

COOL PICKS

THINGS TO DO
IN THE
UPCOMING
WEEK

NEXT WEEK

JONATHAN EDWARDS

Those of a certain age will certainly remember Jonathan Edwards' exhilarating folk-pop hit "Sunshine" ("How much does it cost? I'll buy it!"). Edwards has had a long career performing both for adults and children since, and the veteran song man comes to Don Quixote's in Felton on Thursday, July 7. Details: www.donquixotesmusic.info.

FRIDAY

7 WALKERS

Yes, you can call them a supergroup — with names such as Grateful Dead stalwart Bill Kreutzmann, Meters bassist George Porter Jr., bluesman Papa Mali and stud multi-instrumentalist Matt Hubbard, 7 Walkers trots out an impressive line-up. This psychedelic/funk combo brings its considerable mojo to the Rio Theatre on Friday. Details: www.riotheatre.com.



NEXT WEEK

GILLIAN WELCH

Though her sound has never been described as "beachy," Gillian Welch, the reigning queen of modern primitive folk (and a former Santa Cruz Cruzer), comes to the beautiful old Coconut Grove Ballroom at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. Welch plays alongside her longtime partner David Rawlings on Wednesday, July 6. Details: folkyeah.com.

THURSDAY June 30, 2011

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THEATER REVIEW

Cabrillo Stage lets it all hang out

'Full Monty' production a squeal-inducing blast

By WALLACE BAINE

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They didn't build the beautiful Crocker Theater on the campus of Cabrillo College to host bachelorette parties. But this summer, from inside the Crocker, you might hear that distinct audience squeal that is usually only heard at such get-togethers.

When a production of "The Full Monty" is going well, it can easily conjure up that unique squeal — you know the kind, sort of like the Beatlemania screech but a tad more guttural, with sharper nails — and Cabrillo Stage's new production, the first offering in its 30th anniversary season, is pulling it off with aplomb.

The, um, cheeky stage musical opened Friday with the appropriately randy response from the largely female audience, and Cabrillo Stage again showed it can flat-out nail contemporary musical theater.

The play is, of course, based on the famous British film of the same name. This time, though, the unemployed men who form a Chippendales-like stripper act to regain a measure of their masculinity and self-respect are Americans, Buffalo factory workers to be exact.

The ringleader is Jerry, played with appealing swagger by Kyle Payne, who might remind you of a young Billy Crystal. Jerry is 32, trying vainly to escape his inner street punk. He's newly divorced and focused intently on how to keep seeing his teenaged son. Jerry's best friend is Dave (Santa Cruzan Kevin High), a hefty fellow called a "fat bastard" by Jerry. The two eventually gather four more guys to raise money by doing what the Chippendales guys won't do — go "the full monty," that is,

SEE 'MONTY' ON D2



JANA MARCUS/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Alice Hughes as Vicki Nichols gives Darin Dailey, Kyle Payne, Kevin High, Dan Housek and Darwin Garrett some lessons in Cabrillo Stage's 'The Full Monty,' playing through July 17.

'MONTY'

Continued from D1

completely nude.

You won't hear from this reviewer whether the guys fulfill that promise at the end or not. That's why they sell tickets. But "Monty" has much more on its mind than displaying beefcake. It's really a playful assault on the male ego, from body image to breadwinner ideal.

Some may find the play hopelessly vulgar, but I found it to be bracingly honest in nearly all aspects. It's full of profanity and contains about 1,000 references, clever and otherwise, to the male anatomy. But it's also fearless in that way. It merrily tramples through a lot of dangerous zones — the male body, female desire, racial stereotypes, homosexuality —

and it does so with no prissy euphemisms. It's a brawny, plainspoken, dirty-minded comedy of the best kind. It's a shot of whiskey where you might expect a wine spritzer. It's definitely not for children or similarly tender souls.

Ironically, in a cast full of guys, two of the most memorable performances were from women. Alice Hughes presented what I thought was the greatest single song performance of the night, as a well-to-do middle-aged housewife exuberantly expressing her love for her life and her man in "Life With Harold." Similarly, Claire Hodgins was dynamite as the salty, aged show-biz burnout Jeanette, who helps the boys in rehearsals. Introducing the strippers near the end of Act Two, she cracked, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have some bad news for you. I won't be taking my

clothes off tonight." The audience roared with mock disappointment.

Skip Epperson again proves himself to be one of this company's finest artists with his amazing and versatile set design that really shimmers with Vegas glitz at the end.

Clocking in at three hours and change, including intermission, the production might have benefitted from some judicious editing, particularly important for a play with such a specifically anticipated final scene. But the endearing cast and the rat-a-tat-tat of funny bits throughout make this a thoroughly enjoyable adult experience.

It might even move you to squeal.

"The Full Monty" runs at the Crocker through July 17. For showtimes and ticket prices, visit www.cabrillostage.com.