

Richmond Hill Players shine in crazy Moon

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The finale of the Richmond Hill Players' 35th season, "Moon Over Buffalo," is a mad romp demanding great strength and stamina from its eight-member cast.

Director Tom Morrow has done a good job of putting together the wild action of this vehicle involving a ludicrous assortment of stage references and pacing the comings and goings through four doors.

The stars of "Moon Over Buffalo" are Charlotte and George Hay, "mature" actors on the down slope of their careers who are with a touring rep company. They learn that Frank Capra, the director of a film version of "The Scarlet Pimpernel," is coming to Buffalo to catch their matinee. Then everything that could go wrong does.

John DeWoestyne plays George broadly, to say the least, and he's a stitch in his "Cyrano nose. He staggers around the stage in his underwear with a Chivas bottle in his hand at one point, and his emoting prompts his mother-in-law, Ethel, to say, "You could stick cloves in him and serve him with pineapple."

Melissa McBain is Charlotte, and she proves she's pretty good at stage combat in a dueling scene with George. Her lightning-fast changes of expression are a marvel, and Mr. VanDeWoestyne surely will be full of bruises at the end of the run after the pummeling she gives him with her fists.

Ethel, Charlotte's mother, is played by Mary Bouljon. She's deaf, but she has a quick wit, and she gets a lot of laughs.

Lorrie Halsall portrays Rosalind, the daughter of the actors, who has left show biz for a more normal life and brings her fiance, Howard, a nerdy weather forecaster, to the green room to meet his future in-laws. Kevin Brake is Howard, who can never remember his own name.

Greg Cripple is Paul, stage manager for the rep company, who broke up with Lorrie and now regrets it. He brings a lot of energy to the role.

Dawn Rena Rapp is Eileen, the young actress who turns up pregnant, thanks to George. She weeps and tells, causing utter domestic chaos for the Hays.

Gregg Neuleib is Richard, who wants to take Charlotte away from George and thinks he can. He's not as zany as the theater types, so he's the calm in the eye of the storm.

The second scene of Act II is onstage, where "Private Lives" and "Cyrano" get mixed up, calling for some frantic ad-libbing all around. The performance is a disaster. What will Frank Capra think? You'll just have to wait and see.