

Horizon's 'Detroit' gives glimpse of recession life

by [Bobby Tedder](#)

October 02, 2014

The Horizon Theatre Co.'s production of Lisa D'Amour's critically acclaimed comedy "Detroit" runs at the Little Five Points venue through Oct. 19.

This incarnation of the playwright's work comes under the direction of Horizon co-founder and longtime Artistic Director Lisa Adler. She said she was drawn to the project for its contemporary material.

"When I first read it back in 2010, it really spoke to me about our times and captured what it felt like to be in the middle of an economic recession — but in a way that's humorous and not political," Adler said. "You've got people struggling to stay [in the] middle class or move beyond that and people struggling with serious problems who are connected to something larger than themselves — community."

The play's narrative centers on the interactions of two couples — one older, one younger — in a suburb of the titular city. As the foursome bonds over backyard barbecues, the neighborly connection they discover threatens to unravel the lives they have managed to build.

"They learn things from each other, [mainly] how to live their life differently — some good, some not so good," said Adler.

Breathing life into the play's characters is an all-star Atlanta cast headed up by Suzi Bass Award winner Carolyn Cook. "Detroit" employs dialogue steeped in the poetry of everyday language. Recommended for ages 18 and up, it has built reputation for challenging audiences to embrace or reject its characters' words and deeds.

"I like the narrative because it pulls no punches," said Cook. "It's funny, scary, exciting, dangerous, dramatic — the whole shebang.

"People are engaged with us, really leaning in and listening throughout the performance. Some of them love it; some of them get angry or frustrated with the characters; some of them wish it turned out differently. But they are never bored."

Cook was cast to inhabit the character of Mary, the overworked suburban breadwinner.

Mark Cabus plays Mary's husband Ben, a laid-off banker trying to reinvent himself with an entrepreneurial start-up business. Adam Fristoe and Kylie Brown are Kenny and Sharon, a couple of sweet-natured yet wildly impulsive, paycheck-to-paycheck slackers.

Tom Thon rounds out the cast in the role of Frank, the nostalgic voice of truth.

Adler said "Detroit" manages to stay true to its genre whilst going to "some dark" places.

"The comedy of the play comes out of character and situations," she said. "It's so recognizable that people find it funny ... and powerful in that they kind of get taken on this [unforgettable] journey."

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