

[Login](#) [Register](#) [e-Newsletters](#) [Contests](#) [Coupons](#) [Place an Ad](#) [Subscriber Services](#) 

WEATHER WATCH:

Milwaukee, WI

43°



high 45° | low 43°

[Detailed Forecast](#) | [7 Day](#) | [Doppler Radar](#)



[Home](#) [News](#) [Watchdog](#) [Opinion](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Food & Dining](#) [Entertainment](#) [Features](#) [Photo/Video](#)

Monday, March 15, 2010 [Movies](#) [Music and Nightlife](#) [Arts and Books](#) [TV and Radio](#) [Weekly Calendar](#) [Tickets](#) [Puzz](#)

 [Arts and Books](#)

[Home](#) » [Entertainment](#) » [Arts and Books](#)

REVIEW

Skylight comedy joyfully follows Marxist doctrine



Katherine Bieh

The cast of Skylight Opera Theatre's "A Day in Hollywood / A Night in the Ukraine" perform as theater ushers.

By Mike Fischer, Special to the Journal Sentinel

Posted: March 13, 2010 | (0) COMMENTS

If you push their overdone plots just a step to the left, most of Hollywood's romantic comedies will begin a striptease gleefully revealing their farcical undergarments.

Lyricist Dick Vosburgh and composer Frank Lazarus turned that insight into the ingenious musical "A Day in Hollywood / A Night in the Ukraine." With Pam Kriger and James Valcq at the helm, the Skylight Opera Theatre opened an exuberant and polished production of this gem on Friday night.

"Hollywood," the straight-faced first half of this double feature, dresses the nine-member cast as ushers in the ornate lobby of Grauman's Chinese Theatre, where they guide us on a whirlwind tour of early movie musicals.

Reprising one of Tommy Tune's signature pieces, the cast taps or glides its way across a screened balcony, where all we can see are a series of famous feet - including those of Sonja Henie, Judy Garland, Tom Mix, and even Mickey and Minnie Mouse.

A musical medley pays homage to composer Richard Whiting, while Ray Jivoff and Carol Greif Schuele impersonate Bob Hope and Shirley Ross to deliver a moving rendition of "Thanks for the Memory."

Along with such loving tributes, however, we see enough of Hollywood's silly side to prime us for the Ukrainian night to come.

As Jeanette MacDonald, Schuele croons a snarky number to a cardboard cutout of Nelson Eddy. Norman Moses leads the cast through a hilarious recapitulation of movie clichés.

Melinda Pfundstein embodies one of those clichés in belting out an ingénue's story of Hollywood dreams. And the smartly tapping cast recounts the farcical story of Hollywood censorship in "Doin' the Production Code."

You can't censor the irrepressible Marx Brothers. After the cast gives us a pre-intermission trailer of the coming madcap romp, we travel to the Ukraine to experience the real thing: a send-up of Chekhov's farce, "The Bear."

Joined by Benjamin Howes as Chico, Moses and Jivoff pair up for the fourth time as Groucho and Harpo, with Schuele playing a rich and addled Russian widow in the Margaret Dumont role.

The ensuing capers, featuring exquisite comic timing, add up to the best Marx Brothers movie that never got made, which means you can only see it if you come in person. Bring your own popcorn.

If you go

"A Day in Hollywood / A Night in the Ukraine" continues through April 4 at the Cabot Theatre, 158 N. Broadway. For tickets, call (414) 291-7800 or go online at skylightopera.com.

Post a comment

We encourage your comments but will strive to remove discussion that contains personal attacks, racial slurs, profanity or other inappropriate material as outlined in our [guidelines](#). We post-moderate comments on most content, but may choose to pre-moderate some comments so please be patient if you don't see yours appear right way. We also ask for your help by reporting comments you think are inappropriate.

Please [login](#) or [register](#) to post a comment.