



Lifting The Iron Curtain On Comedy

Plenty of laughs at Eastline Theatre's
Red Scare On Sunset

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If you laugh for too long, you might miss the next joke on stage at *Red Scare on Sunset*, currently running at the Eastline Theatre in Wantagh.

The comedy opened May 19 and will run until June 3 at the South Shore theater, which came under new management in September 2017. Director Patrick Finn transformed playwright Charles Busch's over-the-top satire to fit the modest black box theater, located at 2123 Wantagh Ave.

Set in the McCarthy era, the show follows Hollywood starlet Mary Dale as she discovers her husband has been lured into the local Communist party, disguised as a method acting class. Hilarity ensues as Dale, portrayed by actor Scott Postel in drag, tries to expose Russian influence in Hollywood.

The play parodies the style of classic 1940s and '50s films, produced during the Cold War when Americans feared Russian interference in American politics and entertainment. Complete with the slapstick comedy made popular in the 1950s and homage to film noir, Finn worked within the limits of the 42-seat theater to bring this extravagant play to life.

"Because of the limit of our space, it was really on Patrick to [determine] how this fits in the space and get the show to flow, and I think he's done a spectacular job at that alone," said

Daniel Higgins, executive artistic director at the Eastline Theatre.

Higgins said the show's ridiculousness makes it hard for many other theater companies to pull off, but has made it a good fit for the cast and crew at Eastline.

"The acting that it takes to pull off the camp is so specific, and you really need people who know their stuff," Higgins said. "Who play to the crowd, know what they'll laugh at and not going to oversell it."

The eight-person production toys with gender-bended casting, featuring a lead in drag and several other minor characters portrayed by actors of the opposite gender.

"We have our lead actor playing an actress and we also have two or three other men playing about three or four other roles, some of those roles being also women," Finn said.

The show's entire team said Postel carries the cast with his outlandish performance, arousing laughter as Mary Dale pursues ridiculous antics with a melodramatic flair.

Cast member Steven Prendergast said the theater, along with the play's cast, provides a comfortable and welcoming place to perform.

"You learn so much from the other people that are coming in and are a part of the cast," Prendergast said.

Prendergast, also a member of the theater's

board of directors, plays Malcolm, a closeted homosexual and servant to Mary Dale and her husband. Off-stage, Prendergast is married to Finn, and the couple resides in Farmingdale with their dog, Abigail.

Prendergast, who has worked with Finn in past productions, said his husband pushes the entirely volunteer cast to explore the absurdities of the show.

"I love working with him as a director because the first thing he'll tell us to do is go all out; go over the top and just go, have fun with it," Prendergast said.

Audiences can expect non-stop laughter within the intimate Nassau County theater.

"There aren't too many comedies I know of or that I've seen on Long Island where you're laughing out loud and missing jokes because you're laughing so much—that's the kind of show this is," Finn said.

Red Scare on Sunset will be held at the Eastline Theatre in Wantagh on June 1 and June 2, at 8 p.m., with a matinee June 3, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for general admission, \$15 for seniors and students and \$10 for children under 12. Tickets can be purchased at www.eastlineproductions.com and at the door.

Readers can receive a \$5 discount by using the promo code 'AANTON' at checkout.



Scott Postel plays Hollywood starlet Mary Dale, who discovers her husband has joined a local Communist party.

(Photos by Eastline Theatre)



Dave Gunder as Frank Taggart and Scott Postel as Mary Dale Taggart