

REVIEW: “Every Now and Then” really does pull you back through time.

By John Gardiner CK Times.ca

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I had a most interesting experience this past Saturday evening. We had a dinner guest over, but we sat down to dinner a little early because I'd agreed to do a review of a modern radio play, “Every Now and Then” and it was coming on CFCO (92.9 FM/630 AM) at 6:25 PM and we wanted to be ready – so we ate a little early, tuned in the radio at the appointed time and settled in to listen.

The play was written and directed by George Zarr of New York and the leading role was played by a professional actor Gregg Rainwater from LA, but the production was a local one the rest of the way. A total of five local actors from Chatham, Tupperville and Windsor were involved in the piece and engineering and sound design was done by David Farquhar.

First let me say that this was a bit déjà vu for me. Even though I listen to a lot of radio these days, I don't tend to listen to much radio drama – mainly, I think, because there isn't too much available on the stations I tend to frequent. But flash back to when I was a young lad and the television was still being born, and I can remember listening to radio the way people watch television today. Once I had settled in, it was a good feeling.

The premise behind “Every Now and Then” is based in time travel, so it caught my attention from the start. I'm a big sci-fi fan and this certainly got me into the piece. In the play, Frank (Rainwater) and Diane (Noelle Dupuis) are out antique shopping. They enter an old antique shop and meet the proprietor, Mr. Sagan. You can tell something's up as soon as the Mr. Sagan (Norm McLeod) character speaks with his deep, mysterious voice.

As Diane browses about the shop, Frank becomes interested in an old phonograph. He is invited to listen to a song on the old machine and while listening to it, he receives a shock and suddenly he is no longer in the antique shop. He is cast back in time where he meets Mabel (Noelle Dupuis) and an eight year old named Virginia (Alexandra Poole). He also reencounters McLeod in a different role and there are also Mrs. Spencer (Pat Gough) and Bob Steele of Windsor who plays a dual role.

I don't want to give too much away about the story, other than to say that it was largely believable – other than the device of “shocking” Frank to change the setting. After this had happened a couple of times, our dinner guest muttered a “yea right”, I think feeling Frank really wouldn't put himself through the experience more than once if he could help it.

But it was a minor thing in the overall plot and generally, I was into the piece. All of the actors did a great job pulling the audience into the play and fitting nicely into their characters. I was impressed because I've worked with different forms of theatre and it's not easy work. Good job by everyone.

Special kudos to Farquhar who did a bang-up job with sound on "Every Now and Then". I said earlier that I've not heard a lot of radio drama, but I've heard some and the quality of this one was right up there with any I've heard. Great job creating a seamless, credible soundscape that let the actors do their jobs.

This was really a special evening and I was glad I turned in. There's some great local talent out there and it was really given a chance to shine on Saturday evening. Great job! Looking forward to more.

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