

Play review

Fancy footwork staged in British comedy

By D. Dietrich
Of The Print

If one were to try to summarize the plot of Phillip King's British comedy "See How They Run," the point would be mute. A more useful purpose would be served just to describe the kind of split-second and fluid timing involved in any successful reproduction of the show.

Portland Civic Theater's production of the play touts some of the finest scrambling seen on local stages. With nary a slip, the Civic's rendition warms up to a fast pace and never slows down until the final curtain.

Easily labeled in the genre of comedy evolving around mistaken identities, the play almost challenges itself by announcing a preview of things to come in the following scenes. If anything, the signpost beginning only serves to whet the audience's appetite and leave a satiated viewer in the end.

The play is set in the vicarage of a small English town shortly after the Second World War. The resident vicar and his wife offer a sharp contrast in culture and ideas. He's a native Britain with a good heart but little courage and even less personality. He appears completely fitting as a man sporting the less-

than-ominous name of Toop.

Toop's wife, on the other hand, holds all the vibrance that he lacks. Raissa Fleming's lively version of the already passionate role of Penelope (Toop's wife) offsets the excessively staid performance of Michael A. Parker's Toop.

The innately slower pace of the first act allows the audience to question the likelihood of the ultra-conservative Toop snaring such a lively match as his American actress wife. Penelope is not the type to blend into a crowd and does little to try and appease the likes of the stodgy parishioners who highly disapprove of her informality.

The most appalled by the Vicar's marital choice is that of Miss Skillon, played by Lucretia Gardner, wonderful in her role of a woman you love to hate. Miss Skillon is upset not only because Mrs. Toop is so unconventional for the time, but also due to her own romantic notions toward the vicar.

Joining the vicar and his wife and the unwelcome Miss Skillon for an evening of laughter and suspense are an unsuspecting American soldier visiting Penelope, her uncle the bishop, a very meek visiting vicar, a British

police sergeant, a desperate escaped Russian spy and the consistently hilarious Cockney maid.

A well-seasoned actor, Charles Bernard graces the show with a charming personality as a confused bishop caught in the midst of the hectic consequences of his niece's whim.

After building the audience's expectations in the first act, the second and third acts are unerring in fulfilling their share of surprises and plot twists. If even just a tad overdone, the maid is delightful as she makes an effort to keep her employers from complete social suicide.

Lucretia Gardner earns an equal amount of laughs with just a bit too much of playing to the audience. In both cases little, if any, harm is done to the absorbing story line and constant visual circus.

Director Scott Parker had his work cut out for him just to get the staging to flow as smoothly as it is managed. The play is polished by colorful dialogue and timely physical comedy.

"See How They Run" at the Civic Theater will continue playing at 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays through Feb. 16 on the mainstage, 1530 S.W. Yamhill St.

College to host 'multi-clinic' jazz fest

By J. Jason
Of The Print

Jazz vocalist Nancy King, highly respected local talent, will be performing at the Oregon City High School auditorium on Saturday, Feb. 9 to wrap up a full day of Invitational Vocal Jazz Festival festivities held at Clackamas Community College.

"This is the third annual vocal jazz festival the College is holding," Lonnie Cline, choral and vocal activities director said. "In the past they have been very successful, and we're ahead of the game this year," he added.

More than 40 high schools from Oregon and Washington received invitations. Of these 20 schools paid the \$70 entry fee to participate. Jazz fans will have to invest \$2 to see the festival and \$5 for King's 8 p.m. concert performance.

"The festival is non-competitive and highly educational," Cline said. Six qualified judges will be on hand to offer constructive criticism on each band's performance. "The pressures of competition are gone. They all enjoy sharing ideas with the other schools and the judge's comments help them so that they can compete well in other competitions," he added.

Cline describes the day-long event as a "non-competitive, multi-clinic performance-oriented jazz festival."

The College's own vocal jazz ensemble will be performing throughout the day as well as helping out with the event's organization. Cline pointed out that many of the College's vocal jazz ensemble members will be featured in their own solo performances.

Although non-competitive, awards will be presented by the judges for outstanding solo performances and two six-term tuition waiver talent grants will be presented to the outstanding senior performers.

Judges for the competition include Mt. Hood Community College faculty members Sue Harris, Steve Christofferson, Mikkel Iverson, Dan Sachs and former instructors Waldo King and Harry Gillgam. Each judge is highly respected in the jazz field.

Cline said the festival is beneficial because "it attracts students to the campus and provides them with educational experience based on the shared concepts of jazz, which will in turn enhance their own everyday music program. It is a valuable way to develop our program by preparing this festival. We will gain a lot of experience in producing the festival," he added.

King's performance will start at 8 p.m. and will last about two hours. "She is extremely good. She sounds a lot like jazz greats Sarah Vaughn,

Ella Fitzgerald and Betty Carter," Cline said.

King's band consists of bassist Tom Wakeling, pianist Steve Christofferson and Lawrence Williams on percussion. She has performed with the likes of immortal talents Earl Hines, Dave Brubeck and Dizzy Gillespie. Her future plans include recording and touring with Ray Brown and his band.

-Humanities feature Oregonians-

The Humanities department at Clackamas Community College is offering a series of films and lectures presented by Oregon artists, filmmakers and musicians. "Humanities Experience" meets in McLoughlin Theatre each Wednesday from 7 - 9:30 p.m. The class is available for college credit but is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call extension 333 at the College.

The next two programs will

be "Nothing But Wood...is Wood," an exhibit of fine woodworking by the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers and prints by Betty Tribe at 8 p.m. in the Pauling Gallery beginning with the film "Oregon

Woodcarvers" at 7 p.m. on Feb. 6. On Feb. 13, a film titled "Claymation" will be shown along with a presentation by Joan Gratz, an animator and set designer for Will Vinton Productions.

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