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ENTERTAINMENT



The UPEI Theatre Society Presents *The Three Cuckolds*

Charlottetown audiences have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity this month to see a rarely performed style of theatre. They will also see a rollicking good time. "This kind of play, commedia dell' arte," says director Gregson Winkfield, "is simply wild, crazy, physical, fast-paced fun."

If you have ever wondered about the origins of "slapstick", or the character of the harlequin, or our modern word "zany", then this production is for you. With three old men married to three young women and all of them unhappy, the stage is set for a carnival of lovers' trysts, mix-ups, mistaken identities, and downright silliness, much of it engineered by the acrobatic trickster Arlechino (better know as Harlequin). Exaggeration is the norm. Imagine a twelve-foot dentist removing a bleeding molar, or an old man stashed in a lemon crate. There is even a devil who surfaces from hell throwing human limbs about the stage. The set for all of this brisk hilarity is a black and white cartoon-like Italian street, designed to show off lots of colourful costumes, including some very elaborate masks.

The choice of play is a natural

for UPEI. It brings to the public a frequently overlooked part of theatre history, while providing terrific entertainment value—an appealing blend of the unusual and the popular. It is also a project ideally suited to UPEI's mixture of experienced and aspiring talent.

Winkfield says that this style of comedy has always been popular, but its modern form is perhaps most clearly seen in the antics of Charlie Chaplin. Speaking enthusiastically about the production, Winkfield is confident that his youthful cast has captured the upbeat and energetic spirit of the play. Commedia dell' arte has a long and rich history (it goes back to Italy in the 1500s), and it still works as powerfully entertaining theatre. Rarely performed these days anywhere, and not likely to be performed again soon on PEI, *The Three Cuckolds* is the kind of theatrical treat not to be missed.

The Three Cuckolds runs at 8:00 pm from Friday, March 29 through Sunday, March 31 at the Carrefour de l'Isle Saint Jean. Tickets are \$10 (\$5 for students and seniors) and may be purchased at the UPEI Bookstore or at the door.

Community Theatre Festival Hits Thirteenth Year

Theatre Prince Edward Island is pleased to announce the 13th annual Community Theatre Festival in association with Confederation Centre of the Arts, to be held Thursday March 28 through Saturday March 30 at the MacKenzie Theatre. Curtain time is 8:00 pm.

The Festival offers community theatre groups from across the province the opportunity to present full-length and one-act plays to audiences outside their own communities, and to receive helpful advice and encouragement from an adjudicator.

This year's Festival will feature groups from Tyne Valley to Morell, including several groups of young players, and a first-time appearance by A.C.T. of Charlottetown who will

perform the first act of their recent hit *The Crucible*.

Presenting so many plays over a short time is a challenge, but for many years now the expertise and cool professionalism of technical director Dutch Thompson and stage manager Dawn Binkley have ensured the smooth running of each evening's playbill.

The Community Theatre Festival is sponsored by the Atlantic Television System (ATV) and the PEI Credit Unions. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors/students, and a discount price of \$18/\$15 is available for a three night package. Tickets will be available at the Confederation Centre box office, or at the door.

For further information, call Theatre PEI at 566-0321.

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