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Omg, 'The Scarlet Pimpernel' is a lol blast

'Scarlet Pimpernel' at Camelot Theatre in Talent is 'just too cool'

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Tim Holmsley, left, as "Sir Percy" and Darek Riley as "Chauvelin" fight for the affection of "Marguerite," played by Kelly Jean Hammond in Camelot Theatre's production of the "Scarlet Pimpernel." Photo by Denise Baratta / for Revels

By John Darling

for Revels

Posted: 8:30 AM December 08, 2011

A Facebook message to my companion at "The Scarlet Pimpernel," running through Dec. 31 at Camelot Theatre in Talent:

HeyU...Wow, right? I don't know when I've been so showered with sheer entertainment. Did it blow you away? I mean, it was amazing. I'm serious. I just keep flashing back on various scenes and cracking up — mainly at the title character (Tim Holmsley) in his amazingly hilarious role as foppish English dandy Sir Percy.

That guy is going places. He just dominated the stage with his wit and inspired body language, dressed up like a peacock and badgering the villain Chauvelin (Darek Riley) for being all menacingly dressed in black all the time. And Holmsley can sing! They all can sing! It was wonderful. Too often, regional musicals can fall down on the singing, but they all were outrageous and swept you up in their characters at every turn.

I have to, omg, go on and on about the 'demmed, elusive Pimpernel,' what a master. Every time he opened his mouth, I started smiling and would soon be giggling. Then there was an occasional howl.

This musical, I mean, like I told you last night, I think was the best thing I've seen in years, maybe in my whole life. How do they do this in Talent, Oregon? And where do they find these people? They were all so outrageous and into the story! Do I rant? Very well, I rant then!

Oh, and that tall, buxom, luscious love interest of the Pimpernel, Marguerite (Kelly Jean Hammond)? Wow, omg, wow. Convincing? Passionate? Great singing? From the gut, heart and soul? I kept hoping she would grab a sword and join in the crazy but keenly controlled and balletic swordplay — and she finally did! Go, girl!

I know you had to catch the slight sine wave of aggression always going on under the insane, prancing humor of the Pimpernel, carrying it off in disguise as Sir Percy right below the nose of the self-important killer Chauvelin. What a pair they are!

I'm sitting here typing this and belly-laughing at the scene where Chauvelin drops the guillotine blade on (what he thinks is) Sir Percy, and the head just hangs there at the blade, so Chauvelin has to walk over and slap it in the basket and announce, "There, it is done!" Everyone was howling, and the characters all had to work hard not to burst into laughter — too funny!

I'm gonna tell ALL my friends they gotta see this. It's just too cool. It was electric from the first moment — and I loved the way they projected beautiful PowerPoint pictures as the backdrop scenery, so inspired. I was carried away all night. I mean, I know I should find something wrong with it, but I can't.

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I tried to convey to Camelot's artistic director, Livia Genise, as we left, that this was too awesome. She does such a great job of choosing, then directing.

And the story, gad, just such a great story of the kind of hero we all want to have living in our town and doing good in the real world — but anonymously — seeking no reward, right? And with a sword! Not a gun! And with a coterie of like-minded, noble gentlemen.

Then there's the romance, so vital to a good story. Sir Percy starts out thinking his wife spitefully ratted out people for execution, and he barely puts up with her. Then, even though she has no idea he's the Pimpernel, she engages in supreme heroism — as does he — to save her brother (and him) from the chopping block. Then he gets it, and such true and deep love explodes like the birth of a star between them. Swoon, swoon, so dear!

Anyway, off to coffee. It was a blast! Ciao.

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