

## Get swept into Jane's world



**Jane Eyre.** In this scene from Theatre Erindale's presentation of *Jane Eyre*, Mrs. Fairfax and the others dress Jane for her wedding. The show opened Oct 22 at Erindale Studio Theatre. *Photo by Jim Smagata*

**Mark Andrew Lawrence, October 26, 2010**

Theatre Erindale has set the bar incredibly high in commencing its 18th season with an exceptionally well-executed performance of *Jane Eyre*.

Stacey Arseneau offers a superb performance in the title role, narrating her own story and observing as her younger self played in the earlier scenes by Tiffany Feler. This is a monumental role for any performer, not only because of the dramatic range, but also because Jane is onstage virtually the entire show.

Arseneau draws the viewer into Jane's story from the moment the play begins and doesn't release us until a post curtain-call epilogue. It's a perfect match of a performer with a part. She has sturdy

support notably from Paolo Santalucia as the troubled Edward Rochester, Kristen Zaza as his

housekeeper and Sheelagh Daly as his ward.

Peter Urbanek's set offers an effective set of playing levels, smartly used to delineate the various locations of the far-reaching tale. Joanne Massingham's stunning costumes perfectly capture the style and look of the period, matching Jane's sombre mood with a stark black dress. The intimate space of the studio theatre provides an ideal setting for this piece, bringing the audience close to the action. The fine discipline of the performers along with excellent diction ensures the words come across as well as the meaning.

Charlotte Brontë's novel has inspired a number of adaptations over the years. None has completely solved the episodic nature of the source material.

Robert Johnson's version does manage to focus the story, and director Scott Denton has paced the production to maximize the impact of the most dramatic moments.

In other productions on stage and screen, the tale of *Jane Eyre* starts to fall flat after she leaves Thornfield. Not here. The audience is swept into Jane's world right from the start, largely because this production doesn't treat it as a revered classic. Instead it brings the story vividly to life.

If this is how Theatre Erindale is launching their season, the next production should really be something.

Performances of *Jane Eyre* continue at Theatre Erindale until Saturday. Weeknight performances begin at 7:30 p.m. with 8 p.m. curtain times on Friday and Saturday. There is also a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday.

Tickets range in price from \$10-\$15 and may be reserved at [www.theatreerindale.com](http://www.theatreerindale.com) or by calling the box office 905-569-4369. [mississauganews@live.com](mailto:mississauganews@live.com)

