

Political satire takes stage

Written by George Browning
Tuesday, 18 September 2012 00:00 -

As November approaches and the presidential campaigns reach new heights of euphemism and overblown rhetoric, we begin to wonder if either of the party's candidates can rise to the occasion and become the leader we need. We find ourselves asking if our country is even capable of producing another Washington, Lincoln or Roosevelt. And, if it is, will we recognize them as such or will it take the lens of history to reveal the true scope of their genius?

Well, while you are contemplating the deeper implications of what it means to be the President of the United States in these complicated, convoluted times, Washington County Actors' Community Theatre is celebrating the history of the Presidency with a production entitled, "44 Plays for 44 Presidents". As part of a nation wide festival, WCACT is teaming up with 43 other theatre companies who will all perform the play between now and the November election.

The play, originally, "43 Plays for 43 Presidents" was conceived, written and debuted by the Neo-Futurists theatre company in Chicago, Il, and takes a hard, sometimes comedic, sometimes cynical look at each of our nations leaders through rearview mirror of the twenty first century. The script rejoices in the triumphs of such Presidents as Teddy Roosevelt, bemoans the tragedies of some like Benjamin Franklin Pierce, and sheds light on some of the lesser known like Millard Fillmore. In any event you are sure to enjoy the show. Former President, Jimmy Carter saw a production of the show by Dad's Garage theatre company in Atlanta. It was reported that he laughed out loud during the vignette depicting President Ronald Reagan.

After mounting its own production of the script in August, 2011, WCACT's president, Charity Main was contacted by one of the shows authors about participating in the festival.

"We are excited to have been asked to be a part of this nation wide festival," says Main. "Of the 44 companies, we are the only community theatre. We are also one of only two companies who have performed the show before." The other companies are located across the United States from New York to California, as well as one in Anchorage, Alaska.

Each company has chosen one vignette from their production which will be filmed and submitted to the festival's organizers to be compiled into a full length video of the entire show. WCACT has selected the vignette featuring John Adams. The full video will be available for viewing on Youtube sometime during November.

Rock the Vote will be promoting the event on its website, rockthevote.org. You can also read a short homage to Salem by "44 Pays..." author, Andy Bayiates, at www.playsforpresidents.com2012/03/.

"44 Plays for 44 Presidents," will be presented at the Gary W. Hartsook Hall, 402 N. Harrison St. in Salem. The dates and times are Sept. 22nd at 7:30 p.m. and Sept. 23rd at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$9 for adults and \$8 for students and can be purchased at the door. WCACT looks forward to seeing you there.

If you have further questions you may call Daniel Main at 812-620-3327.