

Arts & Entertainment

Scapin (The Scams of Scapin)

Review



Left to right: Kimberly Patterson (Zerbinette), Kyle Nudo (Scapin) and Jenny Martin (Hyacinthe). Photo: Judy-Anne Goldman

As the title suggests, the play is definitely centered around Scapin, with the other characters sniffing or blustering in his orbit. Some standouts are Jenny Martin, who is especially adorable weeping and simpering around Scapin. Markus Cummings gives an appropriately solid performance as Scapin's dunderheaded sidekick Sylvestre, and Tom Hyer gamely rants at the trickster as his exasperated employer, Geronte.

If a critic wanted to be churlish, he could pick out some drawbacks stemming from the production's al fresco setting -- an amateurishly painted wooden backdrop, a sound system consisting of tinny speakers tied to

trees and on-stage voice projection that verged perilously close to "shouting." But this critic would immediately feel petty and mean-spirited for even mentioning these trivial details, and whole-heartedly recommend the play anyway.

Saturday and Sunday will be the final performances of the CCPT season. Get your family out there with your own picnic (look, another French contribution to the world!) before it's too late. Be sure to pack a salad. "Freedom dressing" optional.

By Steve Schneider

Over the last year or so, the French have received a lot of bad press in this country. For opposing the war in Iraq, they've been at the butt end of a stream of radio jokes, and some restaurants have even changed the names of signature foodstuffs to things like "Freedom Fries" and "Freedom Bread."

It's a good thing that the Culver City Public Theatre did not acquiesce to the anti-Gallic frenzy. If they had, local residents would have missed out on the production of *Scapin*, written by Moliere, the master of the classical French farce, back in 1669.

A fast paced slapstick farce, falling much closer to the Jerry Lewis than Jean Paul Sartre end of the French taste continuum, *Scapin* is a perfect fit for a breezy weekend afternoon in the park. And, by the way,

what a great park it is, too. Clean and quiet, a lush green lawn, plenty of big trees providing shade, all in the sort of community neighborhood that was supposed to have become extinct after Eisenhower left office. The play isn't half bad either, with all the mandatory double entendres, identity switches and unbelievable coincidences that make the genre so much fun.

Moliere wrote the part of Scapin for himself, and he probably wouldn't have minded giving the role over to Kyle Nudo, who has the right sense of mischief and comic timing to make it work. It would be interesting, however, to hear what Moliere would have thought of Mr. Nudo's range of accents when he beats his master hiding in a gunny sack (it is, after all a farce) -- during which Mr. Nudo appears to be channelling Al Pacino's "Scarface" and an entire platoon of Cockney soldiers.

Scapin

(The Scams of Scapin)

Saturday & Sunday,

August 23 & 24, 2 p.m.

Dr. Paul Carlson Memorial Park
Corner of Motor Ave. and Braddock Dr.
in Culver City

Free admission.

Seating on the lawn. Blankets, lawn chairs and picnic baskets are encouraged.

Culver City Public Theatre

(310) 712-5482

<http://ccpt.org>