



Tuesday, April 10, 2007

Comedy will benefit Scholarship Foundation

CLINTON— In response to the overwhelming support of the community and local businesses in its 25th anniversary season, the Clinton Community Theatre begins its 26th season with the side-splitting comedy "Noises Off" by Michael Frayn on April 13 and 14 at the Clinton Town Hall Auditorium. All proceeds from "Noises Off" will go to the Clinton High School Scholarship Foundation.

"Noises Off" presents the story of an acting troupe that is touring a production of a British farce called "Nothing On." This "play within a play" is full of lots of doors slamming, sexual dalliances, confusions, and, of course, plates of sardines. The encompassing story about the acting troupe is every bit as convoluted. The questions about the actors - who's in love with whom, who doesn't know what, why is everyone angry - are every bit as deep (and irrelevant) as the questions about the characters they portray.

The play, directed by Clinton's Rob Nierintz, is divided into three acts. In the first act, director Lloyd Dallas (Bill Grady) is drilling his cast at their final dress rehearsal, only hours away from the opening. His cast includes Dotty (Shannon Hickley) who can barely remember her lines, the elderly and nearly deaf Selsdon (Bob McGilvary), the sexy bombshell Brooke (Pam Martin), the inarticulate Garry (Scott Smith), the overly nervous Frederick (Ted Zayka), and the ever-game Belinda (Stephanie Fields).

As the act progresses, it becomes clear that their problems go beyond surface squabbings, and that just about anything could result from their difficulties.

During the second act, the set is turned around and the audience watches the backstage antics during the performance. The "Nothing On" actors are trying their hardest to both keep the play going and to kill each other. The audience sees their relationships are so tense it could explode at any moment. There is a sense of pandemonium. You know who the characters are and you know why they're fighting.

In the raucous third act, the tour has fallen apart, and everyone is trying to make it through the final performance as sardines go flying, sets the props start betraying the "Nothing On" actors, and everyone is plowing through the best way they know how.

There are times when the line between the reality of the actors onstage and the characters of "Nothing On" becomes so blurred, it is visibly difficult for some of the characters to know where one ends and the other begins, and it is in those moments that "Noises Off" comes off the best.

If you need a good laugh and want to support a worthy cause, "Noises Off" is for you. There is something here to entertain just about everyone.

The production begins at 8 p.m. on April 13 and 14. Tickets are \$10 for students and senior citizens and \$12 for adults and are available in advance at Clinton High School or at the Bigelow Public Library.

They are also available at the door. For more information, go to www.clintoncommtheatre.com or call (978) 368-1312.