

Dated, But Well-Timed Comedy

Neil Simon's 1963 play *Barefoot in the Park* is Arena Dinner Theatre's holiday offering, and it serves up warm-hearted laughs without too much drama.

Corie and Paul Bratter are a sweet, opposites-attract newlywed couple. Corie (played by Gloria Minnich) is a lively free spirit who gets a "terrific kick out of living." Paul (Michael Coale) is a serious, buttoned-down lawyer trying to make a name for himself on his first case. Corie has rented a tiny New York walk-up apartment on the fifth floor without Paul's having seen it. She has fallen for the apartment's charm, overlooking all its faults — plumbing that works "backward," a bedroom that only fits a twin bed, and a hole in the skylight, to name a few. Paul does not approve but he tries to overlook them for his wife's sake.

Corie's mom, Ethel Banks (Carol Howell-Wasson), is similar to Paul; she is slightly controlling and a bit closed off, not quite understanding Corie's zest for life. Their upstairs neighbor, Victor Velasco (Kim Detwiler), is what Corie would be if she were a single, late-middle-aged man: quirky to the point of eccentricity for eccentricity's sake.

Corie decides her mother needs to experience life now that she's an empty-nester, and she sets up a double date so she can meet the fun-loving Mr. Velasco. Even though she's a good sport, the evening appears to have been a disaster and has put a spotlight on Corie and Paul's differences. Corie decides she doesn't want to be married to a stuffed shirt, so she demands a divorce.

It being an early Neil Simon comedy, the fight



Curtain Call

JEN POIRY-PROUGH

doesn't last long and the couple soon reconcile. It being a 1963 script, it's Corie who makes the concession, but that's all right. Paul seems to understand that he could lighten up a little, too — even though he's feverish when he comes to this realization.

Minnich is perfectly cast as Corie. She is vivacious and enthusiastic, but never obnoxious. The script calls for her to cry quite a bit at the end of the show and she does so convincingly and without being annoying. Coates provides a great contrast and is very natural onstage. You don't see him "acting."

Howell-Wasson plays Mrs. Banks very broadly and has some wonderful moments of physical comedy, particularly in the second act, following their drunken evening out. Detwiler exudes lovable eccentricity as Mr. Velasco, and despite the dated sexual harassment of Corie (she admits he makes her nervous but this only encourages him), he is quite charming. When he begins to recognize the physical limits of his own quirks, you feel for him.

The cast is rounded out by Brian H. Wagner as the wryly kindhearted telephone repairman and by David Thompson, the productions' stage manager who has a bit part as a delivery man.

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BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

7 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. curtain
Friday-Saturday, Dec. 5-6,
12-13 & 19-20

1 p.m. dinner, 2 p.m. curtain

Sunday, Dec. 14

Arena Dinner Theatre

719 Rockhill St., Fort Wayne

Tix.: \$35, 260-424-5622

Games Sucking Up All the Oxygen

Tops at the Box: Francis Lawrence's *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1* continued to kick box office booty, selling another \$57 million last weekend while upping the film's 10-day total to \$225 million in the U.S. and \$480 million worldwide. Don't be surprised if this one hits the \$1 billion mark worldwide before the end of the year. And of course *Part 2* will do similar, if not bigger, numbers. And that's alright. These movies aren't bad at all.

Also at the Box: *Penguins of Madagascar*, a film that straight up describes exactly what it is in its title, took the No. 2 spot at the U.S. box over the weekend, selling just under \$26 million over its first three days of release. Ouch! The folks at Fox absolutely expected their big winter animated flick to do much better numbers. What's up, kids? Where you at, kids? What's going on, miniature humans? *Penguins* did well overseas, selling another \$62 million abroad. Look for this flick to sell reasonably well for weeks to come. Why? Because it doesn't have a whole lot of competition (aside from the weekend's No. 3 film, of course) for the kiddie buck, and there's a winter vay-kay around the corner.

Taking the No. 3 spot at last weekend's U.S. box office was Disney's *Big Hero 6* which sold another \$18.7 million, bringing the film's four-weekend total to \$167 million in the U.S. and \$224 million worldwide. Not bad numbers, but hardly what Disney expected from their big marshmallow movie. Again: what's up, children? Where you at? You were always so reliable? Are you downloading your movies ille-



Screen Time

GREG W. LOCKE

gally? And if so, who taught you to do that, and is it considered to be child abuse to teach tiny people how to steal digital files? I say yes!

Christopher Nolan's sci-fi epic *Interstellar* had another strong weekend, selling another \$16 million on U.S. screens, upping the flick's four-weekend total to \$147 million in the U.S. and \$542 million worldwide. Good for you, Christopher Nolan. You're the new Stanley Kubrick, except your movies sell big and are only sorta good. Rounding out last weekend's Top 5 was newbie comedy *Horrible Bosses 2* starring Jason Bateman, Charlie Day, Jason Sudeikis, Jennifer Aniston, Kevin Spacey, Jamie Foxx, Christoph Waltz and Chris Pine. Holy mega cast, Batman. *Bosses 2* sold \$15.7 million. Add to that a few extra million from the flick's early holiday release — as well as some domestic bucks — and Sean Anders' comedy sequel has already sold about \$35 million in tickets.

Also of Note: Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's amazing *Birdman* continued to sink, selling just another \$1.8 million last weekend, bringing the film's disappointing seven-week total to \$17 million. Sometimes you suck, movie industry. Always you suck, American audiences.

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Current Exhibits

AMERICA'S SPIRIT: EVOLUTION OF A NATIONAL STYLE — Collection drawn from FWMoA's permanent collection chronicling American art from 1765-1900, **Tuesday-Sunday thru Jan. 25**, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, \$5-\$7 (members, free), 422-6467

ART² — 12x12 themed original mixed media pieces from local and regional artists, **Tuesday-Sunday thru Dec. 19**, Artworks Galleria of Fine Art, Fort Wayne, 387-6943

ART FOR THE HOLIDAYS — Handmade ornaments and nativities, **Monday-Saturday, thru Dec. 31**, Orchard Gallery of Fine Art, Fort Wayne, 436-0927

BFA EXHIBITION — Senior thesis pieces from IPFW Department of Visual Communication and Design students, **Wednesday-Sunday, Dec. 5-28**, Wunderkammer Gallery, Fort Wayne, 481-6709

BRENDA MOORE: SOLO EXHIBITION — Paintings, mixed media works and drawings, **daily thru Dec. 21**, Goldfish Gallery, Rolland Arts Center, University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, 399-7999

CHRIS AND SAYAKA GANZ — Sculptures from reclaimed objects, prints and charcoals, **Tuesday-Saturday thru Dec. 6**, Crestwoods Frame Shop & Gallery, Roanoke, 672-2080

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING — Oil, pastel and acrylics courtesy of Linda Warren Projects, **daily thru Dec. 21**, John P. Weatherhead Gallery, Rolland Arts Center, University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, 399-7999

CRAFTING A CONTINUUM: RETHINKING CONTEMPORARY CRAFT — Arizona State University Art Museum and Ceramics Research Center in the Herberger Institute's comprehensive collection of craft holdings and new international requisitions in wood, ceramic and fiber, **Tuesday-Sunday thru Dec. 21**, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, \$5-\$7 (members, free), 422-6467

CROSSING LINES: CONTEMPORARY ART FROM COAST TO COAST — Contemporary pieces from Austin, TX, **Tuesday-Sunday thru Jan. 15**, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, \$5-\$7 (members, free), 422-6467

GROUP HOLIDAY SHOW — Mixed media from Gwen Gutwein, Justin Johnson, Austin Cartwright, Diana Fair, Elizabeth Wamsley, Richard Tuck, Marcy Neiditz, Aaron Dickinson and Linda Nathan Jones, **Tuesday-Saturday, Dec. 10-Jan. 31**, Crestwoods Frame Shop & Gallery, Roanoke, 672-2080

HIGH STYLES HOLIDAY EXHIBIT — Poinsettia filled Christmas display depicting the era between World Wars I and II, **Tuesday-Sunday thru Jan. 4**, Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory, Fort Wayne, \$3-\$5 (2 and under, free), 427-6440

HOLIDAY POP UP GALLERY — Mixed media pieces from 12 local and regional artists, **Wednesday-Sunday, Dec. 5-28**, (opening reception 5-10 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5), The Art Farm, Spencerville, 238-4755

HOLIDAY SHOW — Visual interpretations of the season by national and regional artists including Terry Armstrong, Forrest Formsma, Fred Doloresco, Robert Eberle, Bill Inman, Diane Lyon, Jody Hemphill Smith, CW Mundy and more., **Tuesday-Saturday and by appointment thru Dec. 31**, Castle Gallery Fine Art, Fort Wayne, 426-6568

MARVELOUS MOLECULES: THE SECRET OF LIFE — Traveling exhibit focusing on molecules and the building blocks of life, **daily thru Jan. 4**, Science Central, Fort Wayne, \$5-\$8, 424-2400

Art & Artifacts

THE ROLLING STONES: 50TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT — Photography from Stephen Perfect, **daily thru Dec. 21**, Artist Spotlight Gallery, Rolland Arts Center, University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, 399-7999

TIM PARSLEY: OH BLINDNESS TO THE FUTURE, KINDLY GIVEN — Paintings, drawings and mixed media collages that appropriate and piece together scraps of historic imagery, **daily thru Dec. 15**, Lupke Gallery, University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, 399-7999

Artifacts

CALL FOR ARTISTS

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS (JAN. 23-MARCH 4) — Themed, open call, all-media exhibit; pieces embrace the fun and whimsy of childhood games, for full criteria visit www.artlinkfw.com, submission deadline, **Friday, Dec. 19**, Artlink Contemporary Art Gallery, Fort Wayne, \$10, members free, 424-71955

TEEN PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST — For ages 12-18, submit 8x10 photos of buildings, landmarks or any point of interest in Huntington County, entries accepted thru **Wednesday, Dec. 31**, Huntington City-Township Public Library, 356-2900

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED ART — Call for visual artists, musicians, performing artists and writers to enter to be juried, full details available at artscubatorfw.com/programs/csaa/, application deadline **Saturday, Jan. 5**, Artlink Contemporary Art Gallery, Fort Wayne, \$10, members free, 424-71955

NATIONAL PRINT EXHIBITION (APRIL 24-MAY 27) — Original printmaking media that has been completed in the last 3 years, has not previously been exhibited at Artlink and is no larger than 54" in any direction may be submitted, for full criteria visit www.artlinkfw.com, submission deadline, **Friday, Jan. 23**, Artlink Contemporary Art Gallery, Fort Wayne, 3 entries for \$25, members \$20, 424-71955

SPECIAL EVENTS

DIRECTORS TOUR: AMERICA'S SPIRIT — 1st Thursday Gallery Talk Series featuring a guided tour by Executive Director and Chief Curator Charles Shepard **12:15 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4**, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, \$5-\$7 (members, free), 422-6467

SECOND THURSDAY IN THE PARADIGM GALLERY — Annual jewelry showcase with Steven and Susan Shaikh, **5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 11**, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, free, 422-6467

Upcoming Exhibits

DECEMBER

10TH REGIONAL EXHIBITION — Mixed media pieces from local and regional artists, **Tuesday-Sunday, Dec. 12-Jan. 14**, (opening reception 6-9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12) Artlink Contemporary Art Gallery, Fort Wayne, 424-7195

BOYCOTT! THE ART OF ECONOMIC ACTIVISM — 61 posters from 20 past and present economic campaigns and movements, **Tuesday-Sunday, Dec. 12 thru Jan. 14** (opening reception 6-9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12), Artlink Contemporary Art Gallery, Fort Wayne, 424-7195

USF PHOTO CLUB — Photography, **Tuesday-Sunday, Dec. 12-Jan. 14**, Betty Fishman Gallery, Artlink Contemporary Art Gallery, Fort Wayne, 424-7195