

ing challenge to my produc-
ing shows myself.”

The difference in the jobs is that one puts money in his pocket and the other empties it. Since his budget has crept up to about \$38,000 — about \$10,000 more than planned — breaking even is doubtful even if all 1,600 tickets sell.

“I’m the one taking the risk,” says the Windsor Park Collegiate grad. “It’s all my money. I’ve got a good stack of tickets at home so I’m feeling nervous.”

As a first-time producer, St. Hilaire hankers for a show he can be proud

itions which is an oxymoron,” he says. “If you are acting you are not acting naturally.”

St. Hilaire is willing to stage another show if the financial bath is not too deep. If the turnout is at least 1,000 the wannabe impresario will produce again and see the financial loss as the cost of breaking into the business.

“I really do want to make this long-term,” he says.

The Last Five Years runs nightly at 7:30 p.m. through Jan. 9 with as well 2 p.m. matinees on Saturday and



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Pepper (left) and Isaak in *The Last Five Years*.

Sunday. Tickets are \$30 and available at McNally Robinson, Gas Station Arts Centre and www.act.natural.ca

III

It was truly shocking news to hear of

the sudden passing of actress/director Gina Wilkinson.

The 50-year-old Victoria native was in Winnipeg Nov. 21 directing Conor McPherson’s *The Seafarer* at the MTC Warehouse when she was diagnosed

(*Good Morning Juliet*).

The Canadian theatre community is devastated by the loss of Wilkinson.

“As an actor, director and playwright, Gina’s extraordinary talent went from strength to strength,” says Schipper. “Gina’s laugh lit up a green room, her mind fired up a rehearsal hall, and her passions scorched the Canadian stages she graced. Gina’s uniquely generous, smart and sexy life force will live on in our memories.”

kevin.prokosh@freepress.mb.ca

It’s a good-looking store, but they’re out of plot at *Foodland*

By Randall King

MovieReview

THE title prepares one for something like a documentary, perhaps about our dwindling food supplies.

But this made-in-Manitoba comedy is actually more of an exercise in exploiting limited resources (as opposed to being about limited resources).

Scripted by director Adam Smoluk (*Horse Thieves*), it’s the story of Trevor (James Clayton), a put-upon shlub who needs his job at the titular grocery store to bankroll his anticipated college education.

Unfortunately, he’s under the thumb of a petty assistant manager (Aaron Merke) and the manager of the store,

Foodland

■ Starring James Clayton, Ross McMillan, Stephen Eric McIntyre
■ Cinematheque
■ PG
★½ out of five

Ian Cullmore (Ross McMillan) is only compelled to action when Trevor accidentally catches him engaging in some sad-kinky hanky-panky with a mysterious woman named Lucy (Kim Poirier).

The plot thickens when Trevor visits the store after hours and finds it under the surveillance of a presumed robber.

Cullmore convinces Trevor to empty the contents of the safe and take the money home to his apartment for safe keeping, leaving the burglar empty-handed. Thus, Trevor is tangled in a web of intrigue that necessitates the hiring of dubious private eye Glen Munn (Stephen Eric McIntyre), Cullmore’s firing-range buddy, who has nothing more than a self-printed business card to prove he’s a seasoned investigator.

In its story, *Foodland* often bluffs you into thinking it’s going to go in the direction of other films. It seems the plot is going to follow the dynamic of the Can-film classic *The Silent Partner*, where in a bank clerk, anticipating a robbery, short-changes the thief for his own profit. Then you recall *Blood Simple*,

which also juggled elements including a dubious private eye, a crooked small businessman and a baffled employee, but to more memorable effect.

Foodland indicates it might go to those places, but instead opts for a simple, pared-down plot that is as sadly under-achieving as Ian Cullmore’s love life.

Yet the film has undeniable pleasures. It looks good: The cinematography by Keith Eidse is crisp and tight and expertly lit, if not exactly conducive to comedy.

Director Smoluk also stacks the deck with a couple of good comic actors. McIntyre, who often is obliged to play hoodlum types, makes the most of his dim-witted Sam Spade wannabe. And Ross McMillan spices up his charac-

ter — a middle-aged man who secretly lives with his mom — with a dash of delusion, with respect to the *amour fou* thing he has with the out-of-his-league Lucy.

Alas, the character of Lucy is awkwardly written. Every other role in the film is tethered to the wintry Winnipeg reality but Lucy is especially out of place. She resembles nothing less than a film noir femme fatale who took a wrong turn at the Casbah and ended up at a gig torch singing at the Pemby — Veronica Lake in Hell.

Evidently, writing for women is the one limited resource that Smoluk can’t quite transcend.

randall.king@freepress.mb.ca