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J CITY Theater adept at romantic comedy

'Moon Over Buffalo' plays again this weekend in Hoboken

Diana Schwaeble
Managing Editor

J CITY Theater proves once again that great theater can be seen locally.

Last weekend, the company performed their latest production, *Moon Over Buffalo*, at Frank Sinatra Park in Hoboken. It's a fast-paced comedy about mistaken identity and about the backstage antics of a touring theater company.

Not only did the competent cast entertain the local audience with the romantic romp, but they managed to overcome severe technical difficulties including lightning problems, plus noise from overhead helicopters and traffic.

The play, which was written by Ken Ludwig, was directed by Sandy Cockrell and runs through Aug. 10.

Play within a play



COMING HOME – Roz Hay (Katherine Damigos) returns to Buffalo to tell grandma (Eileen Gaughan) about her recent engagement.

The story, which is set in 1953, follows George (played by TC Corwin) and Charlotte Hay (played by Sandy Cockrell, appearing courtesy of the Actor's Equity Association), two faded Broadway stars who have been outsourced from the Great White Way and forced to perform in dreaded country tours.

They are financially and emotionally ruined, yet continue to perform plays with their group of misfits.

The play reveals all of the backstage shenanigans that many touring companies face.

The company's latest stop is Buffalo, where they are rehearsing *Cyrano* and *Private Lives*. Just before their latest show, Charlotte discovers that George has had an affair with the company's 20-something ingénue Eileen (Rebecca Sesny), who as a result is pregnant with George's child.

Enter Richard Maynard (played by Kellis Carroll), the Hay family lawyer, who in addition to telling Charlotte the company is broke, declares his love for Charlotte.

Enraged by George's latest indiscretion, Charlotte considers leaving George, who goes on a drinking bender when he realizes that she knows the truth.

A fine romance

The Hays' daughter Roz (played by the charming Katherine Damigos), a former company member turned advertising exec, comes to visit her parents and to announce her recent engagement to Howard (Brendan Wahlers), a TV meteorologist.

With her parents busy sorting out their affairs, Roz first tells her grandmother (Eileen Gaughan), who is the company stage manager, about her plans to marry the hapless Howard.

Roz also plans to see her old flame Paul Singer (Clay Cockrell), who is also a company member.

Charlotte returns to announce that she is leaving George, until she is told that none other than Frank Capra is coming to the matinee to audition them for an upcoming film. With dreams of Hollywood before her, Charlotte is determined to make the show a success - if she can just find George.

The eight actors are brilliant in this hilarious farce. Much can be said about the play-within-a-play aspect to the performance, which gives it added humor. In particular, scenes with the misguided lovers - Charlotte and George or Roz and Paul - have a sassy spark that is enjoyable to watch.

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The work is a testament to the theater company, which although new, functions like a longstanding professional company.

Theater in the raw

J CITY Theater is a new company that was created in 2006 by founding members Sandy Harper Cockrell, Clay Cockrell, and Kellis Carroll. The group is known for picking unusual material that is entertaining, yet thought-provoking as well.

The company is a member of the newly formed Hudson County Theater Alliance (HCTA), which supplies support for fellow local groups. In 2007, J CITY participated in the Hudson County One-Act festival (produced by HCTA) with the moving production of *Compression of a Tragedy*.

And...

Moon Over Buffalo was co-sponsored by Mayor Roberts and the city of Hoboken and David Zimmerman and the Theater Company at DeBaun.

Performances will be held this weekend. On Friday, Aug. 8 there will be a special performance, which will be held on the lawn of DeBaun (5th & Hudson streets) at 7 p.m. in Hoboken. The additional performances will be at Frank Sinatra Park in Hoboken including: Saturday, Aug. 9 at 7 p.m. and on Sunday, Aug. 10 at 3 p.m. The performances are free and open to the public. For more information, visit: www.jcity.org.

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