

Coming up Next

Here are the hits (and few misses) from this year's Next Stage theatre fest

THEATRE AWAKENING live performance that awakens the mind

BURIED

by TESSA KING

CHRISTINE BRUBAKER IAN D. CLARK ROSEMARY DUNSMORE FIONA HIGHET

Set and Costume Design: LINDSAY C. WALKER Lighting Design: JASON HAND Sound Design: VERNE GOOD
Assistant Director: JILL HARPER Stage Management: SANDI BECKER
Directed by ANDREW LAMB



This is a Canadian Actors' Equity Approved Co-op
www.theatreawakening.com

Buried truths

BURIED by Tessa King (Theatre Awakening). Mainspace. Jan 14 at 9 pm, Jan 15 at 5:15 pm, Jan 16 at 3 pm, Jan 17 at 7 pm. Rating: **NNNN**

The children-mourning-their-parents play has become a cliché, but **Tessa King's Buried** jolts it back to life.

After the death of their mother, Jean (**Rosemary Dunsmore**), sisters Anne (**Christine Brubaker**) and Rachel (**Fiona Highet**) bicker about her legacy while taking care of their father, Bill (**Ian D. Clark**), who's got Alzheimer's. Things are further complicated because Anne's still haunted by Jean's ghost.

King's script swerves successfully from dark comedy to pathos, and under **Andrew Lamb's** direction, the actors squeeze every suggested meaning from their lines. The music between scenes works on several levels, too.

Not all the symbols are carefully interwoven into the piece, but that's niggling. This piece, developed at the Tarragon's Playwrights Unit, shows lots of potential. Love to see an expanded version.

GS

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Buried ★★★

FEATURING CHRISTINE BRUBAKER, IAN D CLARK, ROSEMARY DUNSMORE, FIONA HIGHET. WRITTEN BY TESSA KING. DIRECTED BY ANDREW LAMB. PRESENTED BY THEATRE AWAKENING. \$12-\$15. JAN 14, 9PM; JAN 15, 5:15PM; JAN 16, 3PM; JAN 17, 7PM. FACTORY THEATRE MAINSPACE, 125 BATHURST. 416-966-1062.

Playwright Tessa King's emotionally wrought and, at times, surprisingly funny tale of two sisters coming to terms with the death of their mother hinges on the dramatic conceit of having recently deceased Jean (played by recent ACTRA winner Rosemary Dunsmore) remain on stage as a ghost-like presence with whom only one daughter can communicate.

The sight gag works best early on as care-giving daughter Anne (Christine Brubaker) struggles through a perfectly awkward eulogy, and later makes for some tense scenes packed with psychological projection. While the story itself is a fairly standard slow-reveal of a secret past tragedy, everyone — especially Ian D. Clark as the Alzheimer's-suffering dad — gives stellar performances throughout. *Buried* maintains a delicate balance between high-stress familial conflict and tender moments of suffering — although for a play centred on jarring staging and constant anxiety, it's more often that the slower, quieter moments have the biggest impact. » **CB**

