

Synetic breathes life into 'Lysistrata'

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My wife and I take frequent trips to Washington DC and one of our destinations is the Synetic Theater. It is a relatively new theater but in seven short years it has been able to generate an army of loyal patrons. Paata and Irina Tsikurishvili, a husband and wife team, have built a company that is unlike any other with their reinventions of classic works with a ferocious, beautiful and utterly distinct style.

Since my first visit over 5 years ago I have made a point of not missing out on new Synetic's productions. I have also had the opportunity to get to know Irina and Paata on a personal basis; witnessing what gifted producers

and collaborators they are.

Synetic's latest collaboration with Georgetown University is "Lysistrata".

"It is every Artistic Director's dream to see his theater company grow and mature" said Paata Tsikurishvili, "It warms my heart to introduce you to Lysistrata, one piece in what we hope will become a long line of collaborations between Synetic and new spaces, artists, and friends".

First performed in Athens in 411 BC, "Lysistrata" is one of few surviving plays written by Aristophanes. The play remains an essential and relevant piece of theater because of the story of men and women struggling for freedom, love, and power. Aristophanes reminds us that war is as essential and instinctual as sex is for human existence.

"Lysistrata" contrasts those things about us that bring about some of our darkest choices and our highest deeds. It talks about lust that corrupts the body and mind and rage that bloodies our homes and fields - human nature's ability to blur the lines between love and lust, rage and sacrifice. At its heart, "Lysistrata" is a dream of peace imagined from a place of devastating and endless war.

A courageous and intelligent woman at a time when it was absolutely unnecessary for a woman to be anything but a wife, a mother, a daughter, and a sister, Lysistrata decides to put an end to war by getting women to agree to withholding sex from their husbands.

Aristophanes is honest and irreverent about the power of sex. As a result, we are able

to see what is as alluring, fun, humorous, intoxicating, powerful, repulsive, scary, and taboo about sex and war.

Synetic sought to depict a timeless world that does not belong to any given period; that does not give us the filter or critical distance of ancient comedy. Their inspirations for this ceaseless war come from Georgia, the Middle East, the Balkans, inner-city America, and the Old West. Synetic has explored, in physical terms, the overlap between the battle-zone and the bedroom, the erotic nature of war and the physical violence of the domestic sphere. The play starts in a climate that has gotten so bad that only a revolutionary act can turn the tide. In a world hollowed-out by numbness, Lysistrata inspires her fellow women to reclaim what it

means to really feel.

What is exciting about this collaboration between Georgetown and Synetic is that the story of Lysistrata is being told honestly and irreverently. It not only utilizes language, poetry, song, and words, but it also incorporates a specific emphasis on the body through breath and movement work. In doing so, this production allows spectators a more visceral experience and point of entry into what life is like for those who anguish, breathe, dream, hope, live, and lust day after day/night after night for days, weeks, months, and years on end in the midst of unrelenting war.

Start your engines, turn on you GPS systems and drive to Synetic Theater in Washington D.C. to personally explore the magic world of theater.

Efron turns '17 Again' into No. 1 hit

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

Zac Efron has taken the box office crown from his Disney teammate Miley Cyrus.

Efron's comedy "17 Again," in which he plays the youthful version of a middle-aged man magically transformed to high school age, debuted as the top weekend movie with \$24.1 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The No. 1 opening for the Warner Bros. movie solidifies the big-screen potential for Efron, who rose to fame with Disney's "High School Musical" series.

"There's no question that Zac's a star," said Dan Fellman, head of distribution for Warner Bros. "He's such a hard-working, talented individual. He certainly has given his all to promote this movie."

Universal had the No. 2 movie with Russell Crowe and Ben Affleck's Washington thriller "State of Play," which pulled in \$14.1 million. Crowe plays a reporter investigating a series of deaths linked to an old college friend (Affleck) who's now a rising star in Congress.

Cyrus' "Hannah Montana: The Movie" slipped from first place to fourth with \$12.7 million. That lifted the domestic total

for Cyrus' movie spinoff of her Disney Channel show to \$56.1 million after 10 days in theaters.

"Hannah Montana" finished just behind DreamWorks Animation's "Monsters vs. Aliens," which took in \$12.9 million to raise its domestic haul to \$162.7 million. Estimates for "Hannah Montana" and "Monsters vs. Aliens" were close enough that the movies could switch rankings when final numbers are reported Monday.

Jason Statham had a so-so opening for his action sequel "Crank: High Voltage," which came in at No. 6 with \$6.5

million, \$4 million less than the first weekend for the 2006 original.

The Lionsgate sequel features Statham in a race to recover his heart, which has been stolen by organ thieves and replaced with a mechanical one.

Hollywood maintained a record box-office pace with just one weekend to go before the busy summer season arrives May 1 with "X-Men Origins: Wolverine," Hugh Jackman's spinoff of the blockbuster "X-Men" franchise.

Overall revenues were at \$112 million, up nearly 20 percent

from the same weekend last year, according to box-office tracker Media By Numbers.

For the year, Media By Numbers is tracking receipts at \$2.92 billion, 17.3 percent ahead of 2008's and well above the box-office pace of 2007, when Hollywood took in a record \$9.7 billion. Accounting for higher ticket prices, movie attendance this year is up 15.6 percent compared to last year's.

The movie business is poised to top \$10 billion at the box office for the first time in 2009, said Paul Dergarabedian, president of Media By Numbers.

"It's going to be a record year, because we've never had a start to a year this strong," Dergarabedian said. "Unless the world goes off its axis and spins into the sun, I don't see how we're not going to have a \$10 billion year."

1. "17 AGAIN," \$24.1 MILLION.
2. "STATE OF PLAY," \$14.1 MILLION.
3. "MONSTERS VS. ALIENS," \$12.9 MILLION.
4. "HANNAH MONTANA: THE MOVIE," \$12.7 MILLION.
5. "FAST & FURIOUS," \$12.3 MILLION.
6. "CRANK: HIGH VOLTAGE," \$6.5 MILLION.
7. "OBSERVE AND REPORT," \$4.1 MILLION.
8. "KNOWING," \$3.5 MILLION.
9. "I LOVE YOU, MAN," \$3.4 MILLION.
10. "THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT," \$3.2 MILLION.

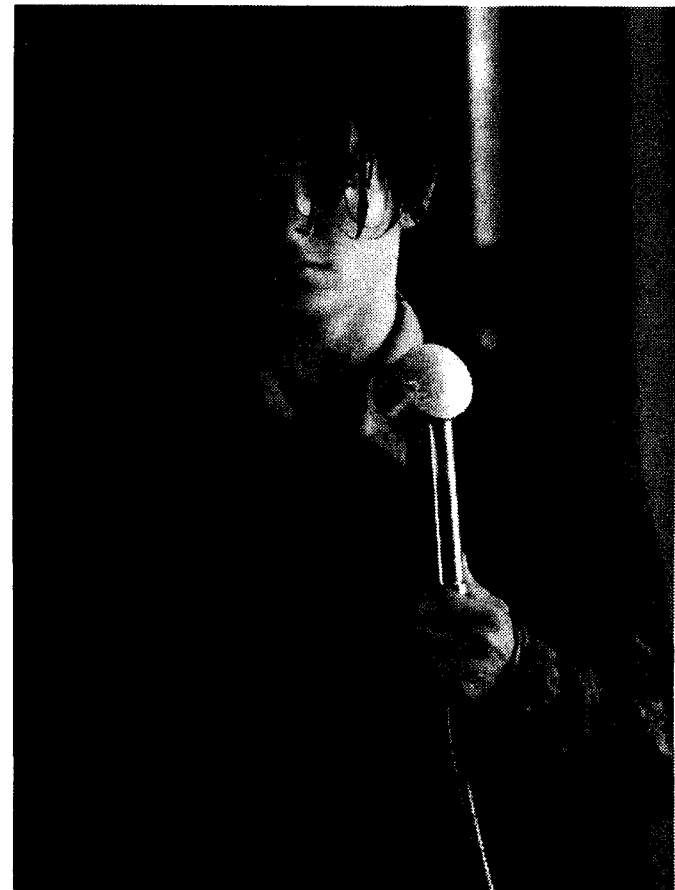


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