‘Laughter’ is funny all the way to the top

By Lacey Korevec
Features Editor

Written about a young man breaking into a career in television writing, at first glance, the plot for Laughter on the 23rd Floor seems a lot like the plot for last year’s fine arts production My Favorite Year. This season’s show, however, is based completely on humor.

Written by Neil Simon about ten years ago, Laughter revolves around a group of writers who are told to “dumb down” the show that they write for to appease viewers, said fine arts assistant professor and show director Miriam Mills.

“It’s about the frustration of trying to make the show more stupid to make NBC happy,” she said. “It’s a somewhat autobiographical play. It’s hysterical.”

When she first read the script, Mills said she could not stop laughing.

“It’s one of the best scripts he’s written in years,” said Mills. “It was a blast to read and I thought, ‘the kids would like this.’ It’s laugh out loud funny.”

Junior Danny Prather portrays the main character Lucius, who also narrates the play. According to Prather, the show’s humor makes it difficult for the actors to keep straight faces while working.

“The cast is amazing,” he said. “I love being a part of it. The audience will be dying from laughter.”

Freshman David Yashin plays the role of Ira Stone, a Jewish hypochondriac who comes to work late every day but gets paid more than everybody else, said Yashin.

“All of the writers are insane,” he said. “They’re all psychotic in a certain way but they all love each other at the same time.”

The show has allowed him to play a role that is different from all of his past performances, said Yashin.

“I get to do all these things I never got to do before,” he said. “Literally, you won’t go more than two minutes without laughing. It’s joke after joke after joke.”

Unlike most plays, there is no deep meaning that audiences will take away from this show, according to Yashin.

“Neil Simon shows are usually a lot of fluff,” he said. “He doesn’t pump you with the meaning of life. It’s just funny.”

Senior Pat Barrar said he noticed that the show is reminiscent of My Favorite Year and while both scripts may be based on the same 1950s television show, the two are very different.

“[My Favorite Year] was a musical,” he said. “It was clean humor. Laughter is a straight play. It’s got more dirty humor in it. You’ll notice similarities in the characters but the stories are told differently.”

In Laughter, Barrar plays the part of Max Prince, the boss of the group of writers working to produce a show, he said.

“My character can go from very calm and cool and then he can just lash out at the drop of a dime,” said Barrar.

“He’s just very paranoid and very eccentric.”

According to Mills, the cast of this production has worked especially well together.

“This has been one of the most talented groups I’ve ever had,” she said. “They’re just so funny. This is one of the few times I’ve ever been able to cancel rehearsals because they already know what they’re doing.”

Students will truly enjoy watching this play, said Mills.

“They’ll have a night where they will truly laugh and everybody needs that with all the tension and stress in their lives,” she said. “Everyone who comes is just going to have a good time.”

The play Laughter on the 23rd Floor will be performed April 16, 17, 23 and 24 at 8 p.m., in the Yvonne Theater. Saturday. The play is co-directed by Miriam Mills and sophomore Ken Hauser.

A feature of

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An Artist’s Word Bank

B T Q D C V T S O R
G A N O W J E T J V
E L L I L E X Y A U
H O C A A V T L R T
R S N K N P U E E L
H T P E D C R E C O
G C V A L E X A S
S E U H W I B T P Q
A B S T R A C T S O
Y Q P I D T G L N O

Across
1. A non-representational painting is called ___.
2. An area that is 2-dimensional, having height and width
3. The measurable distance between points or images

Down
1. The materials used by an artist to create their work
2. When an artist organizes his shapes onto a canvas, he is ___.
3. The way an artist uses his tools and materials to achieve an effect