

STAGEsceneLA

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DURAN DURANTONY & CLEOPATRA

STAGEsceneLA WOW!

William Shakespeare meets The Troubies meet one of the 1980s' most iconic rock bands in Duran DurAntony & Cleopatra, the latest musical-spoofy treat from Troubadour Theater Company "in cahoots with" the Colony Theatre.



The plot remains more or less the same as Shakespeare wrote it four centuries ago (and you might even hear snippets of the Bard's actual words throughout the show), but you know from the moment the entire cast of eleven zanies enter singing and dancing to a lyrically tweaked rendition of Duran Duran's 1982 smash "Rio," retitled "Cleo" ("Her name is Cleo and she dances on the sand, and when she walks, she walks just like an Egyp-chán") that you'll be in the Troubies Zone for the next eighty-five minutes plus intermission.

And in case you've any doubt that you're watching the latest bit of satiric genius by Matt Walker and his cast of ad-lib-blessed triple-threats, just until a hapless bunch of latecomers enter the theater after missing the opening number and The Troubies' (and Carly Simon's) trademark musical greeting for late arrivals will convince you you're exactly where you ought to be for wacky musical-comedy merriment just like those whose arrival was delayed by traffic or poor planning.

As for what is about to transpire on the Colony stage, it's more or less what Shakespeare might have written were he alive and well and living in Burbank with a mind like Walker's.

Roman military leader Antony (Walker), currently cavorting in Egypt with the beautiful Cleopatra (Cloie Wyatt Taylor) while unhappily married to Fulvia, much to the displeasure of Antony's fellow ruler Octavius Caesar (Rick Batalla), is informed by his bff Enobarbus (Rob Nagle) that "Fulvia is dead." (Cue ominous organ chord, one of Duran DurAntony & Cleopatra's unfailingly rib-tickling running gags.)

Antony's ensuing marriage to Octavius's sister Octavia (Philip McNiven in buxom battle-axe drag) not only infuriates Cleo, it prompts war to break out between Antony and Octavius (and oodles of rainbow-colored plastic bullets to be launched across the Colony Theatre stage).



And if you think one asp bite is enough to put an end to a doomed Shakespearean love story, The Troubies have got a bunch of surprises hidden up their Roman and Egyptian sleeves.

Along the way, the uber-talented Batalla, McNiven (doubling as Lepidus), Nagle, Taylor, Walker, and castmates John Paul Batista (Greyworm and Maecenas, rhymes either with

McCracken (Soothsayer), Suzanne Jolie Narbonne (Charmian), and Mike Sulprizio (Agrippa and Pompey) sing and dance up a desert storm to hit after hit after Duran Duran hit.

In other words, expect to be thoroughly entertained by such '80s classics as "Notorious" (retitled "Octavius"), "Girls on Film" (retitled "Girls on Sand"), and "Is There Something I Should Know?" and "The Wild Boys" (no title changes here), and that's just Act One.



As in Troubies shows past (including such other takes on Shakespeare as "A Midsummer Saturday Night's Fever Dream," "Two Gentlemen Of Chicago," and "Fleetwood Macbeth"), Duran DurAntony & Cleopatra guarantees the company's trademark blend of wacky jokes, inspired adlibs, snappy choreography (this time by Batista, Narbonne, and Walker, with additional choreography by The Troubies), and vocal performances (backed by music director Ryan Whyman and bandmates Mike Abraham, Carlos Rivera, and Kevin Stevens).

As always, a Troubies production design's greatest and flashiest asset are its outrageously fabulous costumes and wigs (this time by Narbonne, costumes originally designed by Ms. Sharon McGunigle), though lighting designer Bo Tindell and sound designer Robert Arturo Ramirez deserve their own kudos, with a special tip of the hat to Matt Scott for such varied props as swords, fruit bowls, toy, weapons, and a particularly hungry asp.

Eric Heinly is music supervisor. Corey Lynn Womack is stage manager. David Elzer is publicist.



It's been five long years (interrupted by a pesky pandemic) since The Troubies last took on Shakespeare, making it high time indeed for L.A.'s most inspired band of mirth-makers to spoof the Bard like nobody's business in Duran DurAntony & Cleopatra. Musical spoofs don't get any more Duran DurAntastic than this.

Colony Theatre, 555 North Third Street, Burbank. Through June 16. Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00, Saturdays at 4:00 and 8:00, and Sundays at 4:00 and 7:30.

www.troubie.com

–Steven Stanley
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Photos: Eddy Will