

Centre Stage's 'Whose Wives' a riotous romp

By Paul Hyde

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THEATER REVIEW

Centre Stage's "Whose Wives Are They Anyway?" is a riotous and naughty pleasure, the theatrical equivalent of a very satisfying summer beach novel.

The frothy farce, which opened Thursday night, offers belly-laughs aplenty thanks to a clever plot and a cast of actors who embrace their roles with zest and flamboyant energy.

The story: Two vice presidents of a New York City cosmetics company journey to the suburbs to enjoy a weekend of golf.

While there, they encounter their company's new CEO, who unexpectedly turns out to be a woman and wants to meet their wives, saying, "No one who went golfing for a weekend without his wife would ever work for me."

Chaos ensues as the two VPs try to come up with some phony wives for the weekend — and then the real wives arrive.

Shannon Rossi, in an impressive debut, directs the show in broad strokes and at breakneck speed — entirely appropriate for this sort of capricious romp.

Rossi also fills the sexual innuendo-heavy show with an abundance of physical comedy that never fails to hit the mark.

Her eight actors negotiate their roles with vigor, aplomb and a sure sense of timing.

The two VPs are deftly played by Bryan Gallagher and Jonathan Kilpatrick, both of whom revel in comic desperation.

Trevor Furlong is a delight as the long-suffering hotel handyman Wilson. His perpetual expression of befuddlement is priceless.

Jessie Cann brings a nimble and likeable daffiness to the flibbertigibbet front-desk clerk Tina.

Mary Freeman plays the CEO D.L. Hutchison with the right amount of assertive confidence.

Cindy Mixon is an appealingly prudish Mrs. Carlson, who works herself up into hilarious fits of indignation over the racy happenings at her hotel.

The two wives, who believe themselves callously betrayed by their husbands, are enjoyably played by Melanie Ann Wiliford and Miranda Notus. The former reacts with hysteria, the latter with revenge-seeking anger.

If you're in the mood for summer silliness, there's no better bet than Centre Stage's "Whose Wives Are They Anyway?" The play's suggestive humor, however, may make it unsuitable for younger children.

The show runs through June 9. For tickets, call 864-233-6733.

■ Arts Writer Paul Hyde is reporting live from the Spoleto Festival USA this weekend in Charleston. Follow him on Twitter: @PaulHyde7.

5/27/12