THEATER REVIEW

Brisk 'Comedy of Errors' deliciously entertaining

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The Greenville Shakespeare Company must be reaching for some kind of speed record with its brisk and blithe "Comedy of Errors."

GSC's production of Shakespeare's slapsticky farce clocks in at a mere 65 minutes — even with an intermission for cupcakes.

Jeffrey Stegall's staging at Bob Jones University's Performance Hall is something of a sugary confection itself: sweet, colorful and lots of fun.

Performed in the round, this truncated "Comedy of Errors" retains all the funny bits in the story about two sets of identical twins who are accidentally separated at birth.

Mistaken identities lead to humorous complications: Servants are sent on wrong errands, husbands are locked out of their own homes, and characters are wrongfully accused of crime.

GSC's production has an endearing case of the cutes, with bright costumes in pinks, yellows and oranges.

Stegall, the director/designer, offers some whimsical touches: Instead of handcuffs, a policeman uses hula hoops to capture miscreants. Tennis rackets, meanwhile, serve as swords. The executioner merely carries an even larger tennis racket.

The tavern-keeper, meanwhile, is transformed into a Waffle House waitress with a Southern drawl.

GSC's peppy take on Shakespeare seems geared toward a student audience and probably will keep even young children quite entertained.

Not that it's just for the kids: The adults and BJU students in Thursday's audience found plenty to laugh about as well.

The intimate performance space allows for an audience of only 100 or so, with no one more than four rows from the small stage. The result is an immersive experience.

Stegall keeps the proceedings quick and delightful. The cast is solid across the board. I particularly like the two desperate Dromios (played by Stegall and Paul Michael Garrison) who provide the lion's share of this production's hijinks.

Deft performances also are offered by Philip Eoute and Johnathan Schofield as, respectively, Antipholus of Syracuse and Antipholus of Ephesus.

The design team of Elizabeth Nelson (set), Ron Pyle (lights) and Peter Anglea (music and sound) nicely complement Stegall's jaunty staging.

One more performance of this "Comedy of Errors" remains: tonight at 7:30. For tickets, call 864-770-1372.

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