

that it must be a symbol of...something.) Lighting and sound design are simple and — despite a few glitches at last Friday's performance — effective.

Connie Strayer deserves special mention for her perfect execution of the rustic period costumes, especially the tired frock coat that seems to play a symbiotic role in Hoyle's portrayal of Hugh.

"Translations" runs through July 27, followed by the opening on July 31 of Friel's masterpiece "The Faith Healer." There is also a free series of Irish or Irish-themed films every Monday evening, and a symposium on July 19 that explores Friel's significance as a dramatist and chronicler of traditional Irish life. Details are on the SST website. ■

**What:** "Translations," a play presented by Stanford Summer Theater  
**Where:** Pigott Theatre in Memorial Hall, 551 Serra Mall, Stanford University  
**When:** Thursday-Sunday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., through July 27  
**Cost:** \$20 general admission, \$15 for seniors and Stanford affiliates, \$10 for Stanford students  
**Info:** Go to summertheater.stanford.edu for tickets and event information.

# A silly, seldom-seen Stoppard satire

'Rough Crossing' at the Dragon waxes wacky  
 by Jeanie Forte

If you're not particular about theatrical refinement, and just want to have fun, the current offering at the Dragon Theatre will tickle your funny bone.

Tom Stoppard adapted "Rough Crossing" from a Ferenc Molnár work, "Play at the Castle," but the resemblances (or lack thereof) are unimportant — he freely constructed an affectingly silly farce, giving it the inimitable Stoppard signature.

In a nutshell, a famous playwrighting team of Turai (Steve Cortopassi) and Gal (Magenta Brooks) have but a few hours to fix and finish their latest effort as they cross the pond from Europe to New York. They've brought along their wunderkind composer/pianist, with the surprising name of Adam Adam (Jason Arias), to beef it up, also knowing that he's madly in love with the leading lady, Natasha Navratilova (Monica Cappuccini). However, Natasha and the leading man, Ivor Fish (Noel Wood), already boarded the ship the day before, and are unaware that the other three arrived while they dined.

Turns out Natasha and Ivor dined before, when she was a rising talent and he a matinee idol, and Ivor would like to rekindle the flame. A racy conversation is overheard, Adam is devastated, the

show's future is threatened, and Turai must figure out a way to set things right before they get to New York. Throw into the mix a zany deadpan waiter (Jonathan Ferro), named Dvornicheck — or is it Murphy? — who keeps mistaking such common expressions as "down the hatch" as excuses to drink the cognac he's serving, and who seems to write plays himself.

The solution involves the play within the play, a totally wacky melodrama involving white slavery and a pair of earrings, I think. A happy resolution is inevitable, although how they get there is suitably convoluted. Something involving the Captain, who might also be a playwright, who might have written a play with these characters — oh, never mind.

Try not to make anything deep out of it, or suss out layers of meaning. It's all meant in jest, and you have to just let it roll over you as fluff and fun.

Director Dave Sikula does a good job with staging, the requisite door slams and over-the-top style. But the piece as a whole has problems deciding what it is, and it's hard to tell if that's direction or the play itself. It's a giddy mélange of Noel Coward, Michael Frayn, and the Marx brothers that doesn't quite gel into its own gestalt. Some comic mo-

ments are brilliantly funny, whereas others fall flat.

The character of Adam suffers a particular malady borne out of seeing his criminal mother that renders him incapable of speech at times. The way this is portrayed gives one pause at first, until one realizes the origin of the ailment; perhaps a different choice could have made this less uncomfortable for the audience. In spite of this, Arias is a solid actor, who sports a charming overdone French accent and moons over Natasha like a pup.

And the scenes between Cappuccini and Wood are little gems of flamboyance; they're both so good, it's sheer delight to watch them work together. Cortopassi is excellent as the put-upon, debonair but weary playwright who has to pull a rabbit out of a hat to save his career (and if you see it, you'll love the way Cappuccini says "rabbit"). Brooks has comic potential, but her character seems underdeveloped, a bit superfluous. Again, hard to tell if it's script or staging.

Ferro, as the ditzzy waiter, has a great deadpan demeanor, but the character overall is unclear. Is he supposed to have an accent? No accent? Different accents at different times? A sharper, more deliberate rendering might have delivered more comedy than confusion.

## Theater Review

Still, it's a shipboard romp with some excellent performances amid the script's spoof of itself. Go see it just for some summer fun, don't think too hard, and leave political correctness at the door. ■

**What:** "Rough Crossing," by Tom Stoppard, presented by Dragon Productions  
**Where:** Dragon Theatre, 535 Alma St., Palo Alto  
**When:** Through Aug. 3, with 8 p.m. shows Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. matinees on Sundays  
**Cost:** Tickets range from \$13 to \$25.  
**Info:** Go to www.dragonproductions.net or call 650-493-2006.

**About the cover:**  
 Pictured on the top right corner of the Weekly cover this week are actors Steve Cortopassi (who plays Turai), in back, and Jonathan Ferro (Dvornicheck) in Dragon Productions' "Rough Crossing."

### City of Palo Alto Recreation Presents 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PALO ALTO WEEKLY MOONLIGHT RUN & WALK FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2008

**TIME & PLACE**

**PLEASE NOTE TIMES: 5K walk 7:15pm, 10K run 8:15pm, 5K run 8:45pm.**  
 Race-night registration 6:15 to 8:00pm at City of Palo Alto Baylands Athletic Center, Embarcadero & Geng Roads (just east of the Embarcadero Exit off Highway 101).  
**Parking** — go to PaloAltoOnline.com to check for specific parking locations.

**COURSE**

5K and 10K loop courses over Palo Alto Baylands levee, through the marshlands by the light of the Harvest Moon! Course is flat, USAT&F certified (10k run only) on levee and paved roads. Water at all stops. (Course map available at www.PaloAltoOnline.com)

**REGISTRATIONS & ENTRY FEE**

Pre-registration fee is \$20 per entrant (postmarked by September 5, 2008) and includes a long-sleeve t-shirt. Late/race-night registration is \$25 and includes a shirt only **while supplies last. A scantron card must be filled out at race-night registration.**  
**Family package:** Children 12 and under run free with a registered parent. A completed entry form for each child must be submitted with adult registration. **Please indicate on form and include \$10 for an adult small t-shirt. No confirmation of mail-in registration available. Registration also available online at www.PaloAltoOnline.com. Refunds will not be issued for no-show registrations (and t-shirts will not be held).**

**SPORTS TEAM/CLUBS:**

Pre-registration opportunity for organizations of 10 or more runners; contact Amy at (650) 326-8210 ext. 285.

**MINORS:**

If not pre-registered Minors under 18 **MUST** bring signed parental/waiver form (below) on race night to participate. In addition scantron card must be completely filled out at race-night registration.

**DIVISIONS**

Age divisions: 9 & under; 10-12; 13-19; 20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60-69, and 70 & over with separate divisions for male and female runners in each age group. Race timing provided for 5K and 10K runs only; not 5K walk.

**COMPUTERIZED RESULTS by A Change of Pace**

Race results will be posted on the Internet at www.PaloAltoOnline.com 10am on 9/15. Registration forms must be filled out completely and correctly for results to be accurate. Race organizers are not responsible for incorrect results caused by incomplete or incorrect registration forms.

**AWARDS/PRIZES/ENTERTAINMENT**

Top three finishers in each division. Prize giveaways and refreshments. DJ, Efen Ayala. Pre-race warmup by Andre Bobo.

**BENEFICIARY**

Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund. A holiday-giving fund to benefit Palo Alto area non-profits and charitable organizations. In April 2008, 37 organizations received a total of \$240,000 (from the 2007-2008 Holiday Fund.)

**MORE INFORMATION**

Call (650) 463-4920, (650) 326-8210, email MoonlightRun@pawebly.com. or go to www.PaloAltoOnline.com.

For safety reasons, no dogs allowed on course for the 5K and 10K runs. They are welcome on the 5K walk only. No retractable leashes! Please bring your own clean-up bag. Jogging strollers welcome in the 5K walk or at the back of either run.

Flashlights/head lights recommended.

Register online at [www.PaloAltoOnline.com](http://www.PaloAltoOnline.com)

