

Sooner Theatre's murder mystery delivers a healthy dose of laughter

Reviewed by Andy Rieger | Posted: Sunday, February 15, 2015 9:52 am

For a crisp \$5 bill, a cast member of the Sooner Theatre's 2015 Musical Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre supplied the right clue for our table to guess the killer.

With our cash donations, we learned it was a she and she wasn't a doctor or a nurse. That eliminated all but a handful of cast members. Our last tip produced this gem: "Look for the one in Hello Kitty scrubs."

That was enough for us to guess correctly. Sonographer Cindy Sawyer, played by Leasa Stewart, couldn't take Dr. Gabriel St. John's (Jody White) excessive test orders that pushed her into long shifts. But it was the good doctor's dig at her precious cats that pushed her over the edge so she gave him the old heave-ho out the hospital's second floor window onto the ambulance delivery bay below.

It's OK to let the cat out of the bag now that the final show closed Saturday night. Three nights of sell-out dinner shows upstairs in the Sooner's soon to be studio theatre downtown made for a historic weekend. The show ended Saturday night in a downtown packed with Mardi Gras revelers.

The annual murder mystery benefits Sooner's year-round music, youth drama and community theatre programs. James Briggs, the city's parks planner, once again delivered a humorous who-done-it featuring a cast of regular performers and even a few new faces. It was the seven show written by Briggs.

The music was pure 70s and 80s, just right for this multi-generational audience. Benvenuti's catered a great meal.

Briggs' real-life boss, Jud Foster, opens the show wandering through the hospital's emergency room seeking help for his head injury. He gets help from Jay Potts, a regular hypochondriac ER



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patient who knows the staff, their routines and romances so well he's often mistaken for a doctor. (Heck, he even gets to perform an operation in the men's restroom).

Local architect and longtime frustrated Thespian Mark Krittenbrink plays the vain Dr. Neal N. Partum, expecting all of the staff and fellow ER doc Janet Goodwell, played by Kerrie Brinkman White, to bow to his fantasies. All of their jobs are on the line as the hospital board sends in Dr. St. John to measure the unit's efficiency.

Nurses Shirley Franklin, Terri Nevin-Hesslroth and Gail Blaylock bring more drama to the emergency room and Kathy Nees once again delivers the comic relief murder mystery audiences have come to annually enjoy. Newcomer Ben Odom, an attorney by day, is the hospital's hapless director of security who stumbles upon the killer.

The musicians were lead by Melissa Griffith Edgmon and included Kurt Snodgrass, Bobby Carmen, John Sumida and Craig Price. Jody White directed the show and Whitney Young served as choreographer. The dancing hospital staffers were Ali Miller and Courtney Powell.

The tech crew did great work in the new venue. Voices were crisp and the band didn't overpower. Crew members were Codee Becknel, Kenneth Becknel, Brent Bullard and Phil Gibson.