



THEATRE

'The Flip Side' is the right side for fun

By Wayne Barcomb



The three-member cast of "The Flip Side," Stephen Hope, Craig Laurie and Richie McCall demonstrate unbridled enthusiasm.

"The Flip Side," running at Florida Studio Theatre's Cabaret until June 10, is an amusing, irreverent slice of social commentary that will keep you smiling (most of the time). One promo piece for the show quotes the cast as saying, "If you have any expectations as to what you might see in 'The Flip Side,' drop them."

Good advice. However, it would be difficult to have any expectations after seeing the list of musical numbers in the program. Unless you have been a dedicated aficionado of quirky, satirical songs about bizarre people and events, you are unlikely to recognize any of the songs listed.

And quirky they are. For example, in one of the songs, titled "I'm My Own Grandpaw," songwriter Ray Stevens proceeds to lay out a scenario wherein a man marries a woman whose daughter later marries the man's father. The wacky song then proceeds to describe incredible (but believable) interrelationships that develop from these two marriages where the original guy winds up being his own grandfather.

Bizarre? Absolutely, but typical of the offbeat, clever lyrics that for the most part are very entertaining. I must confess that after reading the breakdown of songs in the program, I thought, "Uh oh." The list won't

evoke any warm romantic memories or much of any recollection.

Try for example, "Would Jesus Wear a Rolex?" "She'd Rather Be Homeless," "It's Me Again, Margaret," "Killed By a Coconut," "The Bricklayer's Song," "Silicon Slim." Get the picture?

There are 20 such songs, a few written by some well known old timers like Tom Lehrer, Shel Silverstein and Ray Stevens. Some are hilarious, like the aforementioned "I'm My Own Grandpaw," "Killed By a Coconut," "I Ain't Going Nowhere," and "Still Gonna Die."

Most are at least amusing – and only a few will fail to do much toward tickling your funny bone, which is the primary raison d'etre for this show.

If the show succeeds (and for the most part, it does), it's because of the unbridled enthusiasm and talent of the three-member cast, Stephen Hope, Craig Laurie and Richie McCall, and, of course, the always delightful (and in this case, whimsical) musical accompaniment of music director/pianist Michael Sebastian.

The program notes tell us that the three performers say that rehearsals have been great fun, more like play than work – a readily believable quote based on the fun the three are having throughout the production. From the moment they burst onto the stage, they are raring to go and never let up.

Each has his own distinctive style, and they interact and compliment one another perfectly, even in such

nonsense numbers as "Night and Day (With Punctuation Marks)," a not terribly funny number which in lesser hands could be a real yawner.

Director Dennis Courtney returns for his 15th FST production, evoking fond memories of some of his previous shows, such as the Cabaret's highly successful "Piano Men" and the wonderful "His Eye Is On Sparrow."

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