

Theater Review: DURAN DURANTONY & CLEOPATRA
(Troubadour Theater Company at the Colony Theatre in Burbank)



by SHARI BARRETT on JUNE 10, 2024
in THEATER-LOS ANGELES

NICE ASP!

Troubadour Theater Company is a free-wheeling, no holds barred, commedia dell'arte-flavored, slapstick-driven Los Angeles based ensemble of actors, musicians, and comedians that has been performing for audiences throughout Southern California and beyond since 1995. Their fast-paced, laugh-filled, loose adaptations (some of the original lines are still there) of classic plays, literature, and film, as well as their original productions and hilarious sketch material, make this company a unique and exciting experience for theatergoers of any age.



Matt Walker (Antony) and Cloie Wyatt Taylor (Cleopatra)
are stalked by Rick Batalla (Octavius Caesar)

Under the direction of **Matt Walker** (since 1995), **The Troubies** are celebrating their 29th season by presenting their latest music and theater mash-up, *Duran DurAnthony & Cleopatra*, beginning with “Her Name is Cleo” and then imploring “Please, Please Tell Me Now” if you are you feeling “Hungry Like the Wolf.” Thus, one of Shakespeare’s most “notorious” tragedies, *Antony & Cleopatra*, is combined with the music of ’80s “Wild Boys” **Duran Duran** to comedic perfection. And all along the way, the award-winning and always irreverent and hysterically funny Troubies “Come Undone” as they tell the twisted tale of love, lust, and sharp objects where the “Rio Grande” becomes the Nile; the Luxor Hotel represents Egypt; the Getty Villa and Caesar’s Palace stand in for Rome locations; and local city references from Pomona to points east and west denote troop movements.



Suzanne Jolie Narbonne (Charmian), Cloie Wyatt Taylor (Cleopatra) and Katie Kitani (Iras)

The action rolls into full swing when Antony (Matt Walker bedecked with the company’s signature bad wig and historically hysterical Roman costume) is called back to Rome by Octavius Caesar (**Rick Batalla**, who certainly enjoys flashing his abundant gold-encrusted cod piece as often as possible) where Antony learns his wife is dead. What should be sad news turns to excitement when Antony thinks he is free to return to Egypt and continue his sexual exploits with Cleopatra (**Cloie Wyatt Taylor** as the ultimate vixen). But, when not plotting war, Cleo prefers to spend her time cavorting in the sand with her lovely handmaidens (**Suzanne Jolie Narbonne** and **Katie Kitani**) who toss beach balls into the audience while wearing aprons giving them the illusion of wearing bikinis.



Rick Batalla (Octavius Caesar) and Matt Walker (Antony)

At the beginning and throughout the play, The Soothsayer (**Mark McCracken**) appears to deliver messages filled with doom, which are often ignored. And he is the one who delivers a basket of fruit to Cleopatra in which hides the cobra ready to kill her. I am not sure if it was planned or not, but the cobra stopped popping up as planned to poison almost every character in the play the night I was there. But no matter to The Troubies, who handled the situation as if it had been planned all along. And laughter reigned.



Cloie Wyatt Taylor (Cleopatra) and Mark McCracken (The Soothsayer)

Also featured in the cast are 25-year Troubies veteran **Beth Kennedy** as the frequently appearing and put upon Messenger, **Mike Sulprizio** as Agrippa/Pompey, **Rob Nagle** as Enobarbus/Menas, **John Paul Batista** as Greyworm/Maecenas (“rhymes with penis”), and **Philip McNiven** who chews the scenery as Lepidus and Octavia, Caesar’s sister who is set up by her brother to be Antony’s second wife, and tries to seduce him away from his obsession with Cleo using her enormously enhanced and tasseled “assets.”

The talented and off-beat design team includes lights by **Bo Tindell**; sound by **Robert Arturo Ramirez**; projections by Rick Batalla; with intentionally hysterically bad wigs and provocative costumes designed by **Suzanne Narbonne** using designs by **Sharon McGunigle**. No holds barred Prop Master **Matt Scott** even throws in giant Nerf dart-throwing plastic guns to denote a cannonball-filled sea battle against pirates!

The enthusiastic four-piece band, led by music director **Ryan Whyman** on piano, includes **Kevin Stevens** on drums, **Mike Abraham** on guitar, and **Carlos Rivera** on bass, all of whom certainly paid close attention from start to finish, a totally necessary feat since The Troubies are well-known for their lengthy comedic improvisations and audience interactions. So be ready to play your part or sing along when requested to do so ... or face their comedic wrath. And don’t you dare be late or the Troubies will call you out in front of the entire audience as you slink to your seats. Then again, someone must be their target, so why not you?

So, make it a “Reflex” to get your tickets to see the Shakespearean “Girls on Sand” and “Say a Prayer” that you’ll be safe from the “Union of the Snake” in your ringside seat with a “View to a Kill,” because when The Troubies take the stage, it’s a “New Religion” in what promises to be no “Ordinary World!”

photos by **Eddy Will**

Duran Dur *Antony & Cleopatra*

[Troubadour Theater Company](#)

Colony Theater, 555 N Third St. in Burbank

free parking in the multi-level lot adjacent to the theater

90 minutes with an intermission (if the improvisation is kept under control)

Thurs & Fri at 8; Sat at 4 & 8; Sun at 4 & 7:30

ends on June 16, 2024

for tickets (\$55-\$60), call 818.558.7000 visit [Colony Theatre](#)

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