

Gaga for Goo

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Viscous & sweet

THEATRE REVIEW

Seraphim

SUZIE GOO HAS returned to the Toronto stage and audiences should lap up her viscous sweetness with gusto.

The musical, written in 1991 by Sky Gilbert, has been resurrected for Buddies In Bad Times Theatre's silver anniversary season, and runs till Sun, Jun 13. With Gilbert's snappy dialogue and thoughtful direction by David Oiye, *Suzie Goo* is an enjoyable romp through the world of 1960s sexualized camp.

The fun starts with audience members being given appointment slips and ushered into an "elevator" antechamber by two glammed-up, gossipy secretaries. An unplanned moment of theatre verité — when the elevator door

funny, and immediately pulls us into the surreal *That Girl-meets-Linda Lovelace* world of *Suzie Goo*.

Ryan Kelly wonderfully balances wide-eyed innocence and coy flirtation as Suzie, who exploits her boss's lecherous nature to further her career. Kelly sings pleasingly, and does a great job of steering the character away from pure camp into actual characterization. We care about Suzie, rather than simply laughing at her.

Recreating his role from the original production, David Ramsden adeptly keeps Mr Bagg distasteful but likable. He wisely keeps the bellowing blowhard shtick in check, delivering a nuanced and clever performance. Appearing in drag later in the play, he is brilliantly understated — almost stealing scenes from his cast mates.

The best performance here is



THAT GIRL MEETS LINDA LOVELACE. The cast of *Suzie Goo*: Private Secretary (clockwise, from top) Ryan Kelly, David Bateman, David Ramsden, Lisa Ann Ross, Edward Roy and Greg Campbell.

conscience in questioning corporate cunning and greed. Ross is suitably smarmy when called for, though occasionally veers into likable but one-dimensional caricature.

The weakest link is Edward Roy's portrayal of Miss Gulch, Suzie's main nemesis. While possessing a wonderful, comedic physicality, Roy unfortunately decides to use a shrill falsetto

though he's a friend, that line was for free). Bateman enters to Glinda *The Good Witch's* theme music from the *Wizard Of Oz* and counsels Suzie and the audience on the vagaries of safe but sticky sex.

With inventive lighting by Geoffrey Bouckley and John Alcon's catchy upbeat score, *Suzie Goo* is a delight to the ears, eyes and