

Published January 5, 2007

'Shakespearean Godfather' rises to the challenge



Laura Van Waardhuizen plays Kay and Josh Visnapuu plays Michael Corleone star in "Corleone: The Shakespearean Godfather," presented by Theater For a Change.

by **james erwin**
juice correspondent

Few things are more intimidating for an actor than to step into a role that someone else made famous. For a director to reinterpret a masterpiece. For a writer than to look at a story and imagine how Shakespeare would have told it.

Everyone involved in Theater For A Change's production of "Corleone: The Shakespearean Godfather" has risen admirably to the challenge.

Playwright David Mann adapted "The Godfather" as a Shakespearean work. At times, Mann's script nails the idea perfectly - especially when the swords come out. At other times, though, Mann gets dangerously close to just tacking on a few "thees" and "thous."

Fans of the Bard will note a few subtle Hamlet references dropped in.

Fans of the film could get itchy waiting for their favorite scenes, but Mann has had to trim out a lot of classic bits to get the play down to its fighting weight of eighty minutes.

There's no horse's head. Don Corleone doesn't chase his grandkid around with his orange-peel fangs. Michael doesn't get to say "You broke my heart." Still, there's plenty left to work with.

The actors each play several roles. While some characters were remade into Shakespearean heroes and villains, no Shakespeare play would be complete without a few clowns who, as always, get to talk rings around everyone else.

John Busbee stands out in this role as Luca Brasi, and Kourtney Horner's Apollonia is another hilarious if

short-lived character. All of the actors are clearly having fun with the play, and there's plenty to relish as an audience member too.

If your significant other isn't enthusiastic about mob flicks but loves Shakespeare or vice versa, take them out to see "Corleone." There's a lot here for both of you. And if you happen to like both? Well, it's a play you... oh, you know the catchphrase.

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∴ "Corleone: The Shakespearean Godfather"

When: 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, Jan. 18-Jan. 20 and 3 p.m. Sunday and Jan. 21

Where: Viking Theatre, Grand View College, 2811 E. 14th St.

Tickets: \$10 at iowatix.com or at the door. \$3 Grand View College students at the door.

Event: Playwright David Mann leads a "Talkback with the Playwright" session after Saturday's performance.

Info: thatcherwilliams.com/theater, (888)288-9512