

Centre Stage's premiere production 'You Are Here'

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THEATER REVIEW

Roger has a lot to handle right now. An upcoming test to become assistant manager at Donut World. A cake-pushing mother. A son who's about to graduate from high school and head off to college. A pile of clean laundry.

That might not seem like much, but to Roger, some of these issues are nearly insurmountable. Roger is developmentally disabled, and change is the

last thing he ever wants to experience.

So begins *You Are Here*, winner of the Centre Stage 2011 New Play Festival now receiving its premiere production. It's a warm comic-drama, written by Steve Totland, that wrestles with issues of parenting, transition, and what really constitutes the "best day ever."

After the original actor fell ill late in production, John Fagan stepped in to

star as Roger. Script in hand (which leads to a brilliant moment at play's end), Fagan nonetheless manages to create an engaging portrait of a father who has struggled for decades with both his own limitations and the necessity to meet and exceed society's expectations of him. After his wife died, Roger fought to keep his son, Guy (Hunter Spangler), and raise him in as normal an environment as possible.

Roger receives help from his mother, Clarice

(winningly played by Connie Clark), and, sometimes, his friend Derrick (Jason Farr). But more than anyone, his son Guy has given Roger the most assistance. Called on to be even more grown up than he is, Guy works hard at school, keeps up relationships with friends - including a girlfriend, Emily (Katelyn McGuirk) - and, too often, plays the role of parent to his own father.

When a college acceptance letter arrives, Guy's future begins to stretch out

is a warm, funny drama

before him. But that same bright future only looks dark and frightening to Roger, whose reliance on ritual and familiarity make a natural transition like his son's move to college seem like the worst thing that could ever happen.

Playwright Steve Totland offers a pretty straightforward drama, effectively staged by Brian Haimbach with a solid cast. While no great epiphanies emerge from the work, it functions well as a look at a non-traditional family and

the fear of change that we all face at one time or another. It's a worthy winner of the New Play Festival.

At only \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, it's a must-see glimpse into the inner workings of theatre - and a chance to see a piece of art in its infancy.

You Are Here runs through Jan. 21 at Centre Stage, 501 River St., in downtown Greenville. For reservations and show-times, call the box office at 233-6733 or visit centrestage.org.