

Lakeshore Players serve café comedy

BY HOLLIE WATSON
The Chronicle

For upwards of 20 years, the Lakeshore Players' Café Theatre has served as a harbinger of summer in the West Island.

WEST ISLAND

"It's our way of saying thanks to our subscribers at the end of our regular season," said Evy Kartus-Solomon, who is producing the annual series for the fourth consecutive year.

Tonight through Friday in Dorval, the company will stage three one-act comedies, "all very humorous and light in tone, in keeping with summer," said the Dollard des Ormeaux resident, who is also the troupe's vice-president.

"The café is set up cabaret-style. It's very laid-back and genial," said Kartus-Solomon, a regular actor in Lakeshore's mainstage shows. She also appeared recently with Village Theatre West and Georgie Productions.

One of the three plays on the bill of fare is by Robert Soroka. It is his third piece for Café Theatre in as many years. He will also direct.

Serving Angie is a witty and quick-paced play "that anyone who has ever experienced a breakup will

relate to. The inspiration for it came for my own observations of how many young men I know — friends, students — whose relationships have ended and who are reticent to recognize the real reasons behind the break-up, said Soroka, who teaches law and business at Dawson College.

There is a "strong progression" in the play, as comic elements give way to more poignant moments, he explained.

"It's a comedy but it goes somewhere," said Soroka, for whom playwrighting has become more than an avocation.

"Teaching is my wife; theatre is my mistress. I need both."

He is currently shopping around for a producer for two other pieces he is working on.

The cast of 10 features veteran Lakeshore actors as well as new blood including Jake Lawrence of Dorval, a Mix 96 DJ making his debut with Serving Angie.

The play will also feature the premiere performance by the company's youngest thespian, Soroka's 11-year-old niece, Jennifer Barera.

Also being presented is the play, *When God Comes to Breakfast, You Don't Burn the Toast* by American playwright Gary Apple.

"It's a very funny contemporary

piece about a couple who find out they're going to be visited by God," Kartus-Solomon said.

"The wife gets frantic and wants to serve him breakfast, but God has another reason for dropping in."

Rounding out this year's offerings is *Pizza Party: A Love Story* by Julianne Bernstein. Directing is Ricky Zurif, who has appeared in Café Theatre in the past and in Lakeshore's mainstage productions.

"It's a physical comedy, frenetic, with a fast tempo," she said.

The focus is a young couple and her would-be fiancé's thwarted attempts to propose one night.

"Café Theatre has always been very popular. It's a feel-good evening, with a very relaxed atmosphere. There are nibbles on the tables, and there's a cash bar," said Zurif, adding each play is about 30 to 40 minutes in duration.

"It also helps subsidize our mainstage productions. That way we're able to support different charities during our regular season."

Lakeshore Players Café Theatre will be presented at the Sarto Desnoyers Community Centre, 1335 Lakeshore Rd. Curtain time is 8 p.m. (doors open at 7:30). Tickets, at a cost of \$10, can be purchased at the door. For more information, call the box office at 631-8718.



Chronicle, Peter McCabe

Lakeshore Players performers Carrie Solomon (left), Peter Cook, Frank Mascitto rehearse for *Pizza Party: A Love Story* at Café Theatre 2003 at the Sarto Desnoyers Community Centre.