

Much Ado...

Continued from Page 8

Both had a chance to earn the audience's respect during the wedding confrontation, where evil John's plan succeeds and Claudio accuses Hero of debauchery. But both Hero and Claudio passed up their chance at dramatic suspense. They instead succumbed to "You — wench! — I — faint!" operatic melodrama (a touch above regular mellerdrama). Still thoroughly enjoyable...after all, Richard Wagner made a living from it.

An intentional bit of melodrama wafting through the performance took the shape of Don John, played by John Lechner, and his henchman. Stage manager Wineman said that in other productions, attempts were made to give John some redeeming characteristics; but director Barnes made the decision to make John a true villain who doesn't pretend to be otherwise. As a result, Lechner was oppressive but endearing, and every audience member must have been tempted to boo-hiss at one point or another.

One scene deserving a resounding ACK was the fake funeral of fair Hero. As black-cloaked figures mourned her with candles, large, insipid leaves plopped indiscreetly from above. Claudio commenced to deliver his heartfelt regrets straight from his lower intestine. And his servant, played by Brad Schulerbusch, opened his mouth and lo, out poured an unintentionally humorous eulogy — in song, no less — to the unfortunately un-dead Hero. I hope this scene was intentionally sappy-to-be-humorous. If it wasn't, at least ditch the leaves, guys.

Kudos and showers of confetti must go to Beatrice, played by Mari Weiss, and Benedick, played by

Charles Bell. Warm, humorous, charismatic performances by both Weiss and Bell made it easy to identify with elements of their stormy courtship. Weiss's role was performed as part of her Masters of Fine Arts degree requirements.

Beatrice's wit alternated between acidic and good-natured. Weiss' timing was superb, except for a few instances of rushed speech, which could be chalked up to opening night jitters.

Benedick's finest hour is his on-stage acrobatics during the eavesdropping scene. Whilst Claudio, Don Pedro (Jim Jorgensen) and Leonato plot Benedick's match with Beatrice, Benedick skulks about the stage, contorting himself in every position imaginable to avoid being seen. The three conspirators, of course, know full well he is there and contrive their conversation to incite his romantic interests. The pace and blocking was dynamically funny; the scene picked up the pace of the play and drove it in the garage. Huzzah!

Wineman said the production has run smoothly and he expects no hitches through closing night Saturday. Barnes, guest director from the Oregon Shakespearean Festival based in Ashland, Ore., should be commended for obvious professionalism and polish.

Wendela Jones' costumes, designed as part of her MFA requirements, captured the spirit of the English Regency period as did the set designed by Thomas Umfrid. The set was truly versatile, harkening back to Elizabethan days and the bard's own Globe Theatre.

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America's hottest new stars discuss the price of fame

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In a special interview, ace reporter Mary Louise Knapp interviews two of America's hottest rising stars, Glenn Stuva and Tom Mockler.

Tom Mockler Glenn Stuva

MLK: I'm sitting here in the living room of two of America's hottest rising stars, Glenn Stuva and Tom Mockler.

Tom: You know how much money I have? \$14,352 — plus a bit more in stocks and bonds.

MLK: It's easy to forget that these men are big stars, because they have a really unique way of putting you at ease. A couple of bottles of Old Style and we're ready to go. This question is for both of you. It seems to me that neither of you bring any relevant experience to your present job as film critics. What qualifications do you have?

Glenn: I used to work at Mutual of Omaha.

Tom: I worked at McDonald's for a summer.

Glenn: I also like to talk about things I don't know about.

MLK: Tell us about your days as a film director, Glenn.

Glenn: Well, my biggest project, perhaps you've seen it, was a movie called *The Horror, The Horror*. This movie was actually a sequel to what I consider my most important film, *Everyman: A Drunkard*. As a matter of fact, *Everyman* starred my friend here, Tom Mockler. The movie talked about the yearning of every man's soul for alcohol.

MLK: But what about those people who don't have such a yearning? I understand that there are people in the upper echelons of the paper you work for that do not drink or approve of drunkenness.

Glenn: I don't like talking about those kind of people.

Tom: They say, if you can't say anything nice about someone, don't say anything at all.

MLK: I've heard rumors that you, Tom, will soon be named Lincoln's meteorologist. Is there any truth to these rumors?

Tom: I'm going to have to shelve any such career plans in lieu of my campaign to become mayor of Omaha. That's right, I'm running against Fat Cat Mike Boyle. I think it's time we had a common man in office.

MLK: Do you consider yourself a common man? You are a big star, after all.

Tom: Well that just happened. In my heart, I think I'm in touch with the people. Which is more than I can say for Fat Cat Mike Boyle who's always got his hand in the coffer somewhere.

MLK: I'd like to ask you both, if it isn't too personal, what your annual incomes are.

Tom: I make about three million a year.

Glenn: I cleared about two and a half million after taxes last year.

MLK: Do you give any of this money away to the less fortunate people of this world?

Glenn: Hell no! You give people money and they won't go to work. That's the problem with this country, nobody works anymore.

Tom: You buy them books and all they do is rip off the covers.

MLK: You've been compared in certain circles to the eminent film critics, Siskel and Ebert.

Glenn: Humbug. Those guys don't have any class.

Tom: They've got nothing on us.

MLK: And what do you think of the *Sneak Previews* people?

Tom: I think Neil Gabler is one of the most obnoxious people on the face of the earth.

Glenn: I would like to pin Gabler down, shave off his artistic beard, and then soil that cute little sweater he always wears.

Tom: I think his vocal chords need operating on. A lobotomy couldn't hurt either.

MLK: Well, so what do you think of the Democratic primaries?

Tom: What I think we're going to see in the coming weeks is the spreading tide of "Hart-Mania." And there's nothing that can stop it, now that it's been unleashed.

MLK: What kind of beer do you guys drink?

Glenn: Falstaff. The beer that made Omaha great.

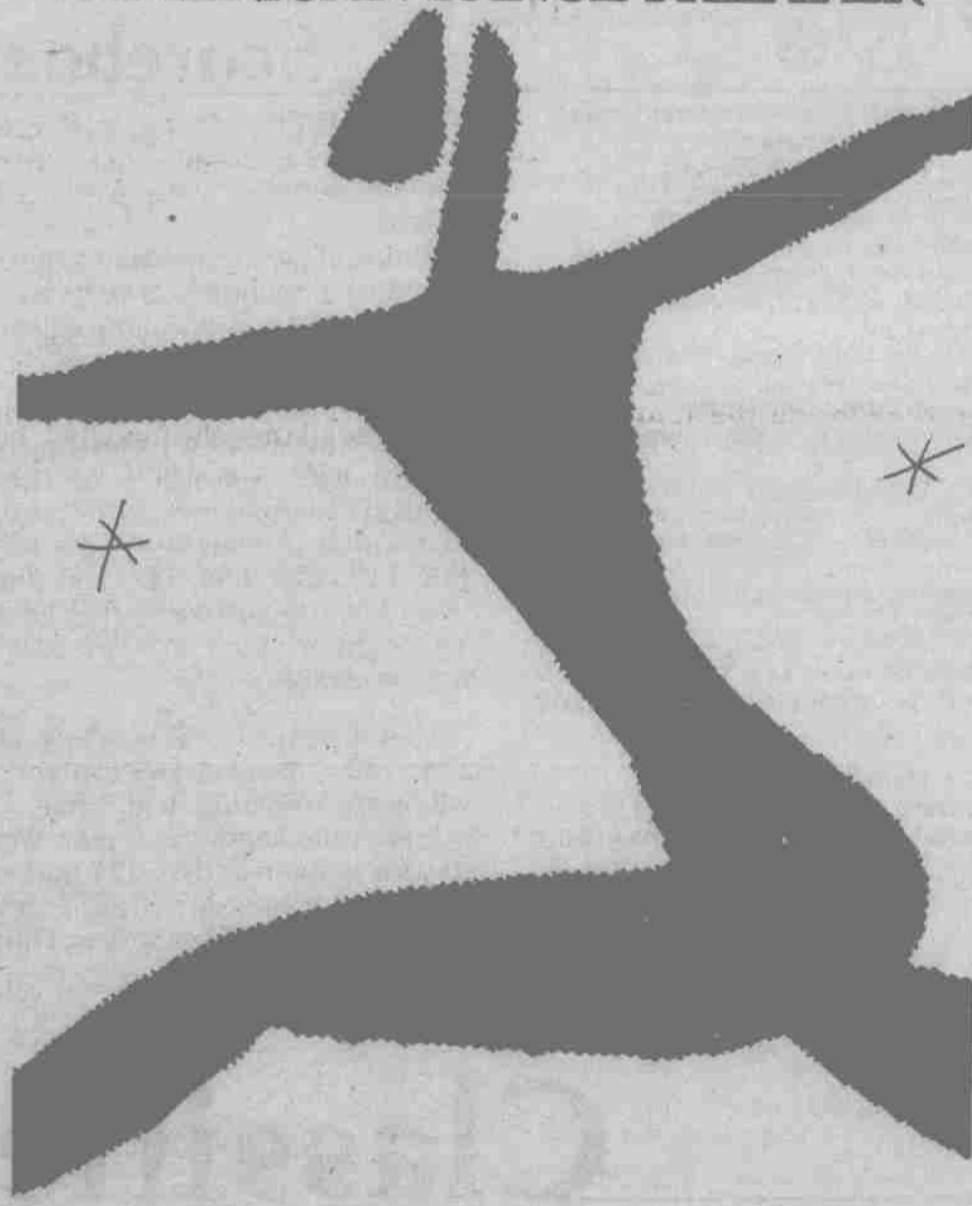
Tom: There is not a better beer at any price.

Glenn: Sure you can drink your fancy foreign beers, but when you come right down to it there's only one beer. I for one would like to thank Bernice Labeledz for her valiant effort which saved the Falstaff brewery. She's one hell of an American.

MLK: Well, there was a lot more I could have told you about these crazy guys, but our time was up. With tears in my eyes, but a warm feeling in my soul, I left their abode, and went out to face the unpleasant realities of the "real" world. Keep riding high in the saddle you drugstore cowboys, wherever you may roam.

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