



Ten Buck's performances will entertain

By JUDY HARRISON, BDN Staff

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Ten Buck Theatre is giving audiences a lesson in the history of drama in its latest offering at the Brewer Middle School. The nearly 2-year-old company, founded by some of Greater Bangor's best actors, is presenting a tandem of one-acts written by the first and last playwrights of the theater of the absurd.

"The Bald Soprano," the classic by Eugene Ionesco that launched a theatrical revolution in 1949, and "After Magritte," written by Tom Stoppard, the English playwright considered the last devotee of the genre, make an intriguing combination for theatergoers who know what to expect.

The absurdists, particularly Ionesco, could leave audience members who are unfamiliar with and unprepared for their nonsensical dialogue and absence of plot, especially in "The Bald Soprano," feeling hostile toward seatmates already initiated in these playwrights' methods. Stoppard's plot and characters will feel and sound more familiar, particularly to fans of Monty Python and "Saturday Night Live."

Director Julie Arnold Lisnet and her talented cast milk every laugh possible out of "The Bald Soprano." The pacing never drags, and just when theatergoers start scratching their heads in bewilderment, Tamela Glenn as Mary the Maid glides onstage to offer a fleeting moment of sanity to the proceedings.

Amy Cain and Putnam Smith are the epitome of stilted British mannerisms as the apparent strangers who deduce to their utter surprise that they are Mr. and Mrs. Martin - husband and wife. The young actors are utterly charming at portraying their characters' ignorance. A.J. Mooney, Allen Adams and Gibran Vogue Graham round out the fine ensemble.

Stoppard wrote "After Magritte" as a companion play to his popular "The Real Inspector Hound," the first play Ten Bucks produced. This one-act also is a mystery that spoofs not only Belgium artist Rene Magritte but also French detective Maigret created by Georges Simenon.

Robert Libbey brings the same manic feel to the play as a director that he's conveyed in his many acting portrayals at theaters in the region. Doug Meswarb and Sarah Diana are delightfully dry and droll as Harris and Thelma, the couple Inspector Foot detects needs the help of a detective. Kenny Volock has never been better as the never baffled but constantly bumbling bobby. James Boccock and A.J. Mooney complete the cast.

Ten Bucks' bold decision to present an evening with the absurdists deserves to be supported and applauded. Audiences, however, should be forewarned - "The Bald Soprano" is strange, weird and nearly incomprehensible. "After Magritte" is almost as strange, nearly as weird, but, ultimately,

coherent. Both are expertly directed, professionally acted and give audiences the flip side to the modern, realistic dramas currently on other area stages.

The plays will be performed through Oct. 20. For more information, call 942-7589. The telephone number on the posters and postcards is incorrect.

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