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audience reviews

Noises Off, Woodland Opera House

Review: This show is laugh 'til you hurt, rolling in the aisles funny. Incredible cast and magnificent direction by Bob Cooner. You must see this show!

Review: Opening night of *Noises Off*, sadly, turned out to be a tragedy rather than the comedy it was billed as. The general sense I had while watching the show was akin to watching a high school production. Whether the fault lies with the director (Bob Cooner) or with the actors for some of the unfortunate character choices is not clear. In act two, the grueling backstage pantomime that requires clear focal points and precise physical comedy to enable the audience to follow along, was often unfocused and poorly executed. Timing is critical in this play, and sadly it was off in many places. This production was not a joy to behold. Bob Roe's portrayal of Lloyd the director was pretty much one dimensional. Almost every line he delivered ended with a rising intonation, making each statement thus uttered sound like a question. I couldn't tell whether this was a deliberate choice, or whether it was Roe's attempt to deliver an English accent. Craig Howard, as Garry, punctuated each unfinished sentence ("We're all here feeling...you know...") with a visual fist pump and knee jerk which served only as a distraction, and was particularly irritating to me. The one ray of light in this otherwise dismal show was Amelia Van Brunt with her excellent portrayal of the ditzy actress Brooke. Van Brunt had an excellent grasp of the role and delivered the vacant, oblivious Brooke with perfection. Her comedic physicality and timing were wonderful to watch and totally believable. Woodland, you've done better.

Review: I have seen several productions of "*Noises Off*" and this is by far the most satisfying. Of all genres, farce is, I think, the most difficult to do well; there is a fine line between just enough and too much. Director Bob Coomer never loses control. His stage business is fresh and funny, his talented cast of local actors performs like professionals. The result is a delight!

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