

Harvey (Bruce McCarthy) and Esther (Maida Belove) sing "The Girl Next Door"



COURTESY OF ACE

Breaking Up Is Easy to Watch

Another lightly rockin' musical at ACE

Welcome to a 1960 evening at the Catskills resort Esther's Paradise. A bluish-gray stage with gleaming streamers for a backdrop provides the set for Del Delmonaco (Don Kelley) who sings and struts for the audience. Harvey (Bruce McCarthy), the resort comedian, follows with some cheesy jokes. Then it's time to bring up a lucky couple — the recently married . . . uh . . . oops. It's time to bring up the recently left-

at-the-altar Marge (Ashley Apelzin) and her best friend Lois (Megan Robertson).

Actors Cabaret of Eugene delivers a West Coast premiere with *Breaking Up is Hard to Do*. The "juke box" musical works well for a small venue like ACE, and the cast supports it sufficiently. The show is based around the music of Neil Sedaka with numbers such as "Lonely Night," "Love Will Keep Us Together" and, of course, "Breaking Up is Hard to Do."

The heartbroken Marge had originally planned to come to the Catskills on her honeymoon, but plans changed when her fiancé failed to appear at the wedding. Lois convinces Marge to fulfill the prepaid plans and joins her for the trip as the dim-witted accomplice. Apelzin fits into the concept well by providing Marge with caricature-like sensitivities for a show meant to be lighthearted. She signifies the sitcom nature that will accompany the rest of the ACE production. Apelzin has a powerful and pleasant voice that is the strongest of all the actors, though she seems to force her vibrato. Robertson as Lois may be the most enjoyable character as the comic relief sidekick. She is reminiscent of Phoebe from *Friends* with misquoted idioms such as "shaking like a leak" and "There are plenty of fish in the tree." Her sweet portrayal of Lois is a bit repetitive but always funny, and she sings with skill, even if her voice is not incredibly powerful.

Kelley plays the resort headliner, Del, with a narcissistic attitude that works well for a character who is concerned only with his own career. Kelley sings and makes better use of the limited stage space than the other actors while coming across as common enough to provide the cruise-ship performer vibe his character needs. Harvey (McCarthy), the resort's other performer, adds quips and one-liners that are neither new nor clever but affective in their absurdity and charm. At the performance I watched, the audience usually gave Harvey more than a hearty chuckle. Gabe (Nick Forrest) plays the resort help. He seems to be Del's lackey and falls head

over heels for Marge. Forrest delivers good comic timing, but his performance leaves a bit to be desired when paired against the other actors' singing voices. Finally, Maida Belove plays the resort owner, Esther, who comes across as the stereotype of a Jewish mother.

Overall the show is funny, and the storyline is consistent in its style. The actors all give worthy performances, whether they needed to be silly, sad or haphazard. The set seems a little simpler than it could be. Often it appears to box the actors into areas, constricting blocking and causing repetitive movement. There are also visible numbers on the set floor, which are a bit distracting. I question the age of the actors with regard to their characters. Apelzin seems too young to be on the receiving end of a botched wedding. Kelley seems a bit old to still be a player in show business — though this does help demonstrate the washed-up aspects of his character.

Still, the audience certainly seemed to be roaring around me, and the show doesn't necessarily speak to much more than its comic sense. There isn't an overarching social theme, but there is a night of fun in *Breaking Up is Hard to Do*. The show is filled with characters in every sense of the word, and the actors seem to be enjoying themselves onstage. The show is worth a watch, and it's definitely filled with laughs. **EW**

Breaking Up is Hard to Do continues through May 4 at ACE and runs May 9-10 at the Hult. Tix at www.actorscabaret.org or 683-4368.



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Margaret Randall

Thursday, April 24
4pm – FREE
EMU Fir Room

Highly acclaimed poet, writer and activist, will read from her recent book *Stones Witness*. Stripped of her U.S. citizenship upon returning to the U.S. after 25 years in Central and South America, she eventually won her immigration case in the U.S. Supreme Court. This event honors the life of Benjamin Linder. Reception following in the Ben Linder Room at 5:30pm





Jared Paul, Literary Artist
Friday, April 25 • 8pm – FREE
Where?
 Jared Paul is widely recognized as one of the top spoken word artists in the country. His performance accomplishments include two nation wide tours and the individual World Poetry Slam. Finals in both 2006 and 2007.
www.myspace.com/jaredpaul

Roger Clyne & the Peacemakers
Sunday, April 27 • 8pm
Agate Hall at 18th Street

\$10 general
 Students Free through the UO Ticket Office

A legion of fans helped propel the band's popularity sold-out shows and coveted Top 10 entries in Billboard charts for all of their albums. Frontman Roger Clyne is also well-known as singer/songwriter for The Refreshments. Clyne also wrote and performed the twangy theme song for FOX's animated hit, "King of the Hill."



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