

"Star of Hope" offers zany, quirky theater entertainment

by Jay Milton Osborne III
Contributing Writer

First-time playwright Lea Floden's farce is a fast-paced, zany, quirky romp through the highly convoluted lives of peculiar, yet familiar, characters. The eccentric and witty style is reminiscent of the 1980's oddball television sitcom "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman."

Often one of the characters is almost recognizable, but you hope you don't actually know any of this off-center very intimately. However, it is their candid, idiosyncratic behavior that makes "Star of Hope" so much fun.

Barry Hunt's masterful directing propels the rapid, yet natural way the actors deliver their lines.

As in real life, the players often interrupt each other to make their point. The delivery seemed so natural that it caused me to wonder if they were not actually improvising.

At times, the actors assimilate and decode lines said to them

before they deliver a line back. These pregnant pauses were also a trademark of "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman."

It is important to pay attention here if you are going to understand the plot.

Tootie is actually Audrey to Dave who is known as Walter to Samantha. Samantha is Betty Jean to Ralph, but is Samantha to Walter. Ralph, known as Bob to Audrey, is Frank to Walter.

Gerri and Jim VanderVooten may have other names too, but they are probably unpronounceable.



Photo by Angela Meya

"Star of Hope" actors: (on floor) - David Sikking, Nicole Trotter, Gordy Oakland and Kevin Michael Moore, (behind couch) - Nanette Gatchel and Rick Mullins.

We are not sure whether the VanderVootens are refugees from "Rosemary's Baby" or "Coneheads." And the baby...well, you will just have to see for yourself.

This ensemble of actors

shows us the multifaceted complexities of each character.

Nicole Trotter as Samantha is perplexed, often pensive, and complicated. Gordy Oakland (Tootie) is naturally sexy and coquettish, while showing a somewhat mean-spirited side. Her favorite line is,

"Actually, Sam, I don't really like that."

Although intentionally and irritatingly loud with overstated Wisconsin accents, Rick Mullins and Nanette Gatchel, as the VanderVootens, steal scenes and laughs with a heavy dose of slap-

stick.

There are several scenes in each of the two acts. Filling the time between each of these is pleasantly upbeat jazz.

Even before the play begins, the audience knows it is in for a rare treat. Something recalling "Word Jazz" plays before the performance begins.

In this number, a baby croons the tune. Next, there is another vocal about the turmoil a baby causes that every parent understands well.

For a very funny and light-hearted experience, spend a couple of hours with the characters in "Star of Hope" at Stark Raving Theater, behind Common Grounds Coffee House, 4319 SE Hawthorne.

If the play reminds you of "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," so much the better.

Furthermore, if you feel lucky, take a chance on the raffle for the Lone Star quilt. If you feel unlucky, don't eat the borscht. It might have a baby in it.

Clackamas choirs perform folk music from around world, inspiring music students

by Cori Kargel
Copy Editor

Last Sunday, the Clackamas choirs presented a concert of folk music from around the world.

The concert featured music from Estonia, Sweden, the United States, Germany and France.

"I'm really excited for these students to be able to sing this music, and to experience these other cultures with the music," said Choral Conductor Lonnie Cline.

"It really makes me recognize the other countries, the other cultures," said Chris Chan, a choir student from Hong Kong.

Though the program included music from a variety of countries, a significant number of the pieces originated in Estonia, a small country that was once part of the former Soviet Union.

The biggest national interest in Estonia is choral music; the majority of the population is involved in it.

Due in part to concerts last year that included Estonian

pieces, the Clackamas Chamber Singers caught the attention of an Estonian association based in Portland. Since that time, the two groups have been in contact with each other.

The Clackamas choir was invited to join Estonian singers in celebrating Estonia's earliest Independence Day

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on Feb. 19. It was a new experience for the CCC students.

"I noticed the Estonians were so extremely friendly. They were like a family," said student Michelle Spear.

"It brings me to the point that I want to be as good as the Estonian singers," Chan added.

The Chamber Singers have also received another invitation. At 10 a.m. on July 3, they will perform with Estonian singers from the West Coast, the Portland Symphonic Choir, the Tallin chamber choir "Arsis" and the folk ensemble "Vikerlased" in the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

The performance will be part of the opening ceremonies for the XXII Convention of the Estonian League of the West Coast, which will take place July 2 through 6. The invitation is a huge honor.

"I feel the music we're singing...gives a good insight of the Estonian people," said student Karie House.

"It (the concert and music) gives the Estonian people a chance to spread their love for music.

"It shows what kind of wonderful, loving people they are," added student Jim Knox.

"Boys on the Side" takes center stage

by Lora Wahrgren
Contributing Writer

The movie "Boys on the Side" was one of those movies where it took until the end to figure out why it was called "Boys on the Side."

Drew Barrymore, as Holly, played an unwed, pregnant, murdering druggie, Jane (Whoopi Goldberg), a lesbian, and Robin (Mary Louise Parker), an HIV-positive woman.

The whole movie was touching, moving and had something to learn from for everyone. I thought it was gonna be another "Thelma and Louise" spinoff, but it wasn't at all. It was definitely better all around.

I felt the movie was slow at times, but overall, definitely worth all of my \$3.50. The movie

touched on all kinds of issues that are important, especially these days. The movie rates up there with all the other movies having to do with relationships, morals, tragedies and ongoing joy and happiness between characters. It was a cross between "Beaches" and "Forrest Gump."

It made me laugh, cry, get pissed and afraid. I was so into the movie, and the storyline had grabbed my attention so much, I didn't even notice my pop was barely touched. Usually, it's empty and on the floor by the end of the movie.

This is absolutely a movie to see with a best friend, sister, mother, just about anyone who understands or is curious about life, relationships and bonding between people.

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