

HALFWAY THERE: Sweet Song to Sisterhood & Small Town Life

By **Carla Maria Verdino-Süllwold**
March 21, 2025

Lewiston's Public Theatre Scores a Hit

Lewiston's Public Theatre's latest production is a poignant, funny, and sweet ode to sisterhood and the joys of small town life. Set in Nova Scotia, Canadian playwright Norm Foster's HALFWAY THERE pays tribute to bonds of female friendship forged in the confines of four ordinary lives played out in the hamlet of Stewiacke, whose only claim to fame is its location halfway between the Equator and the North Pole.

Directed by Janet Mitchko, Foster's 2016 play demonstrates the author's authentic sense of character, his keen ear for seemingly mundane dialogue that is laced with risqué innuendo, hilarious anecdotes, and touching honesty. These strengths hold the audience's attention despite a predictable plot and the absence of much action. Like Chekhov, Foster's work is interior drama, shared on a daily basis by the quartet of women who gather for coffee each afternoon, their quiet existences momentarily rocked by the arrival of a handsome new doctor in town.

Mitchko's direction suits the work by focusing on character, creating excellent cast chemistry, eliciting detailed and genuine performances from the cast, and keeping the pace flowing.

The visual production is polished and attractive with a retro diner unit set by Kit Mayer – all vinyl and tacky local décor – skillfully lit by Michael Reidy, who adds touches of warmth to the mix. Rebecca Armstrong's costumes are particularly effective, delineating character with four different looks for each of the women. Sammy Weidenthal provides the balanced sound design and transition music, while Chris Lomaka serves as the able Stage Manager.

The five-person cast works together with precision and ease. Their comic timing is admirable, just as is their ability to switch gears to quiet revelation and emotion. [Laurie Carter](#) Rose makes a seductive, saucy, yet secretly vulnerable Rita. Nikki Ferry is a bold, plain speaking, warm hearted Vi, while [Heather Dilly](#) portrays [Mary Ellen](#) with sad resignation and child-like longing that transforms into liberation and a sense of self. Rebecca Tucker portrays Janine as outwardly self-possessed and clear-headed but inwardly seeking the missing love in her life. As the only male in the cast, [Gil Brady](#) strikes just the right tone of gentle humor and appealing perseverance, as he comes to appreciate this small town in which he finds himself and falls in love with Janine.

Much like [Neil Simon](#), with whom he is sometimes compared, Norm Foster creates a world that is filled with laughter and tears, heartbreak and happiness, all recounted with a sincerity and naturalism that makes it just as easy for the audience to identify with the characters as it is for the characters to bond with each other. HALFWAY THERE offers an evening of heartfelt emotion and refreshing humor, that makes it the perfect light-hearted theatrical experience.



Rebecca Tucker, Heather Dilly, Nikki Ferry, and Laurie Carter Rose in Halfway There.