

Greeks' word for it: hilarious

By Bob Weibel
special writer

When a cast is having great fun on stage, it's amazing how laughter becomes contagious as the silliness virus sweeps through the audience like an avalanche down the Swiss Alps. And so it is with the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford's "Olympus on My Mind" — a hilarious spoof of the musical comedy genre.

You know you're in for an evening of mirth and merriment when a show has a Greek chorus that goes by the name of Tom, Dick, Horace and Delores. Delores (it turns out) is



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a klutzy chorine who is the wife of the show's financial backer, Murray, the Furrier. Which of course explains how she got her role, and why she wears so many different furs. The musical tells the story of Jupiter and his son, Mercury, when they

come to earth as humans.

Jupiter (disguised as her husband) seduces the beautiful Alcmena. Love flourishes. Then her husband, Amphitryon, returns home after defeating the Spartans. Alcmena discovers her gift belt is inscribed with a "J." Instead of "A," and realizes she has mistaken her husband for another man.

There is mass confusion — and jealousy. Poor Jupiter discovers that being a god isn't all it's cracked up to be. The spurned lover cannot even commit suicide — he's immortal. And so it goes.

JOE DIEDERICH is outstanding as Jupiter. His rich, full baritone voice, deft comic touch and regal looks are a treat to the eyes and ears. Charles Sutherland is excellent as his loyal bumpkin slave, Sosia, especially when he does a variation of Abbot and Costello's "Who's on First?" routine in trying to explain this person who seems to be impersonating him.

The impostor turns out to be Mercury, played engagingly by William Butler, who certainly has a pleasant well-trained voice.

Sandy Martin is stately and charming as Alcmena, the slightly perplexed wife who knows how to handle a man. And Clara Burris is too much for words as Sosia's wife, Charis — especially in her show-stopping number, "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Lord."

Mary Seldon-Schmidt is delightful as the high-energy, low-talent Delores. It's not easy to sing and dance badly (on purpose) and do it with style.

AND KUDOS to the rest of the chorus, Bruce Gellach, Roger Loeb and director Jim Posante (filling in at the last moment), for maintaining a high level of campiness and comedy.

The set is well done, as is lighting and Judy Pierson's many Greek costumes. Dill Murrell's orchestra is in fine tune except, of course, when contributing bizarre special effects.

Bob Weibel of Westland is a free-lance writer who has spent more than 25 years in community theater as a director, designer and performer.



Charles Sutherland is Sosia and Clara Burris is Charis in the musical spoof "Olympus on My Mind," presented by the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford.

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