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Theatre
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“Mirandolina Review”

Mirandolina, presented by the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, is a rollicking festival of a show, yet it is not merely entertainment; it also has a deeper moral meaning relevant to today, even though the show was written in the 1700's. It is a tale of betrayal, love, exploitation, and redemption. No matter how corny that sounds, these are all elements that appeal to us in a modern day, and the Rep has tried to make it even more so by updating some of the costuming and set design to a more contemporary period (so as to alienate viewers as little as possible). The show is effective and fun; I enjoyed it fully.

The play is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Italian *commedia d'ell arte*: the plot itself one of *commedia*'s stock plots, the gags (*lazzi*) were typical of the style, the characters were essentially the stock characters, and so on. There were a few major differences between this play and its forerunner, however. The definition of *commedia* is the Italian form of comedy that had a stock plot and characters, but was done all by improvisation. This, being an established play, obviously was not improvised.

Another key difference between the two is the lack of depth in the traditional form, and the actual lessons that run deep through the veins of *Mirandolina*. Other *commedia*, while entertaining, does not really have anything to take away from the show besides amusement. This show, *Mirandolina*, teaches audience members not to treat love and romance too lightly, or you and others will be hurt. It also says to appreciate what you have, instead of being greedy and trying to obtain more, again because you will ultimately hurt everyone involved.

I felt that the modernisation of the set and wardrobe aided the intended messages quite excellently, also. It gave a time period closer to our own time and place than 18th Century Italy, which allowed the viewers an easier way to connect to the play, and understand the lessons of the show. It seemed like it could almost have been happening at a motel somewhere on the outskirts of the Milwaukee area. The design, as well as the acting, was excellent. I applaud the entire cast and crew for tackling so difficult a project and succeeding so brilliantly.