

UP & COMING WEEKLY

NEWS, VIEWS, ARTS
& ENTERTAINMENT

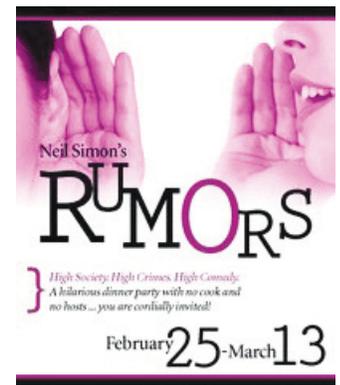
Written by JANICE BURTON

So, if you read my preview of this play, you know that I forecasted that this play would be funny. Little did I know just how funny it is. This play is Hysterical with a capital “H.”

Ongoing at the Cape Fear Regional Theatre, *Rumors*, written by Neil Simon, and fantastically directed by Dirk Lumbard, might just be the “must see” theatrical production this year. (Never mind the might be, it is!)

The production has it all: stellar talent, a great script, wonderful physical comedy and the perfect setting. It just doesn’t get much better than this. And, I know of what I speak. I’ve been seeing shows at the CFRT since late 1997, and this show is, bar none, the funniest show I’ve seen there in the past 14 years.

Bjorn Thorstad, playing Lenny Ganz, was a laugh-a-minute. From the moment he stepped on the stage, he owned it. Thorstad, from New York, has marvelous comedic timing. At times, his style reminded me of funny man John Lithgow — think *Third Rock From the Sun* — but he never missed a punch line and his delivery was always on the mark.



Veteran CFRT actor Nicki Hart played Thorstad’s wife in the farce. Hart is a multi-talented actress, but she shines in comedy. If you saw her in *The Odd Couple*, multiply that performance by 10 and you have her hilarity factor in *Rumors*. With her big red wig and mile-high shoulder pads, she personified the ‘80s trophy wife, but she gave as good as she got.

Also stellar in their casting and their chemistry were New York artist Lynne Rosenberg and Robbie Gay as Chris and Ken Gorman. The two sparked off of each other. Rosenberg, who plays the self-medicating yuppie lawyer, plays one of the best drunks I’ve ever seen. And, Gay is the master of physical comedy. I think that element in the show owes a lot to him.

Libby Seymour, another CFRT veteran, kept the audience in stitches with her back spasms and one liners. John Doerner, a transplanted New Yorker, played her spouse and was a perfect match. The first act is going to leave you in stitches, and while the second act starts out a little slow, the ending is going to leave you breathless. With this in mind, unless you are hurt, dying or in another country, clear your calendar and get down to the Cape Fear Regional Theatre. You don’t want to miss this one!!

Rumors runs through March 13. For tickets, call 323-4233 or visit the website at www.cfart.org.