



# Total Theater<sup>SM</sup>

O n l i n e

- Dramapedia
- Referencia
- Criticopia
- Periodica
- Photorium

## CRITICOPIA REGIONAL THEATER

- First
- Prev
- Next
- Last

**Show Title**                      Rise and Fall of Western Civilization According to Tom Lehrer, The

**Subtitle**

**Total Rating**                      \*\*\*1/2

**Currently Running?**      NO

**Dates**                                      Opened January 11, 2005; Ended March 19, 2005

**Country**                                      USA

**State**    Florida

**City/Town**                                      Sarasota

**Theater Type**                                      Regional

**Producer/Theater Co.**                                      Florida Studio Theater (Richard Hopkins, artistic dir)

**Theater**    Florida Studio Theater - Goldstein Cabaret

**Theater Address**                                      1241 North Palm Avenue

**Box Office Phone**                                      (941) 366-9000

**Running Time**                                      90 min

**Genre**    Musical Revue

**Author**    Songs: Tom Lehrer; Conceived: FST staff

**Director**    Dennis Courtney

**Director** Dennis Courtney

**Review** A schmaltzy song to accompany beer drinking seems an unlikely way to introduce sophisticated Lehrer compositions, but pianist Michael Sebastian even sings a few bars to signal we are in for more than tongue-twisting. A heavily textured draped backdrop flanked by racks holding simple props (mostly hats) visually signals a mix. When an a"Tom"ic trio of interpreters bursts on the scene ragging the Vatican, they complete the transubstantiation of silliness into Tom-myrot, sacred plus profane. For example, "Be Prepared" amounts to a Tom-e of advice to Boy Scouts on how to cover up sins. The men's voices, movement, and accompaniment blend very well. Chad Hudson's sweet tenor makes his "Old Dope Peddler" chilling and also lends itself well to a macabre Irish air. In the same vein, peculiarly Tom-boyish, wiggled Gary Lindemann plays sweetheart to debonair Stephen Hope as they go "Poisoning Pigeons in the Park." Under a sombrero, Gary leads a bloody account of bull fighting. Expected favorite, "National Brotherhood Week," follows the trio's rendering of a song Lehrer wrote for TV's "The Electric Company." It teaches about forming adverbs with the suffix "ly" - -amazingly, without any Tom Swifties. Another amazement: Stephen, like an au-Tom-aton, explaining the periodic table of elements as if Gilbert and Sullivan's modern major general. He's also an effective Tom-cat leading a "Masochism Tango." Shooting Tom-tits, among other creatures, appeals to Gary's "Sporting" instincts. Thankfully, we get no audience participation but instead appreciation for the trio's, and Lehrer's, Tom-foolery. Don't be a doubting Tom..see and hear for yourselves.

**Caution/Guidance** adult themes

**Other Critics**

**Miscellaneous**

**Awards**

**Cast** Stephen Hope, Chad Hudson, Gary Lindemann, Michael Sebastian

**Technical Staff** Choreog/Musical Director: Michael Sebastian; Set & Costumes: Marcella Beckwith; Lights: Allen L. Mack; Music Arrangers: Jim Prosser, Michael Sebastian.

**Critic** Kilker Marie J

**critic**                       **critic, marc s.**

**Date Reviewed**                      **January 2005**