

'Young Frankenstein' whirling dervish of musical delight

By KRISTIN SANTA MARIA
CORRESPONDENT

"Young Frankenstein" by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan came to The Bushnell in Hartford in a swirl of hysterical musical performances marked by well thought out songs, acting and the occasional non-functioning piece of set equipment.

★★★ Theater review

The musical is based on the 1974 film "Young Frankenstein," also by Mel Brooks. In the film and musical, New York Brain Surgeon Frederick Frankenstein inherits his family castle in Transylvania when his grandfather Victor Von Frankenstein dies.

While there, he must decide if he wants to con-

tinue the family business of bringing people back to life. He also faces Transylvania Heights' villagers who have had just about enough of the crazy Frankenstein family. Of course, there is also a sexy lab assistant named Inga, a would-be evil lackey named Igor and, obviously, The Monster.

The show itself is meant as a huge satire on the idea of Frankenstein and other such monster movies. The chemistry of the actors in "Young Frankenstein" perfectly captured that irreverent humor with an energy and talent that shone on stage.

Dr. Frederick Frankenstein (Roger Bart) and The Monster (Shuler Hensley) were hysterical to watch as they interacted on stage. Both were original Broadway cast members, a fact that became obvious

from the rhythm they had working together onstage.

Hensley brought a great physical presence to The Monster. He lurked around on stage as a large bulky mass that ended up having a heart of gold. The audience had to wait a long time to hear The Monster speak, but Hensley made it worth the wait with his incredible voice.

Bart was fun to watch as Dr. Frankenstein. In some ways, his portrayal reminded me of an absent-minded professor who means well but doesn't always get what he bargained for. He comes to Transylvania and immediately runs in to Igor, played with diabolical genius by Cory English. When the two men sing "Together Again" you can't help but smile.

Bart's chemistry was good with everyone he worked with including his

two love interests Elizabeth (Beth Curry) and Inga (Anne Horak). All three characters formed a simply divine and utterly wacky love triangle.

Perhaps, most unexpectedly, was the way that Joanna Glushak stole the show as Frau Blucher. Watching her on stage was like watching someone in the Addams Family. She was delightfully creepy but always enjoyable. Her song "He Vas My Boyfriend" about her dead love Victor Von Frankenstein brought the house down.

The show was entertaining from the first moment it began right up until the curtain closed at the finale. However, some of that entertainment was not intended by the cast and crew of "Young Frankenstein."

The curtain was late in coming up at the beginning

of the show, which was the first clue that something was amiss. Part way through the first act, a piece of the set stayed on stage when it should have moved off stage. Bart and English were left on stage unable to go on because a giant wall was blocking a set piece they needed for the next part of the show. Both actors seemed to just roll with the punches. They handled the unexpected moment well, English even made a joke about the wall.

Such minor incidents happened a couple times during the production largely because this was only the second stop on the tour and the first night the tour was in Hartford. Each time something happened, the unexpected incident was handled with grace and really made the show all that more interesting.

Though the set may

not have always been cooperative, the scenery designed by Robin Wagner was none-the-less impressive. Director and choreographer Susan Stroman managed to bring the humor of Mel Brooks to the stage in a way that does the original movie justice. The musical numbers were well done and visually pleasing.

"Young Frankenstein" may have had some minor hiccups when it came to The Bushnell, but those incidents just added to the humor behind the fun loving musical.

I give this production 3 out of 4 stars.

For more information about "Young Frankenstein", please visit www.YoungFrankensteinTheMusical.com. For information on upcoming shows at The Bushnell, go to www.bushnell.org or call (860) 987 6000.

Music listings

FRIDAY, OCT. 16

SOUTHINGTON
KENN MORR. Americana Folk Music. 8 p.m. Comedy Improv Group. Jitters Coffeehouse, 1273 Queen St., Southington. (860) 747-1100.

BRISTOL

STRANGE TRIBE. Downtown Café, 118 Main St., Bristol.

NOVUS DAI. Bleacher's Café, Middle Street, Bristol.

SPIRIT SHAKER. 9:30 p.m. City Sports Grill, Farmington Avenue, Bristol. Classic hard rock.

OTHER

INSANE CLOWN POSSE, (hed) p.e. 6:30 p.m., Webster Theater, Hartford. WebsterTheater.com

TIP THE VAN, The Duppies, The Allstonians, Live Now. 7 p.m. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

MR. FREEZE/ MADECIPHA. CD release party. Lilly's Pad, Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com.

DARIK AND THE FUNBAGS. Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com

SATURDAY, OCT. 17

SOUTHINGTON
JARED MCCLLOUD. 8 p.m. alternative rock music. Jitters Coffeehouse, 1273 Queen St., Southington (860) 747-1100.

BRISTOL

CRUSH. Downtown Café, 118

Main St., Bristol.

KARMIC JUSTICE. Bleacher's Café, Middle Street, Bristol.

OTHER

KATIE WILSON, Hoe. 7 p.m. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

IAN WOODS. 6 p.m. Gospel music from his album 'Sunday's Best.' St. Vincent Depaul, 617 Main St., Middletown.

SUNDAY, OCT. 18

OTHER
TYPE O NEGATIVE, Seventh Voice, Destroyy. 7 p.m. Webster Theater, Hartford. WebsterTheater.com

THE ROCKETBOYS, Dignan,

Sleepwell, Amanda Kaletsky. 7 p.m. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

NEW FOUND GLORY. Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com

TANYA TUCKER. Mohegan Sun, Wolf Den, Uncasville. MoheganSun.com

MONDAY, OCT. 19

OTHER
OH MY GOD, Like the Hero, Holiday Shores. 7 p.m. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

TUESDAY, OCT. 20

OTHER
SILVERSUN PICKUPS, Cage the Elephant, An Horse. 7 p.m.

Webster Theater, Hartford. Webstertheater.com

WEEKLY OPEN MIKE. 6:30 p.m. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

EYES SET TO KILL, The Word Alive, Dreaming of Eden. 6 p.m., The Webster Underground, Hartford. WebsterTheater.com.

MISFITS. Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21

OTHER
DRIVER SIDE IMPACT, Less Than A Second. 7 p.m. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

PUSH PLAY/ JESSIE JAMES. Toads Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com

THURSDAY, OCT. 22

OTHER
SISTER HAZEL. Mohegan Sun, Wolf Den, Uncasville. MoheganSun.com

FRIDAY, OCT. 23

OTHER
NUTMEG SYMPHONY AND SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH. "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off: George Gershwin's Romance with Kay Swift." 7:30 p.m. South Congregational Church, 9 Pleasant St., Middletown (across from the green). (860)584-1055.

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