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## Regional Reviews: Phoenix

### *Nana's Naughty Knickers* The Palms Theatre

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After their recent back to back excellent productions of two British farces, *Run For Your Wife* and *Caught in the Net*, the Palms Theatre has brought the likable American-set comedy *Nana's Naughty Knickers* to their Marquee Theatre. With a game cast and a humorous script, *Nana* provides a pleasant theatrical experience with a few laugh out loud moments and a lot of chuckles.

Playwright Katherine DiSavino has crafted a lightweight play that is charming though somewhat predictable. The story starts when law student Bridget (Louise Keeton) temporarily moves in with her grandmother Sylvia (Sherry Konjura) for the summer. Within a matter of minutes, Bridget and Sylvia's friend Vera (Lois Sharrott) discover that Bridget is illegally running a lingerie business out of her apartment. Called "Saucy Slips, Etc.," the business is geared toward the senior citizen set. Local policeman Tom O'Grady (Isaac Wesley Wilson), who has a thing for Bridget, and Sylvia's landlord Gil (Gerry Konjura), who is trying to find a way to evict Sylvia from her rent controlled apartment, add the play's only real tension as to whether Sylvia will be found out and evicted or, even worse, arrested.



Lois Sharrott, Toni Kallen and Sherry Konjura

While DiSavino's play is appealing, it doesn't have the sheer lunacy of the British farces that Palms just presented, which is unfortunate. But *Nana* still has its charms and the Palms production does have a winning cast to provide a pleasant afternoon or evening of amusement. Sherry Konjura is appropriately matter of fact, driven and determined as the eager lingerie business lady. She also directs the production, and has plenty of fun with the role, acting alongside husband Gerry and granddaughter Louise Keeton. As the concerned granddaughter, Keeton provides plenty of angst and frustration and makes a winning, realistic couple with Wilson. Sharrott is a gem, getting most of the play's best jokes, and she knows how to deliver a punchline. As the sweet, puppy dog eyed policeman, Wilson is excellent. After seeing him in a couple of ensemble parts at Arizona Broadway Theatre, it is nice to see him in a role that shows off his acting and comedic capabilities. Gerry Konjura is fine as the money hungry landlord and, though he does get a bit too broad at times, he manages to elicit some laughs with ease. Toni Kallen and Barbara McBain both have smaller parts and, though they don't appear until late in act two, provide some fun moments. Austin Morris makes a funny and slightly outrageous UPS delivery man.

Konjura's direction is skillful, not allowing too much of the shtick to play too broad, with a wink and nod to the audience. It's just too bad the script isn't funnier so this gifted cast could show what they and Konjura are capable of. The set design by Gerry Konjura and Thomas R. Prather features some fun secret compartments that open up and pop out to reveal Sylvia's line of merchandise, and Tia Hawkes' costumes include age appropriate designs and a few of those "saucy slips."

While you may know most of what is going to happen from the predictable script, there are still a few surprises in store as well an abundance of charm and good performances in the Palms production of *Nana's Naughty Knickers*.

The Palms Theatre production of *Nana's Naughty Knickers* runs through February 7th, 2015, at 5247 East Brown Road in Mesa. Tickets and information for their series of productions and concerts can be found at <https://thepalmstheatre.com> or by calling 480-924-6260.

Written by Katherine DiSavino  
Directed by Sherry Konjura  
Set Designer: Gerry Konjura & Thomas R. Prather  
Properties: Rob Watson  
Costume Designer: Tia Hawkes  
Stage Manager: Cindy Farnsworth

Cast: (in alphabetical order)  
Heather Van Pree: Toni Kallen  
Bridget: Louise Keeton  
Gil Schmidt: Gerry Konjura  
Sylvia: Sherry Konjura  
Clair: Barbara McBain  
UPS Man: Austin Morris  
Vera: Lois Sharrott  
Tom O'Grady: Isaac Wesley Wilson

*Photo: Toni Kallen Photography / Palms Theatre*

--[Gil Benbrook](#)

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