

At Crighton: Comedy Will Fly Even If Mama Won't

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Catherine Anderson, Martha Davis and Melody Montez PHOTO: Courtesy of Stage Right

[NOTE: All photos by Nikie Brown of WishNik Photography]

Attention all Montgomery County area fans of wacky, far-fetched and very silly comedy. Your time has come with the Stage Right Players' current production of the brand new Jessie Jones / Nicholas Hope / Jamie Wooten play, **Mama Won't Fly**, now premiering at the Crighton Theatre with merry direction from Carolyn Corsano Wong. If you are ready to separate from your serious side and have plenty of laughs, this may be just what you have been waiting for. Even with a few dry spells amid the comedy, there is plenty of down-home hilarity to keep this cross-country road trip rolling.

I mention a road trip because, as you may have already guessed, Mama (Martha Davis as Norleen Sprunt) won't fly! That causes problems when her son in California is about to get married and she needs to get quickly to the West Coast. The job of getting her there by car falls to her feisty daughter, Savannah (Melody Montez), and it is no easy task because Mama is, to say the least, a handful. Miss Davis does a fine job of giving us a Mama who is a master manipulator when it comes to getting her own way in the frequent hilarious clashes with her daughter. Don't think Savannah will surrender without a fight, and adding to the mayhem is the ditzy bride-to-be, Hayley (Catherine Anderson), who as it happens will join the two for the cross-country drive so she can get to know her new family. Fasten your belly laugh seatbelts!

They travel from Birmingham, Alabama to California squeezed into a tiny center-stage car. (Set designs by Ms. Wong and Katt Gilcrease are humorously moved about by purposely visible stage hand, Patrick Slagle). Along the way we meet an abundance of nutty characters, with many actors playing multiple roles that include friend, Tanya (Crys McClure), Denton the auto mechanic (Gerald Livingston), and elderly Essie, (Marcia Feldt Bates) who runs the hilarious Foundation Undergarments Museum and has antique bras for all occasions! Bates is a riot in several roles that include an angry divorced wife-to-be in Las Vegas, and a senile and wheel chair bound old woman



Aunt Ardale (Amy Sowers) and Great Aunt Pawnee (Marcia Feldt Bates). PHOTO: Courtesy of Stage Right

named Great Aunt Pawnee who shows affection by giving you a slap. Out west we meet some of the redneck members of the Sprunt family with Aunt Rema Jean (Katie Kelly), Aunt Ardale (Amy Sowers), dense Cousin Chicken (Michael Raabe), and loony Uncle Ferd (Gerald Livingston)

who raises clothing clashes to a whole new level with his loud plaid pants (one of many comical costumes from designer, Kathleen Zaritski. Don't miss Savannah's homemade square dance outfit.)



Mitch (Steve Murphree) tells the girls a joke in his cowboy bar PHOTO: Courtesy Stage Right

When the trio stops at an Irish – Cowboy bar run by feuding brothers Mitch (Steve Murphree is the cowboy) and Mickey (feisty Irish fun from Quint Bishop), we meet barroom lush, Juliette (another role for Sowers). Edweena (Ms. McClure) and Fanny (Ms. Kelly) are dowdy marching prohibitionists



Savannah 'dancing' with Uncle Ferd (Gerald Livingston). PHOTO: Courtesy of Stage Right

down, but they think better of it and decide to have a drink. Officer Dugger (Mr. Raabe) has comical Smokey and the Bandit swagger as he pulls the gals over on the highway.



Officer Dugger (Michael Raabe) being used as a scratching post PHOTO: Courtesy Stage Right

Hitchhiking lands these ladies in an eighteen-wheeler with a real redneck and an uproarious performance from Mr. Gilcrease.

Then, in the aforementioned Las Vegas scene, impulsive Kiki (Miss McClure) is about to marry Ron, (Mr. Bishop) the man she met last night, but who, it turns out, is still married to Sylvia (Miss Bates). Dressed like a feathered bluebird and presiding hilariously over the ceremony is Teeta (Ms. Sowers), as the "only ordained showgirl minister." The gals do finally get out to the coast and zany hotel host, Kelvin (Patrick Slagle), is ready to greet them.



Katie Kelly and Crys McClure PHOTO : Courtesy of Stage Right



On a wild ride with Red (Katt Gilcrease). Photo: Courtesy of Stage Right



The Royal Flush Discount Wedding Chapel-Crys McClure, Quint Bishop, Amy Sowers.

But have I mentioned that all through the trip Savannah has lamented her lost love, Spud (Mr. Gilcrease again), the man she almost married years before? Well Spud turns up too, but for the fun of what happens then you will have to buy a ticket.

MAMA WON'T FLY continues at Conroe's Crighton Theatre through September 25th with performances Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm and Sunday matinees at 2pm. For tickets (\$12 / \$15 / \$17) and information call 936-441-SHOW or visit the website at www.stage-right.org