

ON STAGE

A good skewering

*New Edgecliff stages three edgy acts by
parodist Christopher Durang*

JACKIE DEMALINE | ENQUIRER STAFF WRITER

New Edgecliff Theatre is spending several evenings this month in "Durang(o)," which has nothing to do with Colorado and everything to do with the mad theatrical land of parodist Christopher Durang. Most of the evening's program is from a quarter century ago, but Durang is still crazy after all these years.

Folks with a passing interest in theater know Durang for his vicious religious satire "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You," which is a clear rebuttal to a Roman Catholic education.

Some of Durang's favorite topics are Catholicism, gay-bashing, marriage and therapy, and they're all represented on stage at New Edgecliff. He especially enjoys biting the hand that feeds him, so theater gets a skewering. Two of the three one-acts that comprise "An Evening in Durang(o)" are about life in the theater.

First up is "The Actor's Nightmare," about an accountant who finds himself pulled onto the stage and at a loss in a range of scenes inspired by "Private Lives," "Hamlet," Samuel Beckett's "Happy Days" and "A Man for All Seasons."

Then there's "For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls," a merciless send-up of "The Glass Menagerie," where Laura becomes Lawrence and the Gentleman Caller switches genders.



NEW EDGECLIFF THEATRE

Devon Campailla, Andrew Bernhard and Greg Hillner are in the cast of "An Evening in Durang(o)."

When You Go

What: "An Evening in Durang(o)"

When: 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday; through Nov. 18

Where: New Edgecliff Theatre, Columbia Performance Center, 3900 Eastern Ave., Columbia Tusculum

Tickets: \$18, \$14 students and seniors.

888-588-0137; www.newedgecliff.com

The final episode is "Dentity Crisis," about a girl trying to recover from a breakdown despite her mental family, the Fromages.

Nathan Gabriel, 25, is New Edgecliff's new associate artistic director and is making his NET directing debut. He thinks Cincinnati is a fine place to grow as an artist. He tried interning at a professional theater in Washington after graduating from Northern Kentucky University but came home and got married.

"Here I can become an associate artistic director," he says. "In D.C., I would have had to spend years and years growing my résumé, assistant to the assistant."

A product of Fort Thomas and Northern Kentucky University, Gabriel is a fan of Durang, having caught a lot of student-directed Durang one-acts during his years attending college in Illinois.

"I wouldn't call his comedy black," judges Gabriel, "but it comes from a violent place. It's sort

of black and bloody." Not quite black, sort of bloody (metaphorically speaking). Perhaps Durang's work is closest to absurdist purple.

The very good cast consists of Andrew Bernhard, Devon Campailla, Amy Harpring, Greg Hillner Erin McCamley and Pamela Shooner, who has the juicy role of Amanda in "Belle."

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etc. Theater reviews

Ace is a smart original musical about fathers and sons and fighter pilots and finding your roots. Smart production, too, at Playhouse in the Park. Through Nov. 17. 513-421-3888

Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge starts the holiday season with a demented look at "A Christmas Carol," from Christopher Durang by the Drama Workshop. Through Nov. 18. 513-598-8303.

This Wonderful Life, a one-man adaptation of the Frank Capra holiday classic "It's a Wonderful Life," begins previews Saturday at Playhouse in the Park. Through Dec. 23. 513-421-3888.

Coming next week

Broadway composer William Finn talks about "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," a charmer of a musical that takes an affectionate look at students who are spellbound.