

Theater Notes 4-12-2013
by Sidney B. Simon

A FARCE THAT GROWS ON YOU

Get ready for your silly bone to be tickled, suspend all disbelief, and roll into the riotous laughter that awaits you at the newest radical production of The Laboratory Theater of Florida.

Who else but Annette Trossbach, Artistic Director, and the wizard behind Lab Theater, would dare to put on that tiny stage, **THE NOSEMAKER'S APPRENTICE: CHRONICLES OF A MEDIEVAL PLASTIC SURGEON?**

Certainly, the cast was in her corner. The five of them are having the jolliest time, pulling off the one liners, the physical gags, and of course, the preposterous plot. So often, when I have to review a farce, this critic begins to feel sorry for the actors. I always wish for them something better to play in. I just can't imagine doing **NOISES OFF**, night after night plus two matinees. I chose not to even go see **BOEING, BOEING**, for sure I would walk out at intermission.

But **THE NOSEMAKER'S APPRENTICE** is different. The premise behind it is intriguing: That there could, indeed, have been Plastic Surgeons in Medieval times. The writing is witty, satirical, biting, and the playwrights were willing to poke fun at some sacred cows of the rich and famous. There are very contemporary face- lift jokes, and boob risings a plenty. The whole effort came off as fun, so if fun is what you go to theater for, get ye to The Lab. It runs until April 27th.

Ken Bryant directed the play and deserves many an accolade for pulling it all off so well. Not only that, he is in the play. And he plays three different characters. Not all at once, silly goose. Not only all of that, Mr. Bryant also designed the set and the lights, and assisted with costumes and props, while whacking a few nails during set construction. It's all part of the life in little theaters. You may also have seen him as Scrooge, or as Ruckley in **ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST**. He is a pro.

Bryant got an amazing performance from young Wil Harbison, who plays the apprentice, down through the many years of his surgical career. Harbison gives it his all, and how enthralling that was to see it unfold. Congratulations, you Cypress Lake High School Graduate.

Chelsea Lange, in a debut performance at The Laboratory Theater of Florida, also playing three different women, and she really shined. She is a recent graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and her superb training marked how good she was. She will be well worth keeping an eye on as does more here in SW Florida.

Todd Fleck, whom I validated in his role of Brick in a fine production Theater Lab did of CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, came through again as the Narrator and the Father, anchoring the whole foray and keeping it somehow together. He knows what he's doing.

And last, but not least, there was a nice job done by Connor Zerilla, in three roles, filled with physical humor and athletic demands.

So, farce, even good farce, may not be your cup of tea. But, if you want what really will be an unforgettable evening of crazy theater, do put THE NOSEMAKER'S APPRENTICE: CHRONICLES OF A MEDIEVAL PLASTIC SURGEON on your list of theater you want to see this magical April. It plays: April 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27 at 8 pm. April 21, a matinee at 2 pm. Call the box office at (239) 218-0481. Tell them you saw this review in the SANIBEL-CAPTIVA ISLANDER.

Or buy tickets at: www.laboratorytheaterflorida.com. The theater is in the Kiwanis Hall, 1634 Woodford Ave, Ft. Myers River District, at the corner of Second Street and Woodford Avenue.