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Inland Stage Presents 'Eclectic Summer Rep Fest'

The Inland Stage Company presents an eclectic mix of live theater in their annual Summer Repertory Festival July 12 through 29.

The first weekend ISC presents their improv-game show "Grapes of Laugh," which pits the company's "ringers" against the "newbies" to see who has got the grapes, according to ISC Artistic Director Jim Marbury.

"Grapes of Laugh is an opportunity to share the simple entertainment value of improvisational comedy, and because we keep the material family friendly and the audience chooses the content of our comedy games, it can be a lot of fun for the whole family," Marbury said. "We are excited to do our very first matinee for 'Grapes of Laugh' on Sunday July 15, with a delightful dinner theatre option."

Tickets are \$5, July 13 and 14 at 8 p.m., with a special dinner theater option on Sunday, July 15 at 2 p.m.

"The Midnight Rocky Horror Tribute Show is a tradition with our acting company," Marbury said. "They love doing this show because they get to focus in on re-imagining the movie. It's a lot of fun and the audience usually dresses up for the occasion."

ISC then presents in repertory the innovative comedy "Fuddy Meers" by David Lindsay-Abaire, and "Marlon and Momma," a world premiere play by Michael Carnick.

"Marlon and Momma" is set in 1967 and centers on psychiatrist (Marlon) and his mother. While working at a local psychiatric hospital, he encounters a young African American man who claims he is Jesus Christ, and who indirectly helps with Marlon coming to terms with his homosexuality.

"Right now in our history, there is a great shift in liberation for oppressed persons, and as this play is set in the years following the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, it mirrors the struggle and allows us to follow the journey of the lead character as he fights to find an identity in a world that does not accept him," said Production Director Kristofer James Ourth. "I believe that this play puts life in a slightly different perspective, and allows for a cathartic moment for people of all different walks of life. It is truly an experience, and is a play being produced at the perfect time in light of recent events regarding civil and human rights."

Since this is only the second time this play has been produced, it is quite interesting for Ourth to work with the actors as they develop the characters.

"Most plays have been widely produced, and actors and directors can fall back on past productions for information, but being a new work, it is a whole different experience," Ourth said. "It is up to us to find the complexity and give life to these wonderfully written characters, and working with these seasoned actors, it is nothing short of a truly happy and fulfilling artistic experience. It is also such a wonderful and different experience being able to work with not only a new work, but directly with the playwright himself."

In contrast, "Fuddy Meers" is in the style of shows on Adult Swim such as Robot Chicken and Family Guy, mixed with the movie "50 First Dates," according to Production Director Winston Peacock,

"A woman wakes up every morning not remembering anything in her life, re-meeting her husband with a hidden past and a troubled teenage son. The woman is taken on an adventure through memories by a limping man, and a nervous man with a foul-mouthed puppet," Peacock said.

Viewer discretion is advised for some crude humor, language, offensive material.

“It is definitely for teenagers and up, this show is a great comedy that will keep you laughing till the very end,” Peacock said. “But then again there were some touching moments between family. And this community needs a good laugh considering the times we are having in the country.”

The World Premiere of "Marlon and Momma" plays at 8 p.m. July 19, 21 and 27 and Sunday, July 29 at 2 p.m. "Fuddy Meers" plays 8 p.m. July 20, 26 and 28 and Sunday July 22nd at 2pm. All tickets are only \$10 and can be purchased on the website at www.inlandstage.org.

ISC also offers group rates and season tickets.

The Esplanade Art Center is located at 2181 W. Esplanade Ave., San Jacinto, Ca.

For more information or reservations, please call the box office at (951) 600-7273 x100.