



Storybook Theatre closes season with witty, imaginative show

By NATHALIE PLOTKIN
Herald Correspondent

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In a refreshing and hilariously detailed production of an unfamiliar, almost satirical fairy tale "Sir Slob and the Princess," the Monterey Peninsula Theatre Company Storybook Theatre finished its season with a not-to-be-missed show for both children and adults who are children at heart.

Whoever decreed that fairy tales are only for children to enjoy was sure wrong about this one.

Under the skilled guidance of director Gary Bolen, every facet of author George Garrett's tongue-in-cheek witty mishmash of the usual ingredients of classic fairy tales was brought vividly and imaginatively to life.

The tale, set in a small kingdom during the time of "Once Upon A," a king and queen decide that Princess Rosebud, whom no one in the kingdom has seen, is old enough to get married.

The king announces an intelligence test for four would-be suitors (it's a small kingdom), but they all pass it.

So he devises a test of their bravery, but it is so fearsome that they all refuse to try it. Slob, a kitchen servant, is the only one with the courage or foolhardiness to try.

He is outfitted with a pot for a helmet, a garbage can lid for a shield, a bread knife for a sword and his steed is an old nag who has been put out to pasture.

As Sir Slob (he's been knighted by his four wildly manic, but inept rivals), Chris Deacon makes a lovable, rather unsophisticated but good-hearted figure.

He is an appealing actor whose emotions are sane and reasonable, and after starting out as the butt of ridicule, he quickly engages one's sympathy.

There is a herald who announces the events of the story and acts as a connecting link throughout.

Holly Timmons is impressive as she keeps the story moving. Her voice is stentorian, her bearing is martial and her straight-faced dedication to her role is admirable and unforgettable. Doubling later as a pussycat of a lion, she is a delight.

The four would-be wooers of the princess are a priceless crew of nitwits. Sirs Jack, Jim, Joe and Jerry become a comic entity of sidesplitting characters as they band together to try to defeat Sir Slob.

Chris Baldwin is a strutting peacock of a fellow whose talent (shades of the Miss America contest) is some really awful singing.

Adam Stein is a skilled swordsman with an imaginary sword (he's lost it and can't find it) is fun to watch as he trips all over himself.

Matt Pavellas is supposed to be a dancer but stumbles over his own feet, or so it seems, and Spencer deVine's talent is excessive cleanliness. But all together, they are like four stooges. They are another enrichment to brighten the zany tale.

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Fabian Martin (the king) and Ana Warner (the queen) are typical parents as they plot and plan to get their daughter married to an appropriate husband.

They are both fine comic actors who have developed their roles into real characters. Martin doubles as an old man who gives Slob a bag of worthless fairy dust and Warner is also a witch who has forgotten the magic formula for changing peoples' shapes.

The role of the Princess is small, but Hillary Salbacka fills it charmingly. She sweetly decides that when cleaned up, Sir Slob would be a satisfactory Prince Charming and expeditiously brings the change about to create the requisite happy ending.

Deena Welch as the Wizard/Giant and Courteney Leggett as Slob's faithful steed are fun to watch, but the real scene-stealer is John Radley as the executioner. His vivid reactions to events that might offer him some work are thoroughly laugh-provoking.

Maleia Gruber, Ari Safi and Sydney Stampher were lighfooted townspeople whose dancing added to the fun.

Carey Crockett's scenic design was a great backdrop for the show. Using a segmented set of units which could be immediately turned to create new locations, there was a street scene, a castle throne room and an eerie forest setting. Very appropriate music made the transitions very pleasant.

Director Bolen guided an alert and able ensemble cast through a varied and entertaining production and I came away wishing there was more.

Nathalie Plotkin can be reached at nanoplotkin@redshift.com . GO!

THEATER REVIEW ·What: MPC Storybook Theatre's presents George Garrett's "Sir Slob and the Princess"
·Where: Studio Theatre, Monterey Peninsula College campus, 980 Fremont St., Monterey ·When: Continues at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 3 p. m. Saturdays and Sundays through April 20 ·Tickets: \$15 general; \$12 young adults (16-21), \$9 children 15 and under, available at the MPC Box Office at 646-4213 from 3-7 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and two hours prior to any performance or online at www.TicketGuys.com ·Information: 646-4213or online at www.mpctheatrec.com

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