

Sunday, July 10, 2011 – Musicals in LA, by Ellen Dostal

## Long Live the Troubies and FLEETWOOD MACBETH!



Lisa Valenzuela (Lady Macbeth) and Morgan Rusler (Macbeth).  
Photos by Chelsea Sutton

Watching a Troubie show feels a little bit like being invited to be part of a secret boys club only in this case, the clubhouse is a theatre rather than a tree house, the secret decoder ring has every possibility of being an exploding magic trick, and the password to get in is sure to be a battle cry, song spoof, or pun. The one thing you know for certain is that when the fun begins, you're in for a helluva good time.

This summer the troupe is stirring up a cauldron cocktail called *Fleetwood Macbeth*, made up of equal parts Fleetwood Mac songs and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The hilarious result turns the Scottish play on its (severed) head while delivering plot points via songs like "Dreams", "You Can Go Your Own

*Way”, “The Chain”, and Landslide”.*

True to form, and honoring the relationship they have with their fans, *FM* enlists audience members to participate in the opening battle scene, though they are soon vanquished by Macbeth (**Morgan Rusler**) and Banquo (**Matt Walker**), with a little help from their trusty pool noodles. As the buddies return from battle they meet witches in the forest whose predictions both excite and disturb Macbeth.



**Matt Walker (Banquo) and Morgan Rusler (Macbeth) with the Witches**

There's a lot of comic mileage to be gained when you turn three witch hags into their Pussycat Doll alter egos, increase their number to eight, and add a little glitz...especially with **Beth Kennedy** at the other end of the witch spectrum. As Hecate, she sports the full ugly witch regalia, nose warts and all. Imagine her writhing on the floor screaming to be taken as a spoil of war or flirting with an audience member to score a date and, well, you get the picture.

The witches' predictions will come back to haunt Macbeth in more ways than one and all will surely not end well for the future king. Bloody right it won't end well, but it will end funny for that's the stuff the Troubies are made of.

**Walker**, who also directs the production, mines every bit of humor imaginable and does it with the most emphatic Scottish brogue you've ever heard. After dodging the slings and arrows of outrageous comedy for the first three quarters of the musical, **Rusler** delivers a completely serious "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" monologue that is so terrific you can hear a pin drop.

Matching wits with him is **Lisa Valenzuela** as Lady Macbeth, a sexy firecracker with a penchant for power that will ultimately be her undoing. Valenzuela scores big channeling Stevie Nicks' sultry vocals (my favorite was her spooky-good version of "Dreams") and costumer **Sharon McGunigle** has given her the trademark top hat, long black coat, and veils to achieve a striking Stevie Nicks rock fantasy princess look. Actually, McGunigle gets props for all the great costumes, from the comic touches of the Scotsmen to the push-up bustiers and fishnets of the witches, they are perfection.

No character escapes the spin doctor treatment - **Brandon Breault** is Sayton, a roller-skating Satanic rocker; **Joseph Keane** is Duncan's son Malcolm, a gentle youth with a mean back flip; **Rob Nagle** is the doomed King Duncan wearing a gigantically nipples breast plate; **Jason Turner** is Macduff, a Little Rascals reject with Charlie Brown's pessimism who also does a hilarious cameo as baby Macduff, and the list goes on.

Musical director **Eric Heinly** (who also plays drums) leads the ever-ready house band, made up of Linda Taylor (guitar), **Kevin Stewart** (bass), **Brian Baker** (keyboards), and **Jack Majdecki** (guitar alternate).

*FM* is choreographed by **Nadine Ellis**, **Christine Lakin** and **Monica Schneider**. Schneider's choreography for "Dreams" is especially saucy for Lady M, featuring the witches and their attempts to rub out the damn spots.

Troubie shows traditionally sell out so make sure you get your tickets now. It's the inside track to the coolest club you've ever been part of with a bunch of rogues who know how not to take things too seriously. And if you ask me, we could all use a little more of that.

Performances run now through August 14th at the Falcon Theatre in Toluca Lake, except for July 15, 16 and 17 when the Troubies will be taking *Fleetwood Macbeth* to La Mirada Theatre. For more information go to <http://www.troubie.com/>.