

Opal Center's latest offers epic laughs

Greek mythology gets a taste of comedy from a veteran cast

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A job well done — and with well over a minute to spare, no less. As a humanities major in my undergraduate years, I partook in more than a few hours (months, really) of the study of Greek (and Roman, and Norse) mythology, spending entire semesters devoted to scouring my copies of its great epics, tragedies and fateful life lessons.

Had the option presented itself, I would no doubt have availed myself of the Opal Center for Arts and Education's latest endeavor, titled aptly "The Iliad, The Odyssey and all of Greek Mythology in 99 Minutes or Less," secure in the knowledge that I had already witnessed the live, frenzied and often hilarious "Cliff's Notes" versions of stories eons in the making.

While the play took place at the Opal Center downtown, its cast was com-

posed almost entirely of Cottage Theatre veterans — five of them, to be exact, each of whom took on more than a handful of the most iconic and revered roles ever known to humankind.

The play begins with the start of the clock — literally in this case, with a visible countdown that lets the audience know the show's intention to deliver on its titular promise. It's a feature that's at once thrilling and a tad off-putting, though it certainly leaves no doubt for the viewer as to what exactly can be expected.

From the opening tick of the clock, the action continues apace, spanning the creation of the world at the hands of Uranus (a name the actors can't bring themselves to say) and leading to the birth of Zeus, perhaps the strongest role (pun intended) of Phil Dempsey, who also gives Poseidon, Perseus and Achilles a welcome comedic turn and draws many of the play's laughs.

The laughs keep coming, with Brad-

ley Wilson providing many a chuckle as Hera, Zeus' overbearing wife who believes (rightly) that her husband has other women on his mind.

"You've never manifested anyone in a shaft of radiant light for me!" Hera whines, pink hair and spectacles completing the costume. Later, Wilson will provide another cheeky accent for Trojan hero Hector, even as the eldest brother of Paris meets his doom.

Not to be outdone is another CT veteran, Earl Ruttenutter, who dons a winged helmet to portray Hermes, messenger of the Gods, and Oedipus, whose story is treated like an entirely too complex bit of middle-school gossip.

Not to be outdone are the play's ladies, Elaine Slatore and Chelsea Armstrong, each with their own fair share of many tangled plots to shoulder. Slatore's Athena stands perfectly strong and resolute next to the play's many male doofuses, and her Oracle is



photo by Jon Stinnett

Zeus (Phil Dempsey) offers Pandora (Chelsea Armstrong) to a delighted Man (Earl Ruttenutter).

the picture of cool in a white wig and shades. Armstrong, meanwhile, absolutely makes the scene in which she portrays Pandora and begs repeatedly for a chance to open the box Zeus has given her as a wedding gift.

It's inside jokes like these that make "99 Minutes or Less" a madcap romp

through subject matter that's typically ponderous and a tad dull, though foreknowledge of the plots at hand is certainly not necessary to enjoy the show. It continues this weekend with shows at the Opal Center, Aug. 28-30, with shows beginning at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday.

AWARDS

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Emma Hitt: photo of animal 2nd; **Josie Hitt:** photo of animal 1st; **Jillian Lowe:** clouds 1st, purple flowers 1st; **Dron Jones:** Bright Eyes 2nd, Tasty 1st, Leaf 2nd, fly 1st; **Holly Whiting:** Patriotic Puppy 3rd, Snowy Day 3rd, Polar Day 1st, Puppy in the Snow 1st, Dandelion 2nd; **Celia Gowing:** Mushrooms & Moss 2nd, Nesting Gannets 3rd, Beach in Raglan 2nd; **Holly Lamb:** Bride & Groom 2nd, A Ruff Smile 2nd, The Busy Bee 3rd, Cross Country Dreaming 3rd; **Lois French:** Family at Baker Bay 1st; **Ken Schwieger:** Sharing Knowledge 1st,

Textiles

Addison Hitt: pillow case 1st; **Josie Hitt:** skirt 3rd; **Jay Slahit:** wall hanging 3rd; **Nadine Chapin:** quilt 3rd; **Molly Patterson:** baby quilt 2nd, doll 1st, sweater 2nd 1st (2); **Carolyn Hansen:** cow head wrap 2nd, head wrap 3rd; **Tiffany Howell:** afghan 3rd, baby afghan

2nd; **Joan Goossens:** kitchen set 3rd, scapgha 2nd, pillow case; **Darlene Fanton:** Hootie Pin cushion 3rd, bunny babies 3rd; **Carla Rigel:** wall hanging 3rd, wall hanging & runner 2nd, flag ribbon flag 3rd; **Amy Evers:** large doily 1st (2), small doily 2nd (2), baby afghan 1st; **Tinika Ossman Steier:** apple pillow 1st; **Jennifer Guevara:** bear picture 1st, cross stitch angel 2nd, stocking 3rd; **Susan Cameron:** quilt 3rd; **Marjorie Steen:** Quillo 1st, vest 3rd, pillow case 1st, wall hanging 2nd; **Gail Norton:** centerpiece doily Best of Show; **Cynthia Christensen:** afghan 3rd, pillowcases 2nd (2); **Bessie Spears:** hat 2nd; **Mary Dorchak:** quilt 3rd; **Dorthea Perkins:** quilt Best of Show, quilt 1st; **Connie Fenrich:** quilt 3rd (4), table runner 3rd, pinwheel 1st; **Sami Payment:** beaded flowers 3rd, felted rose 3rd, doll 3rd, purse 1st, gloves 2nd, 3rd; **Rachel Johnson:** vest 1st, scarf 1st, 3rd, hat 1st; **Peggy Severns:** crochet rug 1st, 2nd (2), Best of Show; **Jim Hueske:** cross stitch picture 1st; **Elaine Chap-**

man: quilt 3rd; **Linda Johnson:** quilt 3rd (2), wall hanging 2nd; **Barbara White:** baby blanket 2nd; **Veronica Geiger:** vest jacket 1st; **Belinda Rembierski:** French braid 1st; **Henry Lancaster:** vest 3rd;

Art

Ziva Nyburg: Zeva and Winter 1st, Grandpa's Log Truck, Roses for Mom 2nd; **Anrianna Green:** Grandpa's Log Truck 1st; **Maximus Ste Fanek:** 3rd; **Hunter Rigel:** Snowman 1st, Gingerbread Cowboy 2nd; **Kayla Lane:** landscape 1st, cat 1st; **Ryan Lane:** Lego characters 2nd, pirate ship 2nd, shark 1st; **Tyson Seaman:** free color 3rd; **Eli Williams:** Red Eye Tree Frog 1st; **Seth Lebow:** bird 2nd, flower 2nd; **Summer Lebow:** Night Moon 1st, Tape Mess 1st; **Briahna Guevara:** "Killya" 2nd; **Sy Williams:** "Other Side of Sea" 1st, "the Rain Forest" Best of Show; **Wyatt Pepiot:** George Straight 1st; **Gabriella Seive:** "darkest hour" 1st, rose 2nd;

Natalle Brink: pink orchid 3rd, purple orchid 2nd, trio 1st; **Kathleen Vineyard:** "Shawn Peace" Best of Show; **Lorraine Simons:** Caleb 1st, penny's 2nd, Christmas Pear 3rd; **Steven Stroud:** dolphin 3rd, seal 2nd; **Elizabeth Ehrich:** "Ink Pen" 1st; **Horst Hittenberger:** "Mother & Calf" Best of Show, "Country Eggs 3rd"; **Marian Varvel:** "Mountain Meadow" 2nd, "Apple Blossom Time" 3rd, "French Villa" 1st; **Helen Wagner:** Indian Poppies 2nd; **Rae Ann Pendleton:** pastel horses 1st, clay & acrylic 1st, foal (clay) 2nd, bear 2nd;

Livestock

Poultry Showmanship: Braiden Glass 1st; Trinity Hawkins 2nd; Abigail Stunner 3rd; Chloe Hinkle 2nd; Kaylee McHugill 3rd; Aspen Brooks 5th; Josef Pifer 1st; Natalee Brink 2nd; Cockerel: Trinity Hawkins 1st; Braiden Glass 2nd; Hens: Josef Pifer 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th; Chloe Hinkle 5th; Trinity Hawkins 6th; Natalee Brink

7th; Pullets: Trinity Hawkins 1st; Addison Hitt 4th; Aspen Brooks 5th; Chloe Hinkle 6th; Kaylee McHugill 8th; Junior Boar: Chloe Hinkle 1st; Trinity Hawkins 2nd; Natalee Brink 3rd; Senior Boar: Chloe Hinkle 1st; Senior Sow: Natalee Brink 1st; Cavies Showmanship: Emily Jones-Cunningham 2nd; Paige Hinkle 2nd; Rowan Jones-Cunningham 3rd; Chloe Hinkle 1st; Kaylee McHugill 2nd; Natalee Brink 2nd; Junior Buck & Doe: Tycho Butler 1st; Ryan Lane 3rd; Doe: Destaney New 1st; Natalee Brink 2nd; Trinity Hawkins 3rd; Claire Butler 2nd; Morgan Ellis 5th; Samantha Ellis 6th; 2nd; Chloe Hinkle 3rd; Natalee Brink 1st; Kaylee McHugill 2nd; Rabbit Showmanship: Trinity Hawkins 1st; Claire Butler 2nd; Kayla Lane 3rd; Ryan Lane 4th; Kaylee McHugill 1st; Chloe Hinkle 2nd; Morgan Ellis 4th; Tycho Butler 5th; Chloe Yoss 6th; Aspen Brooks 8th; Natalie Brink 1st; Samantha Ellis 4th; Destaney New 5th; Goat Showmanship: Lane Youngblood 1st; Trinity Hawkins 1st; Landon

Hawkins 2nd; Chloe Hinkle 1st; Kaylee McHugill 2nd; Laney Johnson 1st; Natalee Brink 4th; Adriannah Hand 5th; Fiber: Natalee Brink 1st; Chloe Hinkle 1st; Dairy Goats: Laney Johnson 1st; Trinity Hawkins 2nd; Landon Hawkins 3rd; Landon Hawkins 1st; Lane Youngblood 2nd; Trinity Hawkins 3rd; Landon Hawkins 1st; Trinity Hawkins 1st; Adriannah Hand 2nd; Laney Johnson 1st; Laney Johnson 1st, 2nd; Kaylee McHugill 4th; Laney Johnson 1st; Laney Johnson 1st; Sheep Showmanship: Addison Hitt 1st; Emma Hitt 1st; Josie Hitt 2nd; Cherish New 3rd; Julie New 1st; Destaney New 1st; Lambs: Emma Hitt 1st; Addison Hitt 2nd; Josie Hitt 3rd; Julie New 1st; Cherish New 2nd; Destaney New 3rd; Swine Showmanship: Tyanna New 1st; Kela New 2nd; Kenny New 3rd; Tyanna New 1st; Kenny New 1st; Tyanna New 2nd; Kela New 3rd; Cattle Showmanship: Landon Hawkins 1st, 1st;

Restaurant

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