

Ensemble cast makes a point of messing things up

In the Citadel's production of *Noises Off*, the mistakes, wardrobe malfunctions, and absolute madness are all part of a tight script

theatrepreview

Noises Off

Runs 27 September to 14 October at 7:30pm

Directed by Bob Baker

Starring John Kirkpatrick, Julien Arnold, and Tom Wood

Citadel Theatre

ALEXANDER WITT
Arts & Entertainment Writer

When the Citadel theatre wanted everything to go wrong, they assembled their very best to make sure everything in their new madcap ensemble adventure comedy, *Noises Off*, would go as pear-shaped as they wanted it to.

Set in the English countryside, the play is about a bumbling cast and crew trying to get their wobbly show on the road. It takes place onstage and offstage in this farce where they just can't seem to get their sardines straight.

The cast and crew are hand-picked: Bob Baker—whose comedy experience extends to The Citadel's *Blithe Spirit* and *A Servant of Two Masters*—directs, with original music by Don Horsburgh. A handful of experienced Citadel actors like John Kirkpatrick, Julien Arnold, Matthew MacFadzean, Tom Wood, and Larry Yachimec help anchor down the frantic show.

This will be the first time anyone in the cast performs the play, which won't seem so out of place onstage—the first act of the *Noises Off* begins with the players in dress rehearsal, botching their roles. It



goes downhill from there, and hilarity ensues. The *New York Times* has called it the funniest play ever written, but one of the actors disagrees.

"It's funnier than the *NY Times* says it is," boasts Kirkpatrick, who is playing the role of Lloyd Dallas, frustrated director. "I play the man who's trying to hold it all together and not succeeding.

"I've worn [the director's] hat before; but this is a pretty unique experience," he continues. "It's about problem-solving and helping [the players] get through the show." But, he claims, it's never as hard as it's presented in *Noises Off*. During a

break in rehearsal, he tries to explain the play in more detail, but ends up being assaulted by his fellow actors.

"It's a play about a company that's trying to put on a farce," he says, before experiencing repeated interruptions. "One of my fellow actors is pissing me off—*Noises Off* is a play about a company that's trying to put on a production of a farce and everything—sorry, my castmate's being a prick right now—and everything that goes wrong back-stage with the company. It's just a disintegration between the relationships and the perfor-

mance in the play."

Judging by his interruptions, the bumbling onstage relationships hide close, playful friendships shared by the cast of *Noises Off*. And the way Kirkpatrick sees it, there's little possibility that any of the climactic sort of things go wrong behind the scenes.

"[Nothing happens] to that extent that things go wrong in *Noises Off* is extreme and hilarious," he clarifies. "Little things will happen backstage, but nothing like this."

Except, of course, if it's directed to be.

CJSR CHARTS

FOR THE WEEK ENDING
TUESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER

1. THE WEAKERTHANS

Reunion Tour
Anti-

2. SHARON JONES AND THE DAP-KINGS

100 Days, 100 Nights
Daptone

3. CARIBOU

Andorra
Merge

4. MIA

Kala
XL

5. SHUYLER JANSEN

Today's Remains
Black Hen

6. JASON ANDERSON

Tonight
ECA

7. PRAIRIE CAT

Attacks!
Fuzzy Logic

8. THE GO! TEAM

Proof Of Youth
Secret City

9. NEW PORNOGRAPHERS

Challengers
Last Gang/Matador

10. CAROLYN MARK

Nothing Is Free
Mint

Uncas stomp out their own blues-country beat

musicpreview

The Uncas

With the Perpetrators

Wednesday, 26 September at 8pm and Friday,
28 September at 9pm

The Locker Room (10209 100 Avenue)

SEAN STEELS
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Have you ever listened to a live recording and heard some idiot screaming incoherently, voice cracking, professing his or her eternal love for the band onstage? Ever wanted to be that idiot?

Well, Alberta's country-rock fusion band The Uncas are here this week to give you that chance. Their show Friday—the headlining slot on a double bill—will be broadcast live over CJSR's airwaves.

Besides the tantalizing possibility of making a fool out of themselves on a live radio broadcast, fans will get lots of sweat, lots of energy, and some surprisingly tight riffing for a country act: The Uncas are notorious for their electric stage presence and a disregard for traditional conventions.

The upcoming show will also be their last visit to Edmonton before going into the studio for the winter. Hitting the tail end of three years on the road has taught them to temper partying with good food and good company, among other things. But more importantly, it brought about an evolution in the band's songwriting and interests, helping them hone their individual sound and style while building up a bottomless catalogue of tracks to select from for their upcoming recording sessions.

"We'll be playing a lot of new material, but we're always happy to oblige requests for our older stuff," guitarist and singer Futch says. "We love it when people start screaming for songs. No 'Freebird,' though. It's got to be an Uncas song."



Also featuring the Perpetrators—a well known, Juno-nominated and WCMA-winning blues band—the shows will be a chance for fans to get close and cozy with two groups legendary for their vivacious live performances. Stage dives, power tools, rafter scaling, and instrument swapping are staples of The Uncas' live repertoire of stage tricks, and at the intimately small Locker Room, (a rechristened, gig-ready version of the Econolodge), everyone is guaranteed to get a couple drops of the bands' sweat flung on them.

"We don't want to make ourselves static," Futch says. "A song doesn't usually sound the same twice. We try to do a high-energy show and entertain people beyond the music. We're all over the place; it's exciting, and no one can know what will happen next. The skilsaws and drills don't hurt, either."

The Uncas relish a loose, unpolished sound that sets them apart from alt-country acts, but it's their versatility that makes them so entertaining live.

Each group member is a capable singer, and being able to play more than one instrument is pretty much a band prerequisite. As a result, their sets usually swing from tight, pre-orchestrated, harmony-sweetened gems to gritty rock stomp-outs.

But according to Futch, the real reason the Locker Room will be shaking is the complementary musical stylings of the two well-oiled jam machines: The Uncas and the Perpetrators.

"We're just doing these couple of shows together, but I wouldn't rule out an eventual tour," he explains. "The two bands work really well together. Country and blues are linked, especially when you're talking about country blues, which is what inspired Johnny Cash or inspires the White Stripes. [The Perpetrators] cover the blues end, and we cover the country. [Together, we] cover the two key components of rock & roll. We're both just playing rock & roll, but it leans a different way."