

This seems to be my week for sex comedies. LEND ME A TENOR BY Ken Ludwig, now playing in the Springer Theatre at the 1000 Islands Playhouse, is the third one in seven days. I'm not going to even try to outline the complex plot. Suffice it to say this very funny play is set in a sumptuous hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934 and is loaded with mistaken identities, opera groupies, producers, divas and of course, tenors.

Robin Fisher has designed a beautiful Art Deco set complete with six doors for the requisite slamming. I particularly admired the couch, the bowl for the grapes and the beautifully painted floor. Her costumes are also good, even the wigs, although Julia's dress needs a slip. I loved Maria's shoes and coveted Diana's black satin gown, although the days when I could have worn it are long gone. The lighting designed by Adair Redish is very nice, especially at the opening of Act II.

The cast is generally good. As Maria, opera star Tito's wife, Kathryn MacKay is appropriately volatile, although her accent is a bit difficult to understand. Keely Hutton does well with the rather thankless role of Maggie, the star-struck ingénue, and certainly looks great in a chemise. Lorna Wilson is terrific as Julia, the equally star-struck opera guild grande dame. She even succeeds in pulling off a believable phone conversation.

As the bellhop, Timm Hughes is often funny but slips in and out of character, while Matthew Gibson as the choleric producer begins with such a big head of steam he leaves himself no place to go. So many of his speeches are played straight out to the house, he seems to have very little relationship with the other characters.

As Diana, the budding diva willing to do anything to succeed, Jan Alexander Smith is not only gorgeous, she makes the character thoroughly believable. She has one of my all-time favorite lines: "Never trust a man in tights." Her Act II scene with Tito is very funny and also very real.

Speaking of Tito, Kyle Dadd sports a good Italian accent along with a beautiful voice and makes this international opera star a three-dimensional character. He's hilarious in his doped-up Act II state. Matthew John Lundvall is also very good as Max, the would-be operatic tenor. His lovely Act I duet with Tito proves he has the chops for it.

Director Greg Wanless has done a nice job with all the slapstick staging, especially that between Max and Tito. I know it's difficult with a farce to make the characters more than two-dimensional caricatures, but he's helped some of his actors manage it. He's also staged a clever and funny curtain call.

LEND ME A TENOR is a very funny play and perfect summer fare. Despite a few flaws, this production provides an entertaining evening in the theatre.

On a scale of one to five the 1000 Islands Playhouse production of LEND ME A TENOR gets four and one-third fish. For North Country Public Radio I'm Connie Meng.