

## Theatre Erindale offers pearl of a play

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Stacey Gawrylash and friends in *String Of Pearls*.  
Photo by Jim Smagata.

Leave it to Theatre Erindale to unearth a relatively unknown recent play and turn it into a brilliant showcase for the female members of the school's acting ensemble.

*String of Pearls* is a fascinating and funny piece that is highly recommended, with the caveat that there's some strong language and adult situations involved.

Michele Lowe's one-act play is a modern reworking of Arthur Schnitzler's classic German play, *La Ronde*. Schnitzler's play looked at a series of connected romantic and sexual liaisons over a number of years. With *String of Pearls* we follow a single strand as it winds its way to more than a dozen owners over the course of 35 years.

This 2004 play was originally presented off-Broadway with four actors playing all the roles. Theatre Erindale expands the cast to allow a number of students a chance to shine as they take us on a fascinating journey.

This is a very funny play, and at times surprisingly touching. It also offers a subtle social commentary on the changing sexual mores and attitudes. The title has an erotically charged double meaning in at least one of the vignettes. It also explores the evolving and often challenging roles women are faced with in modern society.

Director Ralph Small ensures that this episodic tale is performed at a brisk pace, showcasing each of the performers in the interconnected vignettes. Of particular note are Stacey Gawrylash as the political consultant, Helene, Hallie Seline as the brave mother, Ela, and Kristen Zaza as the lonely grave digger, Cindy.

Julian Munds has a bright cameo in drag as the domineering mother, Gloria.

He also shines in the brief curtain-raiser that precedes *Pearls*. *The Spot* is a short piece — barely 12 minutes long - detailing the production of an ad for a political candidate. Munds is the commanding senior political advisor, and although intended as satire it's probably closer to reality than we'd like to believe.

Performances of *The Spot* and *String of Pearls* continue at Theatre Erindale until Saturday. Weeknight performances start at 7:30 p.m., with 8 p.m. curtain times on Friday and Saturday. There's also a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday.