

ENTERTAINMENT

Kiss Me Kate is an elaborate concert

The Sunshine Festival production of *Kiss Me Kate* opened Saturday night at the Opera House to an audience of almost 600.

It took me a long time to formulate an opinion about *Kiss Me Kate*. This is not your typical play. Each number takes the form of a major production piece. Normally, there would be one in each act, maybe two.

Near the end I was thinking the play resembled something more like an elaborate concert of Cole Porter's music, tied together by a storyline. A little research proved my thought correct. Most of the tunes were culled from a stockpile and utilized for this play, rather than being composed for the play.

The storyline is two couples are having their difficulties — what's new? The two couples happen to be actors in a production of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. They carry their differences from behind the scenes to centre stage. That's a good concept, making for some funny moments.

The play is long, ending at 11 p.m. The first act was an hour and a half. I felt it was a slow build for 70 minutes to get us to 20 minutes of tightly-packed humour.

You definitely want to hit the head before this one starts, judging by the number of people making a dash for the washrooms at intermission.

I don't want you to think this play is boring. You just need to be prepared for the length. Each of the numbers is extremely well-performed. If you don't happen to like one, just wait, the next one will be



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different.

Between the complex and good-looking set designed by Tim Webb, the costumes (which are almost a show in itself) by Chris Cristobal, the tremendous acting and singing by the entire cast, you're going to have plenty to look at and appreciate.

When they dance, and there's a lot of it, you're going to be amazed. There's only so much stage to work with. Having about 14 production numbers, there's only so many moves you can do before it gets repetitive.

In the second act I started to pay closer attention to see what choreographer Ted Banfalvi was going to do next that would be different. I was constantly amazed at the next trick. Banfalvi managed to do something unexpected and kept my interest pretty high.

This cast is the same from *Jesus Christ Superstar*. It only had three rehearsal days to work out bugs with the set and technical cues. That left little time to rehearse the danc-

ing. What I saw opening night was a lot tighter than it should have been under the circumstances. The dancing execution hasn't got far to go. It's about 95 per cent there, which is still putting it second from the top of the best I've seen in the Opera House.

June Crowley and Fred Love are the main leads, with Paul Nolan and Christy Adamson as secondary leads. Matt Campbell and Debbie Collins add comic relief as gangsters.

All of it is tied together by Dave Campbell, who is proving to be a premier director.

Kiss Me Kate runs to the end of August.

• Literary Lapses took place at the Leacock Museum last week. This two-day reading series focusing on local established and emerging authors was part of the Leacock Summer Festival when it was conceived.

I was out to two events. The first was the launch of a book called *All in Our Families: a Lifescapes Anthology*. The book was the result of a writing program run by the Orillia Public Library. Thirteen people contributed 20 stories to the anthology.

I read the whole thing in 24 hours. It's a spiral-bound work-in-progress — many of the authors have more stories and are continuing on with the *Lifescapes* program.

All the stories are personal reflections of events, with a bit of Orillia's history, but, mostly the authors offer glimpses into their lives.

Two stories are about war. The personal hardship those authors experienced make any of today's problems experienced by the rest of us

COMING UP

COMING UP ... The Zephyr Gallery has *Endless Summer* on all summer. ... Mickey Columby plays at the Harbour Inn in Lagoon City Friday nights; *Chinook* does Saturday evenings. ... the 2nd Last Call has the Relics tonight; *Lucky 13* is in Friday; Bon Jovi clone band, *One Wild Night*, is in Saturday. ... the opening reception at the Orillia Museum of Art and History for Joan Hewitt-LeBoeuf's *Here and There* is Sunday at 2 p.m. ... Paul Shilling and Jon Oelrichs have an exhibit at 8 Matchedash St.; call 689-4889 or 835-5844 to make an appointment. ... *Even Steven* is playing at the legion Friday and Saturday nights.

look insignificant.

The rest of the stories are of those moments in time when something is learned that stays with someone for the rest of their life.

What's enjoyable in reading is discovering what each author finds worth remembering and discovering there is something similar in your own experience that is part of who you are — even if you didn't know it.

Copies are available at the Orillia Public Library for five bucks.

The second event I attended was the awarding of prizes for unpublished authors for poetry and prose on Wednesday evening.

Wally Bremner won first prize in poetry with a poem called *The Saint-*

ly Sinner. I wish I could remember what it was about, but I do remember laughing at the right places. Victor Hood and Steve Jerney were second and third.

Alice DeMunnik won the prose contest with a short story called *Dancing at Mel Levine's*. This one is about how a night out with the girls could have turned into a lifetime of hell. Rolf Helbig and Wane Lindsay were second and third.

Congratulations to all — winners, honourable mentions and those who tried.

• It's time to get your orders in for season tickets to the Mariposa Arts Theatre Film Night. The first film, *Dear Frankie*, plays at Cinema 4 on Sept. 7.

You can get 10 films for the price of nine by sending a cheque to L. Crawford, 5518 Fawn Bay Rd., RR 6, Orillia, Ont., L3V 6H6.

Make the cheque out for \$72 and let them know if you want tickets for matinees (4 p.m.) or evenings (7).

• There's a new art event happening Aug. 20 called *Starry Night*.

A dozen venues are on this tour, ending with a reception at the Orillia Museum of Art and History.

It's in the evening and I'll have more details next week.

Meanwhile, call Spotlight on Arts and Festivals (329-2333) for more information.

• There is a party honouring Larry Douglas in Rama on Saturday from noon to 6 p.m.

Call Ron Douglas at 326-6308 for details.

Contact John Swartz at watchthisproductions@encode.com.