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Must provide resume
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◆ Center Stage

By Jared Curtis



Steve Mathews and Mike Pace star in Theater ... For A Change's production of the "Sunshine Boys," which runs Thursday through Sunday and May 8-11. Shows start at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday at the Grand View College Viking Theatre, 2811 E. 14th St. Tickets are \$10 and available at the box office or www.lowatix.com. Visit www.theaterforchange.com for more information.

Grumpy old men

Bickering duo unleashes a fury of one-liners

Bringing the 2007-08 season to a close, Theater ... For A Change (TFAC) presents Neil Simon's "Sunshine Boys." Although "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill" was scheduled to end the season, the show was rescheduled to run in the fall and "Sunshine Boys" was chosen to take its place.

"With the opening in the production schedule, we discussed what would be a show which also has its story in the history of entertainment," said TFAC's Producing Artistic Director Thatcher Williams. "What came to mind immediately was 'The Sunshine Boys' since our audiences enjoyed Simon's 'Laughter on the 23rd Floor' last season. It will brighten your day, warm your heart, put a twinkle in your eye and a smile on your face."

"Sunshine Boys" focuses on the aging Al Lewis and Willy Clark, a one-time vaudevillian team known as "Lewis and Clark" who, over the course of 40 years, grew to hate each other. Clark, who was not ready for retirement, resented Lewis for breaking up the act when he opted to leave show business. Many years later, CBS invited the team to reunite for a special show on the history of comedy, representing the vaudeville era.

"Our director, Mike Cornelison, whom I have worked with in radio, television, etc., thought that Steve Mathews and I could pull this off," said Mike Pace, who plays Al Lewis. "We've been great friends for more than 25 years, worked together at KIOA, were partners

together with Radio Garage Productions and have been accused of being Des Moines' answer to the 'Odd Couple.'"

Both Pace and Mathews shine as bickering old men who, in their hey day, were the kings of comedy. Today they are no longer in the business and only celebrities in their own mind, until they get an offer to get back on stage, which neither can refuse.

"The rehearsals are a combination of uproarious laughter and nail biting tension as we learn to be someone we're not. And it's not easy for me to get really mad at Mike. We've been friends too long to take anything too seriously," said Mathews, who plays Willie Clark. "It's a wonderful show, and Mike and I feel truly honored to be a part of it."

The show is full of one-liners that will have your sides splitting with laughter. But behind the jokes, it's a story of friendship.

"It's a layered love story about two guys who worked together for 43 years, while at times, barely tolerating each other," Pace said. "The show is straight-ahead fun and even though there is some innuendo and a little language, it's pretty tame and mild for today's world."

Stage notes: Tallgrass Theatre Co. has yet to announce its 2008-2009 season, but the lineup will include the Third Annual Iowa Playwrights Workshop. Playwrights are encouraged to submit original works at anytime during the year to info@tallgrasstheatre.org. Submissions can be full-length or one-act plays written by a playwright originally from Iowa or currently residing in Iowa. ...When opera meets rock, it's thrilling to hear. The East Village Opera Co. performs Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Stephens Auditorium in Ames. Tickets range from \$15 to \$38.50. This concert will win over hipsters and opera lovers alike. ... "Stomp" is returning to Civic Center of Greater Des Moines for a limited engagement May 9 to 11, as part of the Betts Broadway Series. Tickets range from \$27.50 to \$45 and are on sale now at the Civic Center box office. ... StageWest concludes the 2007-08 season at the Stoner Theater with the Midwest premiere of Christopher Durang's new hit comic fantasy about the afterlife, "Miss Witherspoon." Performances are Friday through Sunday and May 7-11. Tickets range from \$16 to \$20 and are available at the Civic Center box office. ... The Des Moines Playhouse's KG Children's Theatre presents "Holes" starting Friday running through May 18. Tickets range from \$12 to \$15 and are available at The Des Moines Playhouse box office. CV

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