

Box full of child's play spills across Shuler stage

By Tim Keller
Special to The Chronicle-News
RATON — It was a terrible, horrible, very bad day for Louis and Tabitha when they succumbed to curiosity and opened the big box that had appeared in their New York City East Village walk-up apartment. The wooden crate turned out to be, literally, Pandora's Box, and it was full of their worst nightmares, famous villains from the world's favorite fairy tales.

The weekend Shuler Theater production of "Once Upon a Pandora's Box," a 2007 stage play by Monica Flory, showed the playwright to be in close touch with her inner child, which is not to say that she's in command of it: The children in her play spill all over the stage in frenetic silliness.

Watching the 65-minute romp often felt like being a parent peaking into the children's playroom without them being aware of being watched.

It was children's play acting without restraint. There was the Queen from Snow White, played with relish by Zoe Gomez, and the Big Bad Wolf played by Spenser Willden. Meigan Deater was a very mean Witch, Laura Robertson a petulant Fairy #13, and Ryan Hull an antic Rumpelstiltskin called "Rumpel."

Once they're let out of the box, they take captive their two unwitting hosts, Louis and Tabitha, played by Christopher Mandonado and Nathaly Torres. The



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Zeus, played by Junior Torres, lays down his rules for the villains he's put in Pandora's Box. From front left, the villains are Zoe Gomez as the Queen from Snow White, Laura Robertson as Fairy #13, Meigan Deater as the Witch, Spenser Willden as the Big Bad Wolf, and Ryan Hull as Rumpel (Rumpelstiltskin).

troublemaker behind all this was none other than Zeus, played by the troupe's youngest member, Junior Torres, but voiced by high school senior James Neary.

Before the villains were boxed, they ran rampant

throughout the auditorium and stage, speaking in their original languages while Stone Phillips, as Translator, calmly stood to the side providing the audience with translations.

Johnny Gentry bookend

ed Phillips's Translator by showing up near the play's end as Reporter, standing in the same spot to give the audience news reports of the goings-on after it finally occurred to the villains to leave the tiny apartment

and unleash themselves on New York City.

Rounding out the cast were Asia Gentry as Angela, Breanna Brown as Beautella, and Rachyl Hull as Esperella, visitors to the apartment. While it was,

indeed, all child's play, it was not without guiding hands, albeit invisible ones.

Director Gail Dixon-Willden again showed her gift for wrangling children without diminishing their natural playfulness. This was her annual foray into mounting a play for the community's 8- to-12-year-old actors, a practice that is already paying dividends for other plays, such as the annual "A Christmas Carol," when casting calls for children's roles bring practiced young actors.

Bill Fegan produced the play for The Santa Fe Trail School for the Performing Arts. Cian Hazen was the technical director and designed the lighting, which was run by Tessa Fleming. Ashley Atwater ran the sound, which was designed by Hazen and Willden and recorded by Billy Donati. Desiree Martinez was the assistant director, aided by assistant stage manager Haley James and crewmembers Megan Petrie and John Davis. Ursula Garcia and Misty Gomez costumed the young actors, and someone — uncredited — had a ball in designing and applying their make-up.

In addition to public performances Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoon, the Raton Public Schools treated its kindergarteners, first and second graders to Friday morning performances at the Shuler. By all appearances, a zany time was had by all.

Champs

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going into the locker room.

The game changed in the third quarter when struggling starter Navarette found her scoring touch, scoring all of her eight points in the second half.

Navarette said although her shots weren't falling, she continued to play strong defense and continued to shoot the ball. She said with each shot she told herself, "it's going down."

Junior Ashleigh Vecellio led the team with nine points while Navarette, junior Chelsea Velasquez and senior Kendra Torres recorded eight points in the contest.

Although his team's shots couldn't find the nylon in the first half, Dasko said his team was able to shoot the ball effectively and rebounded the ball well with senior Tiffany Castillo leading the club with six rebounds.

Eight minutes from a district title, the Lady Miners kept their foot on the gas, burying the Lady Demons in the final frame, cruising to a 50-31 victory and a district title.

With many of the Lady Miners playing together from a young age, Navarette said the team has formed a special bond. Dasko has called this team a fist, because, "we all stick together."

Velasquez said this team won't quit until it achieves its ultimate goal, a state championship.

"We're going to play our heart out," she said.

While the Lady Miners were able to celebrate a district title Saturday night, Trinidad had to sweat out a tense and dramatic victory over Florence Friday night, when Velasquez hit a buzzer-beating three pointer to defeat Florence 38-36 in the semi-final round.

Trailing by as many as eight before the half, the Lady Miners surged in the second half, chipping away at the Florence lead.

Taking the lead at 35-34 with 10 seconds left, Florence was able to sink two clutch free throws to give it a one-point lead with four seconds to go.

With four seconds remaining, Velasquez caught the in-bounds pass and after one dribble she put up a prayer, sinking the shot and sending the Trinidad bench into hysteria.

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Mike Albanese/The Chronicle-News

Trinidad senior Stephany Navarette drives by a Buena Vista defender to lay in two of her eight points on the night, helping to catapult the Lady Miners to a 50-31 victory over the Lady Demons and claim the Tri-Peaks District championship title.

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final vote on the question of his/her removal." Gil de Rubio said he received a letter from Pando and Bonato, but the letter did not go into details about why they are trying to fire him.

"I'm just a little confused as to why this is happening," Gil de Rubio said.

Mayor John Rino said he was informed of the meeting request Friday afternoon. He said he is not aware of Pando and Bonato's reasons for the request, but he believes it is time for a vote on the city manager.

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Bernadette Baca-Gonzalez
Councilwoman

"It's probably time for an up and down vote on (Gil de Rubio's) termination. ... We need to make a decision one way or another," he said.

Other council members were unhappy with the turn of events and expressed shock and disbelief.

"My head's reeling from it. ... Right now I'm just kind of flabbergasted," Councilwoman Bernadette Baca-Gonzalez said about the vote to fire Gil de Rubio.

Councilwoman Carol Bolton agreed. "This is the worst thing they could do," she said. "It's a total show of political patronage."

And as to why members of council would want to fire Gil de Rubio, she said, "I'm sure they'll dream up something."

Relations between some of the council members and Gil de Rubio have been strained for some time now, coming to a head last year when members of the council tried to do the city manager's annual review in executive session. Gil de Rubio requested a public hearing on his performance and drew a large and vocal crowd of supporters to the council meeting to support his request.

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Ordinance

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and community," Shultz said. On Friday, Shultz said Budweiser products will be sold at the park and the beer company will also be sponsoring the Triggers.

She added she would apply for the 3.2 percent license in March, only if City Council approves the second reading of the ordinance.

If the council approves and Shultz submits the license request in March, she said the chamber would be notified in April whether or not it has received the license.

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Community Education

Mt. San Rafael Hospital Community Education

Wednesday, February 29, 2012
Dr. Ronald Dalton, Internal Med/Pediatrics
"Heart Health"

Wednesday, March 21, 2012
Dr. David Reitter, General Surgeon
"Colon Cancer Screening"



All community education is in the Hospital Cafeteria at 5:30pm

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