

Austin Theater Review

Keeping your finger on the pulse of Performance Theater in Austin, Texas.

Past Reviews:

HOUSE

Arthuriosis, A Metal Opera

Romeo & Juliet

BLACK SNOW

Salvage Vanguard Theatre

Tutto Theatre Company

8:00 P.M. Thursday-Sundays, June26th-July 10th

Tickets and Reservations

Review By: Sean Fuentes



Have you ever heard of the saying, “Be careful what you wish for, because you just might get it”? Well, for Sergei Leontievich Maxudov, the main character of “Black Snow”, a play based on the unfinished novel “A Theatrical Novel” written by Mikhail Bulgakov, and adapted to the stage by Keith Reddin, this saying rings loud and clear as his adventure through the eccentrically clouded famed Moscow Art Theatre takes him through the highest highs and the lowest lows of his life before leaving him constricted, confused, and dejected.

"NUNSENSE"

A Musical Comedy

The City Theatre

June 11 – July 5. Thurs. – Sat. at 8:00 and Sun. 5:30.

For Tickets and reservations Call 512-524-2870 or e-mail info@citytheatreAustin.org

Review By: Sean Fuentes



From the very beginning the Little Sisters of Hoboken have overcome mishaps that have been tossed in their way. In fact the Little Sisters of Hoboken originally should have been the Little Sisters of Cleveland, with dreams of expanding the order to Cleveland via England the sisters got off the plane in Newark by mistake and never quite made it to Cleveland. Today is no different as Sister Julia, Child of God has accidentally poisoned fifty-two of sisters, may they all rest in peace, and it is up to the remaining five sisters to figure out how to bury all fifty-two sisters! What better way to raise the funds than with a talent show fundraiser.

As the show begins the cast hits you with two little numbers, “Nunsence is Habit-Forming” and “A Difficult Transition”, both scratch the surface of the powerful voices, technical choreography, and precise execution that can be experienced throughout the entire performance. Reverend Mother, Sister Mary Regina, played by Melita McAtee, is hilarious and firm at the same time. McAtee’s

Sergei Leontievich Maxudov, played by Gabriel Luna, has poured his heart into the writing of a novel that exactly no one likes, or so he thinks. Just as he is prepared to end it all, there is a sudden knock on the door, an offer to publish his novel and a wish granted. Luna's Maxudov is common in his sensibility as Maxudov tries desperately to overcome every obstacle he faces, but it is obvious from the beginning he is a fish out of water and no more obvious then when he meets the famed director Ivan Vasilievich, played by Smaranda Ciceu. While Luna's Maxudov is grounded and centered, Ciceu's Vasilievich is eccentric and airy. Luna and Ciceu's tango of writer pitted against director is thrilling and unique to watch as Luna's Maxudov fights to keep his written words and sanity in rehearsals, Ciceu's Vasilievich changes the script at will and runs rehearsals with his Yoda of "method acting" mentality. Luna is charismatic, funny and charming in his portrayal of Maxudov and will have you in his corner the entire performance. Ciceu puts together an amazing character in Vasilievich. Crossed between Groucho Marx and Andy Warhol Ciceu's physical comedy and timing will knock you out with laughter.

Francisco Rodriguez, Amy Downing, Maarou Naboulsi, Ron Weisberg, Verity Branco, Diego Larrea-Puempae, and Kyle Lagunas round out the cast as these actors put on a stunning performance of the fifty-four character play. The rhythm of their performance is fast, fast, fast and set designer and scene charge artist Lisa Laratta has all seven of these actors kicking it up to warp speed. After wardrobe and set changes, these actors move in and out of characters with electrifyingly precise movements and timing. And with plenty of Illya Polixena Bondarevsky Romanus Pryakhina Aloysius Stpanovich's to go around you might think that it would be hard to remember 54 Russian names to keep everything strait in your head, but it's not. It's not because each character is so uniquely different from any of the other characters in that each is memorable through the individuality of the actors and distinct costume designs by Kim H. Ngo. Rodriguez, Downing, Naboulsi, Weisberg, Branco, Larrea-Puempae, and Lagunas show off their versatility in creating characters that are over the top, hilarious, and captivating, with each showing a high level of aptitude in physical comedy, timing and voice manipulation. Their performance is sure to please and will keep a smile stretched across your face the entire night!

Director Dustin Wills, with help from assistant director Keri Boyd has brought together a group of talented actors and molded them into a comedic dynamo allowing the actors to dive deep into their many diverse characters without letting them lose sight of the big picture. His approach has produced a performance that is resoundingly funny

Reverend Mother has seen it all and there is nothing she can't handle, except her passed, which she reveals in a solo called "Turn Up the Spotlight" where she describes her family's history as well as her hidden passion for the spotlight. The Reverend Mother's right hand Nun, Sister Mary Hubert played by Dorothy Mays Clark, does everything by the book, and is in charge of training new recruits. Clark's Mary Hubert flexes her soulful voice and "gentle but firm" attitude in "The Biggest Ain't the Best" and "Holier Than Thou". McAtee and Clark complement each other and the rest of the cast in delivering gut splitting punch lines as well as giving solid acting and dancing performances.

Sister Mary Leo, played by Glenna Bowman, is the quite one of the group. But don't let the quite facade fool you as Bowman pares her smoothly gentle singing voice with graceful dance steps in the performance of "Benedicite". Bowman, along with Clark, McAtee, and Sister Mary Amnesia played by Michelle Cheney, leads the way in "Lilacs Bring Back Memories" a gorgeous song that takes the characters back in time to experiences before they devoted their lives to god. Cheney's Sister Mary Amnesia is a delight to watch as she is constantly being directed by her fellow nuns. Cheney's operatic voice is put on display throughout the performance but most noticeably in "Tackle That Temptation with a Time Step". Cheney also delivers the goods as she blows the audience up in laughter with her ventriloquism skills and a short quiz the audience is asked to participate in. Jennifer Coy plays Sister Robert Anne who is the kid from the streets, the streets Brooklyn that is. Coy's Brooklyn accent hits the mark and will have you believing she is not acting. Coy takes center stage with a spectacular performance of "I Just Want to Be a Star" where Coy proves her voice can open and close the show with tremendous power and tenacity.

The multitalented performers singing, acting and dancing combined with a great musical score will keep a smile on your face the whole way through. If you have never attended a performance at the City Theatre you will be taken in by the eclectic style and great acoustic sound. Directed by Andy Berkovsky with music and lyrics by Dan Goggin and live accompaniments by Betty Lin on piano and Anthony Ortega on drums, "Nonsense" is a complete hit!

Next up:

TOUCH - by Toni Press-Coffman. June 18, 2009
Produced by the The Vestige Group. Check out the youtube add for the premier of "TOUCH"!

...and produced a performance that is remarkably funny and sensationally brilliant. "Black Snow" is a full throttle double barrel shotgun of a comedy that takes you on one mans custom thrill ride experience through the inner workings of writers, publishers, actors, producers, directors, and stage hands and finds out that having his wish come true was more than he bargained for.



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