

Classic Theatre at TWHS & Classic Comedy at Crighton

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“The People’s Critic”

(4-23-2010 Conroe COURIER &
www.ThePeoplesCritic.com 04.23.10)

It is no surprise that **The Woodlands High School’s** recent production of Peter Schaffer’s **AMADEUS** has been an award-winning triumph in the University Interscholastic League competition. Brilliantly directed by Connie Sue Godwin, Carlen Gilseth and Tammy McClanahan, this will stand as a shining star in the long tradition of theatrical excellence at TWHS. Amid a well-executed and smoky mist, the audience has its first glimpse of the set design’s elegant simplicity. With just three grand columns draped in elegant fabric, and a few gilt-edged furnishings, we have the suggestion of perhaps a chamber in the 18th century palace of Austrian Emperor, Joseph II (Tyler Lewis). As the play opens, court gossip abounds, and two amusing “Venticelli” (Travis Meader & Vic Shutee) remind us a bit of Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum while serving skillfully as merry guides and narrators for the action that follows. The gossip suggests that perhaps court composer, Antonio Salieri (Keith Hale in a stunning performance), may have murdered his fellow composer, Amadeus Mozart (Joe Dougherty, in an acting triumph of his own).

Suddenly the aged Salieri rises from his wheelchair to confront the audience with his side of the story. We go into flashback for a series of wonderful scenes recalling the earlier years when the competing talents of the two composers seemed at odds as the brilliant Mozart’s compositions outshone those of his jealous rival. Dougherty is a riot in his romantic romps with bride-to-be, Constanze (Cecily Breaux), while Salieri’s escalating envy is beautifully realized in Mr. Hale’s powerful portrayal and easy grace of movement on the stage. Miss Breaux was wonderful as well, whether giving us the giddy laughter of Constanze, or her wrenching grief at Amadeus’ deathbed. Andrew Novak, Craig Putnam, Alex McCauley, Elisa Regulski, Allison McKinney round out the stunning cast with additional support from Jessica Trinque, Dani DePoy, Katlin Newman and Lauren Kozar. All were arrayed in the lush period costume designs of director, Godwin. Cast movement around the stage was finely

choreographed, and superb lighting designs (Steven Lanier) and special lighting effects (Kristen Conroy) were so beautifully executed that some of the carefully crafted frozen cast tableaux had the look of masterpiece paintings. Bravo!

For more information on TWHS Theatre visit www.twhstheatre.com

Not far away, just north of The Woodlands in increasingly quaint downtown Conroe, last Saturday night featured plenty of hilarity as the **Stage Right Players** presented the silly but fun-filled comedy, "**Dearly Beloved**", at the **Crighton Theatre**. Directed by Diane Edgar, and written by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope & Jamie Wooten, this comic romp is part of a trilogy that includes two earlier productions at Crighton, Southern Hospitality and Christmas Belles, with the latter scheduled to return to Crighton for a December 3rd-19th run next holiday season.

Dearly Beloved features many familiar zany characters from the redneck town of Fayro, Texas, including the Futrelle sisters: marriage-hungry Twink (Amy Creel), sexy and sassy woman of the world, Honey Raye (Amy Sowers), and their somewhat more refined married sister, Frankie (Patrice Kentimenos), whose husband Dub Dubberly (Wade Gonsoulin) is not the sharpest knife in the drawer. The scene is a back room at the Tabernacle of the Lamb Church (set by Greg Kelly with Nick Barfield) where Frankie and Dub await the arrival their daughter and bride-to-be, Tina Jo, on this, her wedding day. Don't hold your breath for that arrival as the wedding guests get increasingly restless and local florist, Geneva Musgrove (feisty and comical Carolyn Corsano Wong) does her best to keep the assembled in their chapel seats. Geneva's flowered sun suit alone adds to the mirth, and the southern belle costumes (designer, Deborah Blake) of the bridal party add to the fun. Meanwhile, Tina Jo's twin sister, Gina Jo (Jessica Honsinger), has developed a crush on novice substitute minister, Justin Waverly (cutely played by Robert Evans). Complicating things further, fortuneteller, Madame Nelda (Kay Calzone), reveals to Twink that she will only marry her beloved (and very drunk) Wiley Hicks (Patrick Slagle) if Wiley pulls himself together to witness today's wedding. The groom's mother Patsy (Kate Hudson) does her best to stop the marriage, and pity local sheriff, John Curtis Buntner (Tom Lockhart again reminding one of comedian Jonathan Winters) as he tries to track down the elusive bride and groom. Stop by the Crighton Theatre and see if he succeeds.

DEARLY BELOVED continues through May 2nd with Friday and Saturday evening performances at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. For tickets and information call 936-441-7469, or visit the website at www.stage-right.org .

Bentley's columns, featured in newspapers from the East Coast to the Gulf Coast, may be viewed on the website at www.ThePeoplesCritic.com while E-mail may be addressed to ThePeoplesCritic@earthlink.net