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Fairy Dust

Local queer production of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera 'Iolanthe'

By Doug Rule
Published on July 30, 2009, 12:00am | Comments

“The story is, like all Gilbert and Sullivan, very silly,” says Jill Strachan, executive director of the nonprofit Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, of *Iolanthe*. “Some people think it’s their silliest one.” The title character falls in love with a mortal, a crime in fairy culture, usually punishable by death. Instead, the popular Iolanthe starts a trend, and by the comic opera’s end, the fairy queen gives her blessing.



In partnership with the GLBT Arts Consortium, CHAW is producing a version of the show, first staged in England in 1882, that may be the silliest yet. This production features a cast of 16 volunteers from the area and the community at large, with a focus on gender-neutrality. “Some of our fairies are men, some of our [mortals] are women,” says Strachan. That’s true even of the fairy queen, played by a man “out of drag.”

Every summer Strachan co-directs with choreographer Alvin Mayes a different Gilbert and Sullivan production for CHAW, from *Pirates of Penzance* to *H.M.S. Pinafore* to Strachan’s favorite, *The Mikado*. Net proceeds from the show benefit CHAW and the Consortium.

Friday, July 31, Saturday, Aug. 1, Friday, Aug. 7, and Saturday, Aug. 8, at 7 p.m. Also Saturday, Aug. 1, and Saturday, Aug. 8, at 3 p.m. At 545 Seventh St. SE. Tickets are \$20. Call 202-547-6839 or visit www.chaw.org.

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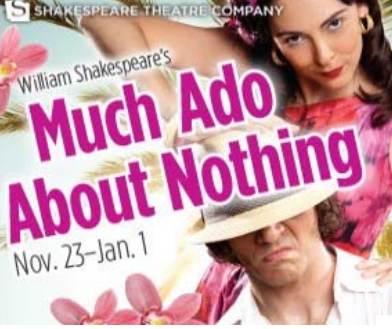


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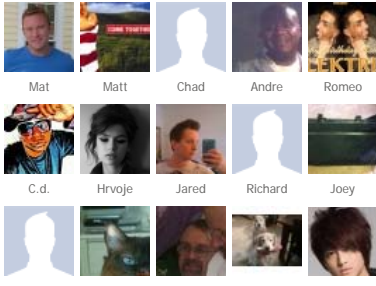
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