



Hedgerow Theatre Makes Laughter a Habit

By Christina Perryman

Dan Goggin's musical "Nunsense" has been entertaining audiences since 1985. I first saw this delightful comedy more than 10 years ago and, true to the second number, "Nunsense is Habit-Forming," as I've seen the show and several of its offshoots many times. And yet, the jokes never get old. Each cast is unique (although almost every performance I have been to includes the incomparable Micki Sharpe) and every production is hilarious, including the one currently on stage at Hedgerow Theatre, excellently directed by Sharpe.

The Little Sisters of Hoboken are in trouble. One fateful evening, while 19 of the nuns were enjoying a cutthroat night of bingo with the Maryknolls, the convent's cook, Sister Julia, Child of God, killed 52 members of the order with a bad batch of vichyssoise. Through Mother Superior's efforts (a thriving greeting card business that came to her in a vision), they were able to bury 48 of the sisters. However, bad planning (also on Mother Superior's part), leaves four nuns stuffed in the freezer with no money to bury them.

In order to raise the additional funds, five of the sisters hold a variety show. During the variety act, the audience learns more about the order's humble start as well as the future aspirations of sisters Mary Regina, Hubert, Leo, Robert Anne and Amnesia.

Hedgerow's staging features excellently choreographed dance numbers, catchy songs and witty humor along with some physical comedy that is executed perfectly by Hedgerow's stellar cast. The costumes, by Elizabeth Hanson, were perfect and took me back to my days at St. Madeline-St. Rose (now St. James Regional) – although I can't picture my eighth-grade teacher, Sister Joan, or our principal, Sister Rita, breaking into a time step. For the set, the Little Sisters of Hoboken borrowed the Mount St. Helen stage, which was terrifically dressed by Sebastian Kearney for a staging of "Grease."



Micki Sharpe leads the charge as dignified Mother Superior, Sister Mary Regina. Sharpe is "Nunsense" veteran and it shows in her flawless performance. Two of my favorite segments, A Word From Reverend Mother and Baking with the BVM, feature Sharpe at her finest. Sharpe and Susan Wefel, who plays Sister Mary Hubert, play off each other nicely. As Hubert, Wefel funnily pines for the top spot (Mother Superior's job) and eggs on the action. Debbie Bello plays street smart Sister Robert Anne with brashness and humor. Gerri Weagraff is one of the funniest cast members as Sister Amnesia. Weagraff's Amnesia is endearingly simple, easily confused and entertaining. Erika Flanick is wonderful as Sister Mary Leo, a novice who hopes to one day be the first nun ballerina. She dances wonderfully and gets into comical trouble with Amnesia and Robert Anne.

Musical numbers include "Tackle The Temptation with a Time Step," "We've Got To Clean Out The Freezer," "Just A Coupl'a Sisters," "I Just Want to Be a Star," "Holier Than Thou" and many more. The show also features plenty of audience participation, including a quiz on how the order began, hilariously emceed by Sister Amnesia. Although there are a few mature jokes, "Nunsense" can be enjoyed by the whole family.

"Nunsense" continues at Hedgerow Theatre, 64 Rose Valley Road, Rose Valley, through Jan. 19. Show times are 7:30 p.m., Jan. 10, 11, 17 and 18, 3 p.m. Jan. 11 and 18, and 2 p.m. Jan. 12, 15 and 19. All tickets are \$25. For tickets or information, call 610-565-4211 or visit www.HedgerowTheatre.org.



Allens Lane will present "The Philadelphia Story" Jan. 10-26



Old Academy Players' "Barefoot in the Park" by Neil Simon opens on Jan. 10.