



The Mystery of Irma Vep: A Night of Laughter at Bay Street Theatre

July 4, 2013

by Julia Boudreau

DISPATCH - JULY 4, 2013 (4:30 p.m.)

Sag Harbor, NY-

"The Mystery of Irma Vep," running July 2 to 28 at Bay Street Theatre, brings a sense of mystery, satire, thrills, chills and comedy all at once to summer theatergoers, continues Bay Street's high standards of excellent theatrical productions.

Written by Charles Ludlam, Bay Street's second mainstage production focuses on one man's quest to solve the mystery of his wife's death. It uses the ingenious theatrical device of having two actors play all the different parts. Kenneth Elliott directs.

The performance will keep audiences guessing while they follow the main character, Lord Edgar, as he faces vampires, werewolves and mummies. Like any good husband, Lord Edgar goes to great lengths to uncover his first wife's killer even amid the mysterious events happening along the way. Lord Edgar eventually returns to his estate to discover that the truth to his wife's death was hidden within his own house all along.



David Greenspan, Tom Aulino. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

The play is satirical in nature and touches on a multitude of traditional film genres, including Victorian melodrama, Gothic horror, parts of the Alfred Hitchcock film "Rebecca", and elements of farce.

The play first debuted in September 1984 in New York City's Greenwich Village. It was produced by Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company and ran for two years. Ludlam played multiple roles in the original production, including starring as Lady Enid, the new mistress of the manor, and playing a butler. Ludlam's lifelong partner, Everett Quinton, starred as Lord Edgar Hillcrest, the master of the manor, and also played the housekeeper and other characters.

Together, the unstoppable duo of Ludlam and Quinton won the 1985 Obie Award for Ensemble Performance. The original production also won a Special Drama Desk Award.



David Greenspan, Tom Aulino. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

The play was later produced at the Westside Theatre Off-Broadway from September 1998 to July 1999 and won the 1999 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Revival, in addition to Outer Critics Circle Award nominations for Outstanding Revival of a Play, Outstanding Lighting Design (by John Lee Beatty), and Outstanding Costume Design (by William Ivey Long).

In Sag Harbor, audiences will be treated to the talents of actors Tom Aulino and David Greenspan taking on a total of eight characters on the Bay Street stage.

“‘Irma Vep’ is going to be a funny show!” says Gary Hygom, producer for Bay Street Theatre. “We are incredible happy to have both Tom and David as our two-man cast playing eight different characters with over 35 different costume changes. Under Elliott’s direction, ‘Vep’ will have audiences crying with laughter.”



David Greenspan. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

The small cast is certainly prepared for the multi-character challenge with years of acting experience. Actor Tom Aulino’s past work includes the Broadway revival of “On The Town” as well as “Marvin’s Room,” “Up Against It!” “The Chang Fragments,” “Measure for Measure” and “Henry VIII,” “Sin,” and “UBU.”

Aulino performed in “Circle Mirror Transformation” and directed a production of “The Mystery of Irma Vep” last fall at Kansas City Rep. He was one of the original members of Charles Busch and Ken Elliott’s Theatre-In-Limbo. He currently works as an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Auburn University.



Tom Aulino, David Greenspan. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

David Greenspan also brings with him a list of acting achievements and has won five Obie Awards,

given by the Village Voice newspaper for off-Broadway Productions. His most recent credits include “The Haunted Inn,” “Marie Antoinette” and “Melancholy Play.” He has received two performance Obies and one Obie for Sustained Achievement.



David Greenspan, Tom Aulino. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

With years of experience in the director’s chair, Elliott boasts a record that includes directing Off-Broadway plays and musicals at the Public, Primary Stages, Manhattan Theatre Club and the WPA Theatre.

He co-authored and directed “Devil Boys from Beyond,” which received the Outstanding Play Award at the 2009 New York International Fringe Festival and was then performed at New World Stages in 2010. His regional experience includes performances at the Cape Playhouse, and he currently works as an associate professor of theatre and the chair of the Fine Arts Department at Rutgers University in Camden.

This laughter-filled, guessing game of a play is the perfect way to begin a summer of theatre and culture at Bay Street.



Tom Aulino, David Greenspan. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

BASIC FACTS: “The Mystery of Irma Vep” is performed at Bay Street Theatre through July 28. Tickets are available by calling the Box Office at 631-725-9500 or buying online at www.baystreet.org. Tickets range in price from \$57.50 to \$69.50. As not to decrease attendance at the fireworks display taking place on Saturday, July 6, in Sag Harbor, “The Mystery of Irma Vep” will be performed at 7 p.m. for July 6 only.

Bay Street Theater is located at 1 Bay Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963. For more information, or to buy tickets, visit www.baystreet.org or call 631-725-9500.