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'The Pelvis' goes missing in new Keizer Homegrown production

By ERIC A. HOWALD Of the Keizertimes

Linda Baker was about ready to hand over the reins of Keizer Homegrown Threatre's production of *Elvis Has Left the Building* when the intended director's play in another venue was held over.

It was a blessing in disguise. "She would have had to pry it from my cold, dead hands. This cast is one of the best I've ever worked with and they are completely on their game," Baker said.

The play opens this weekend with shows March 15-16, 22-23 and 29-30. Curtain time is 7 p.m. each night and 2 p.m. matinees on March 17, 24 and 31. Tickets are \$15 and available at keizerhomegrowntheatre.org.

The play, written by Virginia Cate and Duke Ernsberger, takes place in December 1970. Elvis Presley's sly manager, "Colonel" Tom Parker, is all shook up because he's racked up a debt and promised to make good on it using Elvis himself. The problem is "The Pelvis" has gone missing. Hilarity ensues as Parker tries to solve the problem, including hypnotizing two underlings into thinking they are Elvis.

Paul Nelson, plays Parker, a notoriously hated man in real life, but he took that as a challenge.

"He's iconic, but nobody really knows what he was like



as a person. It's not like having to play Elvis himself. My goal is try to make the audience like him because he was hated. If I can do that, I feel like I'll have done my job," Nelson said

Laura Davis plays Parker's German secretary Trudy and said she had her eye on the part since the troupe held its auditions.

She said not to come in expecting high-quality Elvis impersonation, but that is part of the charm.

"We just have fun, that's really it. It's a farce. It is unseri-





ous," she said.

While there's more physical comedy than she's typically tackled, Davis said the she enjoys being the power player

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in the otherwise male-dominated cast.

"She's a bit of a spitfire. In the man's world of this play, she can run the guys around a KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald FAR LEFT: Tim Reid plays a hapless assistant who transforms into Elvis during the play. ABOVE: Accacia Nepote is journalist Jill Turner investigating the disappearance of the King of Rock. LEFT: Laura Davis, as secretary Trudy, gives Paul Nelson's "Colonel" Tom Parker a piece of her mind.

bit. She runs the office and the show," Davis said.

It's Parker's two support staffers Candy, played by Braden Pippert, and Roscoe, played by Tim Reid, that end up attempting to fill Presley's shoes when the heat is on.

"Candy is basically The Colonel's fixer who is called in to try and help him figure out what to do. The hardest part for me is not watching Tim because he makes me break character," Pippert said.

Reid describes Roscoe as "nerdy office assistant with an Elvis fetish." Reid, who preferred sports to the stage in high school, said this play feels more like a sporting event.

"I'm always dripping sweat after the second act," he said.

Reid, a college professor, said he hopes some of his students decide to turn out for the show.

"I try to have a sense of humor to keep them engaged, but I hope they come and see this because I'm having a blast," he said.





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