

Written by Thom White

Monday, 12 March 2012 06:00

- [Buy OEM Adobe Photoshop CS5 for Photographers](#)
- [Buy Cheap Ashampoo Powerup 3](#)
- [Buy Cheap Autodesk AutoCAD Structural Detailing 2015 \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Buy Adobe Illustrator CS4 \(en,ja,ko,zh,de,es,fr,it,nl,pt,da,sv\)](#)
- [Buy Cheap GibbsCAM 2013 64-bit](#)
- [Buy Cheap Adobe Dreamweaver CS5.5 Student And Teacher Edition MAC](#)
- [Buy Cheap Efreesky MagicTweak 4.11](#)
- [Buy Cheap Xilisoft HD Video Converter 6 MAC](#)
- [Buy OEM Infinite Skills - Learning Autodesk Autocad Electrical 2014](#)
- [Buy Cheap Ableton Suite 8](#)
- [Buy Cheap Boris FX 10 \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Rosetta Stone - Learn Korean \(Level 1, 2 & 3 Set\) MAC](#)



Apparently, director Gary Clark doesn't think Playcrafters Barn Theatre audiences will get author Pat Cook's jokes in the venue's current *If It's Monday, This Must Be Murder*, because almost every already-obvious punchline is accented with a combination of slow, careful enunciation and a physical action. For example, the main character, Michael Schmidt's Monday, is referenced in another character's line, "Rainy days and Monday always get me down." On Saturday, though, the actor saying this put vocal emphasis on the "Monday" and grandly gesticulated toward Schmidt, as though this rather lame attempt at humor needed to be *clarified*

. It was one of many not-so-clever quips that were rendered even less funny through Clark's, and his cast's, efforts to make sure they weren't missed.

This failure to make the script any funnier through performance was fairly obvious on Saturday, as the loud-ish laughs toward the production's start continually dwindled to light chuckles mixed with groans. And there are groan-worthy moments aplenty in Cook's tale of a private investigator hired to uncover the murderer of members of the private Club Morocco. The first three victims are killed right of the bat, in a series of short scenes depicting their somewhat humorous deaths, and as Harry Monday investigates, more murders occur, with every still-living character's potential motives revealed. Along the way, though, Cook practically *begs* for groans with lines such as "Are your planets out of alignment or is that just the way your dress hangs?" Ugh.

Written by Thom White
Monday, 12 March 2012 06:00



It doesn't help that some of the show's cast members are completely lacking in subtlety, which proves appropriate for a few but a significant problem for others. Lisa Kahn's clairvoyant Glamis Ludlow, with her gypsy getup and the way she seems to float around the room with a spiritual air, deserves to be dramatic, which is how Kahn plays her (without *over*-playing her). The same is true of Sara Wegener's sexpot Stella Fountaine, who enters the show accompanied by vaudeville-stripper music and sultrily, wordlessly, sashays her way across the stage; Wegener keeps up this comically sexy charade throughout

If It's Monday...

, but also brings a welcome dramatic feel to the role. And Greg Bouljon is the only actor here who manages to avoid melodrama and incorporate nuance into his role. His club president Cecil Deborus reminded me of Stanley Tucci's Nigel in

T

he Devil Wears Prada

, from his accent to his glasses to his slightly imperious disposition.

There's no "slightly," however, about Schmidt's Monday, given the actor's constant over-enunciation and line readings of the nudge-nudge, wink-wink variety. In *If It's Monday...*, Schmidt

doesn't invite the audience to laugh along with him at his jokes but speaks as if those jokes are too clever to be understood when

merely

spoken – he delivers them slowly, clearly, and with

a lot

of emphasis, apparently so we audience members can have a chance at comprehending their humor. I highly doubt Schmidt intends to be condescending, but that's how his performance comes across, as does most of Clark's similarly toned show. (Pami Triebel at least has a chance to redeem her ditzzy, eccentric, and overplayed club member Freida with her Act II portrayal of Freida's twin sister, a strong-willed, confident woman played with a more suitable level of melodrama.)



And then there's the conundrum of Faith R. Hardacre. As the new club manager Billie Jean Hodecker, who hires Monday to investigate the murders, Hardacre plays to the (figurative) balcony with high volume, concise diction, and clear facial expressions that register the

Club Meh: "If It's Monday, This Must Be Murder," at the Playcrafters Barn Theatre through March 18

Written by Thom White

Monday, 12 March 2012 06:00

emotional meaning in her words and thoughts. It would be a notable performance in a bigger theatre, where her performance would easily read to the back of the room. But unfortunately, the back of the room at Playcrafters is within throwing distance of the stage, with only a light toss required. Consequently, Hardacre appears to be overacting, though only because she isn't adjusting her skills for a smaller space.

While a scenic designer isn't named in the program, the set is distinctive for its Moroccan styling – with its vibrant mixture of purples, oranges, and blues well chosen by set decorators Peg Smit and Jean Russell – and Sara Wegener's impressive, rear-stage mural. It's otherwise difficult to find much that I personally liked about the show. My partner's 12-year old daughter, who accompanied me to *If It's Monday...*, liked it quite a bit, though, noting that it seemed like a piece performed at her middle school by fellow students. That was precisely my problem with it.

If It's Monday, This Must Be Murder *plays at the Playcrafters Barn Theatre (4950 35th Avenue, Moline) through March 18. For information and tickets, call (309)762-0330 or visit Playcrafters.com*