



1950s-STYLE COMEDY: (left to right) Bernie Kopell, Teresa Ganzel, Lou Cutell in 'Viagara Falls.' Photo: Carol Rosegg

Theater Review

**50s-style *Viagara Falls*
is an Rx for the funny bone**

Viagara Falls

Written by Lou Cutell & Joao Machado

Directed by Don Crichton

Little Shubert Theatre

422 West 42nd Street

(212-239-6200), www.VFallsThePlay.com

By David NouNou

In *Viagara Falls*, Joao Machado and Lou Cutell haven't written so much of a play as much as a long skit that could have been performed on the old "Carol Burnett Show." Anyone who's ever seen any of her shows or skits knows they were meant to be fun, enjoyable, entertaining, and sometimes silly. In that respect, *Viagara Falls* succeeds on all those levels with an extra, added ingredient: it is also touching.

It is the eve of Charley's (Lou Cutell's) 77th birthday, and his best friend and upstairs neighbor, Moe, (Bernie Kopell), has come down to for the annual ritual of celebrating Charley's birthday with a cake. Charley and Moe could easily pass for Oscar Madison and Felix Unger's long-lost cousins. This time around, the two aren't divorcees but widowers. The frisky and adventurous Moe, in this case not satisfied with just a cake to celebrate his birthday, has taken the magic blue pill and wants the uptight, strait-laced Moe to join him in an orgiastic evening with two prostitutes.

They call an escort service run by Jacqueline Tempest (Teresa Ganzel), requesting two ladies, but to our delight, only one shows up, the ever-delectable Miss Tempest. Ms. Ganzel is wonderful as the eager-to-please hooker for a \$100 an hour, who ends up having a heart of gold. Her moments with the boys are uproarious. Mr. Cutell, because of his uncanny resemblance to Don Rickles, leaves us wanting acerbic lines *a la* Rickles, but he is, instead, a lovable teddy bear. Mr. Kopell has honed his good-guy persona to perfection.

Viagara Falls may seem outdated and hokey in this age of flash, glitz, and short attention spans. Yes, it is an innocent comedy that tries to be naughty and may have been written in the style of the 1950s comedies. At its core, though, it is entertaining, funny, touching, and makes us laugh. What better reasons could one have to see this show?

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