



NEWS AND REVIEWS – Rich Bowory

The Sacred Fools Theatre, in association with Burglars of Hamm, opens their 2018-19 season with Lars Mattsun's RESA FANTASTISK MYSTISK, a recently discovered play written by this Swedish playwright who created a play of note that holds a number of hidden meanings, metaphors, and other messages that made this composer of stage plays a name unto himself.

The concept of this play features the protagonist Phillip (Tim Kopacz), a struggling artist that embarks onto a fantastical and somewhat surreal journey to reclaim his right to be a painter. His journey takes him toward situations that reflect upon the meaning and times that were common and discovered during the era this stage piece was first created sometime between 1898 and 1903. Here, the audience can witness the struggles between his existence and those encountered that speak for the meaning of the color red, the relation of his sexual domain, the concept of woman's presence (not necessarily related to the sexual thing), his "Fruit Period", and other related concepts that Lars Mattsun and his other plays written in the late 19th century-early 20th century reflect upon. His creative works were compared along such contemporaries as Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg in terms to strong meaning with stronger characters.

For those that may not be familiar with Mattsun's play, the director, adaptor, and choreographer of this production, Todd Merrill, will guide the audience into the real meanings expressed in this play through AV devices. Each audience member will receive a wireless audio headset. Throughout this production, Merrill will explain in detail through the sounds of his voice into what is going on, and what some of the characters present mean to the play. Serving as play-by-play and "color" announcer, Merrill details these expressions to where the audience will then begin to understand what is unfolding. His commentary is what makes the play into a new(er) meaning for all exposed.

This play was first presented as part of the Hollywood Fringe Festival in cooperation with the theater troupe *Burglars of Hamm* and *The Ghost Road Company*. In this production as presented by the Sacred Fools, it took nine (yes, nine) writers to make this show just what is is; A play that is amusing and comical! The writers that "revised" Mattsun's original concept (Carolyn Almos, Matt Almos, Jon Beauregard, Joel Marshall, Todd Merrill, Katharine Noon, Victor Ortado, Laura Otis, and Selina Merrill), created a piece that is deep in words, deeper in concepts, and overall, a piece that really moves!

The ensemble cast (or "dramatis personae") that appears in this production features Carolyn Almos as Gertrude, Scott Leggett as Barnaby, Carrie Keranen (alternating with Laura Nicole Harrison) as Mariah, Selina Merrill as Madame Sheksetenloldt, and Kita Grayson as The Mysterious Child. Albert Dayton serves as the bonafied director (based upon Matt Almos' original direction) that makes this play a real treat to experience and to wonder.

Also to note is Barbara Lempel's scenic design of the stage area, using her skills to create a set that is in the same authentic Swedish style of a classic Mattsunian creation.

To really appreciate the play style of Lars Mattsun, it is highly recommended that the audience attendee(s) read up on his other works that include *Where the Shoe Squeezed*, *Song of Wonder*, *Day of Trees*, and *Whether Wind Wither You*. These titles make up part of the 23 plays that have known to exist as composed by Mattsun. If you can't find any of these plays, just use your favorite search engine on the 'net to seek 'em. While you're at it, just Google your way to discover any details on playwright Lars Mattsun as well! You will be impressed in what you may find!! (Lost a luck!!)

RESA FANTASTISK MYSTISK, presented by The Sacred Fools Theatre Company and Burglars of Hamm, performs on the Broadwater Main Stage, 1076 Lillian Way (off Santa Monica Blvd. and one block west of Vine Street), Hollywood, until November 3rd. Showtimes are Friday and Saturday nights at 8:00 PM, and Sunday evenings at 7:00 PM. Ticket reservation can be made by emailing the theatre box office directly at SFReservations@SacredFools.org, or through the theater company's website at <http://www.SacredFools.org>