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Thursday, March 11, 2010

Skylight Goes Hollywood (And the Ukraine)

By [Russ Bickerstaff](#)

Beginning this week, **Skylight Opera Theatre** presents one cast performing two one-act musicals in *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine*.

The straightforward opening act offers a celebration of old Hollywood musicals. It's set in the lobby of Grauman's Chinese Theatre in the 1930s. In costumes designed by Shima Orans, who did a breathtaking job on Skylight's recent production of *South Pacific*, the ensemble will perform a musical revue that pays tribute to films of the era. The cast mixes Skylight favorites like Norman Moses and Ray Jivoff with newer stars like Molly Rhode and Chase Stoeger.

This first act should offer plenty of fun, as the Skylight does an excellent job of bringing a cinematic feel to the Broadway Theatre Center's Cabot Theatre. With a cast of nine, *A Day in Hollywood* will be just the right size to create a sweeping yet intimate performance that connects to the audience.

The show switches gears in the second act with *A Night in the Ukraine*, a musical inspired by Anton Chekhov's 19th-century farce *The Bear*. The twist is that it's done in the style of a stage musical featuring the Marx Brothers. Jivoff and Moses play Harpo and Groucho, respectively. The Marx Brothers are, in turn, playing roles in the story, which actually makes a lot of sense, because much of their work was commedia dell'arte by way of vaudeville. The Marx Brothers played themselves playing characters in their films, so allowing others to also play those vaudevillian characters is fair play.

Jivoff and Moses have inhabited these roles before, most recently in Skylight's production of *Animal Crackers*. Die-hard fans of the Marx Brothers may have a hard time accepting actors portraying them on the stage; in the context of the current musical, however, it should be interesting. A blend of ancient Russian farce and pseudo-contemporary musical, combined with the kind of production standards Milwaukee has come to expect from the Skylight Opera Theatre, should make for a pleasant, perhaps even intoxicating, overall experience.

A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine runs March 12-April 4 at the Broadway Theatre Center.

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TODAY IN MILWAUKEE



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- David L:** I was suprised Joel doesn't know that there is already ...
- David:** Why not just expand BadgerCare to everyone? Stop discriminating against ...
- David L:** One of my friends who is a pharmacist was convicted ...
- ova collective:** sad but often times true
- Karl Marx:** You know how many other useless index's are traded on ...
- max:** Hey Amanda, This would be a great opportunity for you to ...
- Craig S.:** This is a HUGE step in the right direction. Instead ...
- Karl Marx:** Current headlines of US capitalism falling like debt dynamite dominoes...) ...
- Karl Marx:** 4 minute video. Economic Recovery? Not So Fast <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBOM28XRZs>
- Amanda Roslansky:** This is the worst line-up I ever heard. PitchFork has ...
- David:** Yes- take the coal plants offline. But whatever you do, ...
- David:** Wow. Engage in class warfare much? Let's explore that notion- ...