

Jean Brenner: Review

Perfect comedy with a perfect cast

Prolific playwright Neil Simon creates very funny characters who speak very amusing dialogue in his plays.

When the actors are the right ones, as in this production, Simon's plays can be hysterically funny.

The actors are special in "The Sunshine Boys," in production at Playmasters theater in Bensalem. This is the perfect comedy for audiences open to crazy humor.

Experienced and capable Tom Dinardo, portrays over-the-hill comedian Willie Clark. Tom is a fine, fine actor. In fact, he has a following of people who travel to see him wherever he is performing in community theaters all around the greater Philadelphia area.

Tom's acting skills are unmatched in community theater. His facial expressions, body language, character interpretation and perfect timing are a joy to watch. But, he is not just a comedic actor; in other productions, he has played serious leading roles such as Willy Loman in "Death of a Salesman."

Foil to Willie is Bob Clothier as Al Lewis whose deadpan emotionless delivery is a perfect contrast to Willie's loud emotions.

Lewis and Clark, two old friends and partners, have not seen each other for 11 years, since they concluded their act and parted as enemies. Time has marched on. Both men are now in their late 70s or 80s, somewhat bitter that they are not working ... that no one wants to hire them individually.

Willie's nephew, Ben Silverman, is the agent for both men. He checks on his uncle every Wednesday, bringing the current copy of Variety, the theater newspaper. Dr. Uncle Willie's surprise, Ben presents him with an opportunity. CBS is doing a special about comedians from early years, and wants Lewis



Tom Dinardo and Bob Clothier portray "The Sunshine Boys" in the Neil Simon comedy at Playmasters this weekend.

and Clark to re-create one of their sketches.

Steven Roberson Butler as Silverman shows kindness and helpfulness to his Uncle Willie, while trying to keep his own frustration at the older man's stubbornness under control.

Both elderly actors want to do the gig, and they can use the money, but old problems step in their way, and as they try to revive the sketch, their egos clash, creating several extremely funny scenes.

Good directors know how to cast the right people in quirky Simon characters, and director Bob Clothier not only has cast and directed this play well, but he performs the second lead, Al Lewis, very, very well.

As the two actors resurrect old disagreements, the situation gets more and more hysterical, even as a blonde nurse hired for the CBS sketch, played perfectly by Sara Stepnowski, captures their attention.

While they try to bring the old scene to life, Willie works himself into a frenzy and lands in the hospital with a heart attack.

Later, he recuperates at home under the watchful eyes of a non-nonsense nurse played by actress Kathy Garofano, who also is assistant director.

The ending is a bit of a surprise to Willie and Al and the audience.

Michael McCollum plays a small role as the patient in the doctor sketch, and Carl Searle completes the cast as a television production assistant in the same scene.

Seeing "The Sunshine Boys" at Playmasters would be a treat for any adult this weekend with shows tonight, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and with matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 at the door.

Playmasters is at 3401 State Road, Bensalem, just 1/4 mile north of Street Road in a building in the Neshaminy State Park. A lighted sign lights the way to a large parking lot. The theater is comfortable with sloped floor, alternating cushioned seats, and comfortable stage visibility.

The group has been presenting plays since 1952, primarily producing comedies - four plays per season, operating from September until May.

Unfortunately, Playmasters does not have an up-to-date website and does not show current productions.

You can buy tickets at the door or at playmasters@aol.com.

Female singer-songwriters showcased at Stangl

CUT artisan.hair.design, presents an evening of music with "Ladies Take the Stage," a showcase of women singer-songwriters, at the Stangl Factory in Flemington, N.J., at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 7.

The line-up will feature Nalani & Sarina, The Still Small Voice, Brianna Nelson, and Francy.

As native New Jerseyans, twins Nalani & Sarina are known for their pop sound as well as their ballads.

The Still Small Voice, has an indie spirit and a unique sound, led by front woman Christiana Benton. A native of Newtown, singer-songwriter Brianna Nelson, still a teenager, made it to the final casting for NBC's "The Voice."

Francy, on tour with The Still Small Voice, is said to have a "unique vibe."

For information, visit Ladies Take the Stage online. Espresso based drinks and pastries will be available from partner company Factory Fuel Co. Coffeehouse. Blue Fish Grill provide take-out from the restaurant's small plates selection, or food can be ordered from the main menu.

"Ladies Take the Stage" is sponsored by CUT artisan.hair.design., Stangl Stage and Factory Fuel Co. Coffeehouse.

All tickets are \$15 on the Ticketfly website.



Twins Nalani and Sarina, native New Jerseyans, perform in "Ladies Take the Stage."



The Still Small Voice is part of the concert by women singer-songwriters at the Stangl Factory in Flemington, N.J.

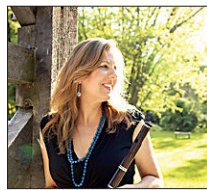
WDVR hosts Big Irish Show

WDVR FM holds its 4th annual Big Irish Show on March 7, at the Virginia Napurano Arts Center, 522 Rosemont-Ringoos Road, Sergeantsville, N.J.

This year's show will feature the return of WDVR's Celtic Sunday Brunch host, singer Ed Saulz, with piper, flute and whistle player Terry Hartzell.

Highlighting the show is the acclaimed Traditional Irish Music duo of Rose Flanagan and Laura Byrne. Their 2014 CD, "Forget Me Not," of traditional tunes on fiddle and flute earned great reviews on both sides of the Atlantic.

The show begins at 7:30 p.m.



LAURA BYRNE

Tickets are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Children under 10 are admitted for free. Call 609-397-5991, or visit wdvr.fm.org. Refreshments will be served.

Children's chorus and Cordus Mundi give joint concert



Bel Canto performs. The children's chorus sings with Bucks County-based male cappella group Cordus Mundi on March 14.

ANNA BENTLEY/AMB-PHOTO.COM

Bucks County-based male cappella group Cordus Mundi under the directorship of Rick Rosen and David W. Fryling, and Bel Canto Children's Chorus, under the directorship of Joy Hirokawa, will present a collaborative concert.

The concert is set for 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 14, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 6587 Upper York Road, Solebury.

Each group will present a featured set, and the program will conclude with the groups com-

binning for several collaborative pieces. Music comes from a wide range of composers and styles, including works by Palestrina, Mendelssohn, Ellington, Dawson, Brahms, Jeffers, Walker, Hogan and more.

Founded in 1993 and comprised of auditioned treble singers from five counties in southeastern Pennsylvania, The Bel Canto Children's Chorus has developed an international reputation. Tours have taken the choir to Europe and Canada.

The choir completed a recording with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem for a Christmas CD in 2013.

Formed in January, 2005, Cordus Mundi is comprised of members from around the greater Bucks County area, including several New Hope and Doylestown residents.

Tickets for the Cordus Mundi/Bel Canto collaborative concert are \$25 at the door, or in advance at 650-219-2748 or online.



The Central Bucks East High School Choir joined the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra in a concert Feb. 22.

Mozart Requiem inspires at Bucks Symphony concert

Scott Teschner

The Bucks County Symphony Orchestra played to a capacity audience at Central Bucks High School East on Sunday, Feb. 22.

The 65 musicians in Bucks County's symphonic ensemble joined forces with the Central Bucks East High School Choir for

an inspiring performance of the Mozart Requiem, joined by soloists Jessica Lennick, Alexandra Schenck, Galeano Salas, and Jason Switzer.

The unity of orchestra, chorus and soloists was superb, with Music Director Gary S. Fagin eliciting from the ensemble a perfect balance of intensity and serenity.

The orchestra also performed Respighi's

evocative "Fountains of Rome," a musical portrayal of the Eternal City's famous fountains.

The BCSO's next performance is the annual Pops Concert on March 15, featuring local Broadway artists Justin Guarini and Jenny Lee Stern.

Scott Teschner is president of the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra.

Society seeks scholarship applicants

The Bucks County Choral Society announces an open application period for its annual scholarship program to Westminster Choir College summer camps. The scholarship program accepts applications from 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students enrolled in Bucks County public and private secondary schools. Home schooled students within the same age and grade range may also apply. The single scholarship includes 100 percent of the tuition, room and board.

The program involves either the Vocal Institute (July 5-18), Solo Vocal Artist (June 21 - July 4) or Musical Theater (July 19 - Aug. 2) programs. Programs offer residential and non-residential options. Applicants must include a written recommendation from their school choir director, private voice instructor and/or church choir leader. Applications may be acquired through the Bucks County Choral Society website.

Applications and recommendations must be received no later than April 15. The winner will be announced May 1.

Concert offers American heritage music

The Friends of the Delaware Canal and the David Library of the American Revolution host a performance of American Heritage Music at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 10.

The concert will take place in the Feinstone Conference Center at the David Library of the American Revolution, 1201 River Road, Washington Crossing.

American music in the 1800s was melodic, energetic and bound to start toes tapping. Settlers car-

ried tunes from their homelands and created new music that embodied their hardships, joys and stories from the Revolutionary War, Civil War and beyond.

The Long Hill String Band, a group of six local musicians, will perform that Old Time music. With fiddle, banjo, mountain dulcimer, mandolin, bass, guitar and voice, they will evoke the times when America was growing by leaps and bounds.

On the program will be canal

tunes, reels, jigs, waltzes, square dance numbers and familiars such as "Oh, Susanna"; "Buffalo Gals"; and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Karl Varnal and his fellow band members will also share some of the history of the times and the songs that they will be playing.

The program is free and open to the public. Reservations are strongly encouraged. Call 215-493-6776, x 100, or e-mail rsvp@dlar.org.



The Long Hill String Band performs Old Time music at the David Library of the American Revolution in Washington Crossing March 10.