

From Cole to Comedy: It Was 'De-Lovely', But 'It Was Just One of Those Things'

By: Steven Wong



*What do you
mean, we're not
doing COLE!!*



*Tommy Hunter, Wayne Krennerich, Manny Cafeo (director),
Harold Wood, Mike Anderson
Carolyn Wong, Amy Sowers, Catherine Anderson & Giny Mendez*

STAGE RIGHT of Texas, now performing at the historic Crighton Theatre in downtown Conroe announces a change to its season line-up. We had originally scheduled to produce COLE, a musical about the life and music of Cole Porter in February. Unfortunately, we've had to give up the rights to that show. Manny Cafeo, the director of COLE, felt there were too many obstacles in our way to produce a quality show. The main obstacle being that the publisher could not provide us with all of the materials for the show (evidently it hasn't been done in quite a while and some of the materials have been lost). The publisher would also not allow us to alter, cut, change, or create what Manny



felt was needed in order to make the show work. Instead of COLE we are going to produce Ken Ludwig's madcap screwball comedy LEND ME A TENOR. We had some amazing talent in the COLE cast and Manny felt that this show would provide an avenue for some to showcase their comedic and singing talents.

Winner of 3 Tony Awards and 4 Drama Desk Awards, LEND ME A TENOR takes place in 1934, where The Cleveland Grand Opera Company awaits the arrival of guest singer Tito Morelli. Hailed as possibly the greatest operatic tenor of his time, Tito (also known as "Il Stupendo") is to perform the title role in their gala performance of Giuseppe Verdi's Otello.

Greeting guest singer Tito and his hot tempered wife Maria are the artistic director, Henry Saunders; his mischievous daughter, Maggie; and Saunders' bungling assistant Max. Diana, a soprano in the company, and Julia, the well-aged Chairman of the Opera Guild, each want to better her career by spending some "quality time" with Tito. Thrown into the mix is Frank, the hotel bellhop, a huge Merelli fan who tries his best to see the tenor any way he can.

Hysteria ensues when the star is presumed dead in his hotel room and a "suicide" note is found (actually Maria's "Dear John" note to Tito). Saunders scrambles to find a suitable solution that won't cost him his job. After much convincing and manipulation, the nebbish Max agrees to impersonate Il Stupendo. Max succeeds admirably, but what happens if Morelli isn't dead after all? Come find out how this case of mistaken identity, celebrity worship and amore resolves at a fever pitch.

Some of the cast are familiar to our audiences having recently appeared in the Vaudeville show. 'Il Supendo' the tenor Tito Merelli is being played by Harold Wood. Harold appeared in the Vaudeville and has been performing with the Gilbert & Sullivan Society for many years. Tito's wife Maria is being played by STAGE RIGHT regular Catherine Anderson. Catherine was last seen in the Vaudeville show and in Love Letters last February.

Others from the Vaudeville cast include Carolyn Corsano Wong as the daffy dame president of the Opera Guild, Amy Sowers as the opportunistic soprano Diana, and Tommy Hunter. Tommy has an amazing voice and will play the scene stealing role of the Bellhop that wants to be an opera singer. Some new faces include Wayne Krennerich as the irascible the-

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Giny Mendez and Mike Anderson as Maggie & Max



Mike Anderson and Wayne Krennerich as Max and Saunders trying to find a tenor

atre manager Saunders and Mike Anderson as the theatre manager's right hand man Max. Both are wonderfully talented and Mike plays a terrific nebbish having just finished playing Leo Bloom in Playhouse 1960's production of The Producers.

He has a beautiful singing voice and spot on comic timing which the role of Max demands. Rounding out our cast is voice teacher and certified music therapist Giny Mendez. She plays Max's love interest Maggie. Giny is a very talented young lady

and has been absent from the Crighton stage for too long.

Show dates are Feb. 19 - Mar. 7, Friday & Saturday nights at 8 pm, two Sunday matinees Feb. 28 and Mar. 7 at 2 pm. Tickets can be purchased

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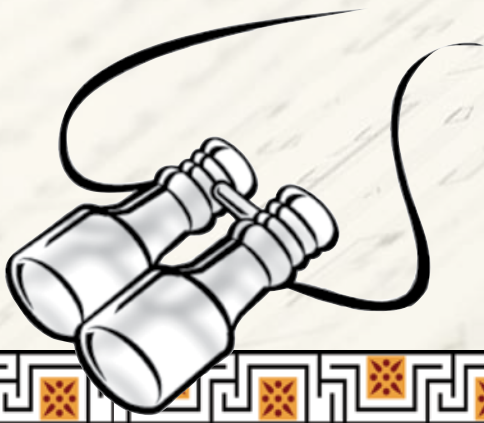
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online via our website www.stage-right.org or the Crighton Theatre website: www.crighton-theatre.org. Tickets can also be purchased by calling the box office at 936-441-7469. It is a bit more adult themed than the shows we generally produce. We'd rate it a PG-13.

We sincerely hope our patrons will understand the need for the show change; we were in a bit of a Catch 22 situation. In the words of one of Cole Porter's standards; "It was just one of those things." We hope one day to produce a Cole Porter show and hope that our audiences will enjoy this hilarious comedic romp instead. If you have comments, questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us at info@stage-right.org. See you at the Crighton! ♦



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