

Times Out THEATRE

A 'clever, funny and thought provoking show'

CONSISTING of 20 sketches and 20 songs, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* resembles more an extended stand-up comedy routine than a bona fide musical, writes Mark Campbell.

Presented by The'atricks Theatre Company at Eltham's Bob Hope Theatre, the show featured just four performers and two musicians. But size isn't everything - as the production ably demonstrated.

Written by Joe DiPetro with music by Jimmy Roberts, *I Love You...* has been an off-Broadway hit since 1996.

Its subtitle - 'Everything you have ever thought about dating, romance, marriage, lovers, husbands, wives and in-laws but

were afraid to admit!' - says it all.

Act 1 takes us from a hesitant initial encounter (*Cantata for a First Date*), via a speed-dating skit in which the couple jump straight to break-up and divorce to save time, to the scary first moment you meet the parents (*Hey There Single Gal/Guy*).

A hilarious spoof commercial about a law firm who, for a small fee, ensures 'satisfaction guaranteed' during sex leads into the inevitable climax - marriage (*Wedding Vows*).

After the interval, an amusing entr'acte in which Clare Taylor's violin solo upstages Robert Bottrill's piano-playing enters continues the 'battle of the

sexes' theme and leads succinctly into the highs and lows of wedded life.

Sex (or the lack of it), children, arguments, divorce and death - it's a far cry from the lighter tone of the first half. *Shouldn't I Be in Love You?* is a heartfelt solo about the possibility of rekindled romance, while the unlikely scenario of dating at a funeral is touched upon in the wistful *I Can Live With That*.

Larissa Webb and Sarah Coleman were the female contingent of this quartet, while Richard Cooper (also musical director) and Eric Whiting were their unreconstructed male counterparts. Playing a multiplicity of characters of widely differing ages, all four

were excellent.

Lively, vibrant, funny, with superb singing voices, Larissa and Sarah were arguably the more talented performers, but this is in no way a criticism of the men - they were up against some stiff opposition.

Adroitly directed by Wendy Reynolds, and employing a busy backstage crew who whizzed props and furniture around seamlessly in the black-outs, *I Love You...* really was a clever, funny though-provoking little show.

My only criticism would be a technical one - a follow-spot was sorely needed whenever anyone moved off the stage, to avoid them being plunged into darkness.

Mark Campbell



NATURE is under unprecedented threat as ripples from the credit crunch influence hard-pressed politicians seeking to extricate themselves from the financial mess they failed to anticipate and still struggle to manage. Funding for nature conservation is likely to be a target. Savage cuts can be expected with little regard for the future. Paying bills for today's profligacy could endanger our wildlife tomorrow. Our children and grandchildren face the consequences of this financial disaster - and one of them may be extinction of some wildlife due to cuts in conservation schemes. Just when it seemed threatened species like water vole and otter had turned the corner, cuts in projects to restore their habitat will again raise doubts about their future. The RSPB has launched a campaign to stop this happening and we can all lend a hand. The charity has prepared a letter demanding action for nature from politicians. The RSPB's Letter to the Future aims to show political leaders that nature matters, is an essential part of life and must be protected for the future. They aim to gather hundreds of thousands of signatures to show politicians that people care about nature. The letter demands politicians create a countryside fit for wildlife, safeguard sealife, stop extinctions, save the tropical forests, stop climate chaos and help inspire children through nature. I'm signing and sending off my copy today. To get a copy visit www.rspb.org.uk/letter or call 0303 030 7772. Why not request copies for your neighbours too? Some of the wildlife at risk for future generations in Britain and overseas is beautifully illustrated in a wonderful new book *Life in the Wild* (published by Dorling Kindersley £25). From the exquisite fragility of a butterfly to the majesty of a humpback whale it is an absorbing record of the diversity of life in the wild. Photographer Thomas Marent has captured the beauty of the natural world and some of his pictures stir strong emotions. Order from Subbuteo Books 0870 010 9700. Download a free animal screensaver every month at www.dk.com/lifeinthewild. Meanwhile birdwatchers awaiting publication of the Collins Bird Guide in October will have to wait. It has been delayed a second time - until December.



OLD PALS: Matthew Webb as Algernon and Stuart Keil as Jack.

Wildernesse classic

AN AMATEUR dramatics' theatre is putting on an Oscar Wilde production this month which satirises Victorian society.

The Importance of Being Earnest, directed by Daniel Cox, is being staged at the Edward Alderton Theatre in Brampton Road, Bexleyheath, from Saturday until

next Saturday. Performances start at 8 and there will be no performance on Sunday. The play's humour derives from characters maintaining fictitious identities to escape unwelcome social obligations.

Jack Worthing invents a brother to inject some excitement into his

life and as an excuse to leave his dull country life behind to pursue the object of his desire.

But across town another man takes the same name when visiting Worthing's young ward Cecily. Box office: 0208 301 5584 or visit www.edwardalderton.org.

Kate Mead

Cash for film

APPLICATIONS are open for a £200,000 a year fund aimed at helping up and coming filmmakers.

The Kent Development Fund for film and TV production in Kent has now started accepting applications.

A pioneering fund managed by Kent County Council's Kent Film Office, is looking for applications in four areas - Development, Production, Skills and Training and Infrastructure. Applications will be considered by the Kent Film Office and successful projects will then be presented to the Kent Development Fund panel for final approval.

Kevin Lynes, KCC cabinet member for regeneration and economic development said: "The Kent Development Fund is fantastic news for Kent's economy and residents. We're proud to be supporting the county in this way and the success we've already seen by supporting just one film shows what we can achieve by supporting more films in future."

KCC previously provided £75,000 of funding for feature film *The Calling*, which was made in the county and starred Kent actress Brenda Blethyn. Visit www.kent.gov.uk/filmoffice.



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