after the production is open. They are constantly trying new things with nothing set in stone — choices are fresh, without presentation."

"It's totally innocent, too," Racicot promises of the coyly titled "4Play." "It's not some raunchy thing. It's a sweet story that anyone who has been in any type of relationship can connect to. It doesn't matter if you're gay or straight."

"I think it will be exciting to see especially on Valentine's week. ... We're hoping to have a lot of couples — or anyone — come out and see it," she added.

Through the process of preparing for opening week, Racicot sees her newest project as a learning opportunity to better understand her craft and herself.

"I'm just seeing where life takes me. It's been a rollercoaster these past three years," the Palmdale substitute teacher-by-day said. "I'm just trying to learn what I can and figure out what I like and don't like. I've said 'yes' to a lot of opportunities and I've been lucky enough to have some really cool projects come out of it like this one."