Written by Mike Schulz Wednesday, 10 September 2008 02:41



During a recent post-show conversation, an actor friend and I agreed that perhaps the most exciting moments at any theatrical production are those few seconds before the production even starts, when the lights dim, cell phones (please God) are turned to silent or vibrate, and the venue becomes alive with possibility - with the awareness that, in this live art form, absolutely *anything* can happen.

For theatre lovers, this is a ceaseless thrill. And between September 12, when Moline's Playcrafters Barn Theatre debuts the Burt Bacharach/Hal David/Neil Simon musical *Promises*, *Promises*

unning through September 21), and December 13 and 14, when Iowa City's Riverside Theatre offers Ron Clark's holiday-oriented Small Miracles

, it's a thrill that area audiences can experience more than four dozen (different) times over.

Beyond *Small Miracles*, Riverside Theatre is also producing the current two-man/15-character farce *Stones in His Pockets* (through September 28), the cancer-themed drama *Coffee & Hope* (October 24 through November 9), and a one-woman comedy with what must be autumn's sweetest title:

Megan Gogerty Loves You Very Much

(November 21 through 30).

The Englert Theatre hosts the City Circle Acting Company's *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* (October 17 through 19), the Young Footliters' *Beauty & the Beast*

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(October 30 through November 2), and the Iowa City Community Theatre's

The King & I

(September 12 through 14), while the Iowa City Community Theatre's own hometown venue - located at the Johnson County Fairgrounds - houses the family drama

Sarah, Plain & Tall

(November 7 through 16). And rounding out the Iowa City offerings are Martin McDonagh's horrifying and funny

The Pillowman

by the Dreamwell Theatre company (September 26 through October 4), and the University of Iowa's take on Chekhov's

Three Sisters

(November 13 through 22).

In Cedar Rapids, the city's Mt. Mercy College stages Katie Forgette's family dramedy *The O'Connor Girls*

(November 6 through 8), while the community's Theatre Cedar Rapids - currently celebrating its 75th season - presents the haunting drama of

The Children's Hour

(September 26 through October 5), Rodgers & Hammerstein's

The Sound of Music

(November 28 through December 14), and the happy perversity of

The Rocky Horror Show

(October 24 through November 1).

lowa's Amana Colonies delivers a sex farce in the Old Creamery Theatre's production of *Whose Wives Are They Anyway?*

(October 10 through November 16), and a farce

minus

the sex in the venue's

Nunsense

sequel,

Nuncrackers

(November 21 through December 20), plus two family-musical presentations:

Little Red Riding Hood

(September 27 through October 11) and

The Elves & the Shoemaker

(December 6 through 20). Clinton's Best Cellar Players perform the family comedy

Saddles & Six-Guns

at the River Arts Center (September 12 through 14). And Anamosa's Starlighters Theatre stages Stephen Schwartz's beloved

Godspell

(December 5 through 14).

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Meanwhile, across the river, Geneseo's Richmond Hill Barn Theatre presents the stage inspiration for the classic Ingrid Bergman chiller *Gaslight* in *Angel Street* (October 2 through 12). Galesburg's Knox College tackles Molière in

Tartuffe

(October 24 through November 1), while the city's Orpheum Theatre hosts the national touring production of

A Christmas Carol: The Musical

on November 28.



The Quad Cities will host a national touring production of its own when Stephen Sondheim's bloody-good *Sweeney Todd* hits the Adler Theatre on September 27, while decidedly more family-friendly entertainment can be found in Davenport Junior Theatre's performances of *Bunnicula*

(October 22 through 26) and Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (December 10 through 14).

After September 19's one-night reprise of *Murder in the Double Wide* by It's a Mystery Productions, the interactive-comedy troupe offers new laughs at Bettendorf's Lodge hotel with the Mafia-themed whodunit

Whacked at da Wedding

(October 24, November 14, and December 12 and 14). And New Ground Theatre, performing in the Village of East Davenport's Village Theatre, makes a rare foray into musical territory with the Richard Maltby Jr. and David Shire revue

Closer Than Ever

(September 18 through 28).

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Among college- and university-theatre options, Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery* and *The Summer People* will

be staged at Bettendorf's Scott Community College (October 9 through 18), Rock Island's Augustana College will produce the Langston Hughes translation of Federico García Lorca's Blood Wedding

(October 17 through 26), Moline's Black Hawk College will tackle the absurd with Eugène Ionesco's

Jack: Or, the Submission

(November 14 through 18), and Davenport's St. Ambrose University will unveil an Ionesco of its own in the studio-theatre production of

The Lesson

(November 6 through 9), plus - in conjunction with the school's year-long Darwin Project - an Allaert Auditorium staging of the famed Scopes Monkey Trial courtroom-drama *Inherit the Wind*

(October 3 through 5).

For the group's first endeavor in the Village Theatre, the Prenzie Players produce Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (October 17 through 25), while Playcrafters follows *Promises*, *Promises*

with an adaptation of the family classic

Anne of Green Gables

(November 7 through 16), and the venue's Moline neighbors at Quad City Music Guild's Prospect Park Auditorium offer a(nother) late-fall staging of

Nuncrackers

(December 4 through 7).

Rock Island's Green Room venue delivers the Stephen King terror of *Misery* (September 25 through 28), the staged reading of the debuting musical

What About Job?

(October 4 and 5), and both parts of Tony Kushner's epic fantasia

Angels in America

, beginning with

Millennium Approaches

(October 31 through November 9) and concluding with

Perestroika

(December 5 through 14). Davenport's Harrison Hilltop offers its own staged readings with September 27's

It Had to Be You: The Works of Julie Jensen

, a dark thriller with

The Woman in Black

(October 9 through 18), a sitcom precursor with Neil Simon's

The Odd Couple

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(November 13 through 22), and Yasmina Reza's Tony-winning drama about art titled ... *Art*

(November 28 through December 7).

And finally, at my old stomping grounds of Rock Island's Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse, there's the final weekend of the wonderful *Are We There Yet?* (through September 13); a stage adaptation of a Frank Capra classic in

A Wonderful Life

(November 12 through January 3); a

really

funny family-musical version of

Snow White

(November 28 through December 27); and a sextet of wannabe male strippers threatening to expose

The Full Monty

(September 17 through November 8). Expect fireworks; remember, Circa does

have a thrust stage.