

Theatre opens season with 'Starcatcher'



BY SAM WRIGHT
swright@cgsentinel.com

Putnam Spelling Bee). The play is built around complimentary characters, and the cast strongly displays the fun, wild and magical dynamic between all of the characters.

To start with, Joel Ibanez's portrayal of Captain Slank's surly attitude toward his subordinates sets the scene of nautical life of 19th century Great Britain. The audience is immediately set for an adventure.

But other relationships, though not crucial to the plot, helped create a hilarious wonder to the story. A highlight of the play was the relationship between Alf (a Neverland crewman played by Dale Flynn) and Mrs. Betty Bumbrake (Molly's nanny played by Keith Kessler). The two play a game of romantic cat and mouse until Alf goes too far and Kessler's feminine voice is discarded (intentionally) and the manly interior of Kessler comes out to stop Alf's relentless pursuit. The sudden switch had the audience aching with laughter.

Then enter the dimwitted Black Stache, whose intelligence is barely held up by his first mate, Smee. The endless puns and

mispronunciations by Stache (played by Kory Weimer), who is then corrected by Smee (played by Sophie Blades) truly hit a nostalgic nerve when thinking of the goofy villain from the Disney animated film.

The boy who is later named Peter is played by Sheldon Hall. The young Hall brings to the stage the angst and anger of a neglected orphan boy who hates grown-ups, but also brings the innocence of boyhood to light.

Outside of the outstanding cast, the set design (**FeO2 group or company**) served as a background for a story that has a lot of fantasy-based elements to it. In Act I, the set is used for the two vessels. A variety of wooden boxes, ladders and rope made up the vessels. Tony Rust deserves recognition for the direction of the play, and one of the more interestingly directed scenes was where Molly sneaks around multiple levels and peaks into different rooms on board. The movement throughout the set is well done for the given limited space.

For theatre lovers, this is not one to miss. *Peter and the Starcatcher* is boisterous, brazen and beautifully bestowed unto its audience (and will have its wordplay evidently rub off).

The Cottage Theatre kicked off its 2017 season with a bang. *Peter and the Starcatcher* is the perfect play to kick off the 35th anniversary of the local theatre. The play is based on a novel of the same name by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson.

The story follows the origin of Peter Pan and the land of Neverland. Lord Leonard Aster and his daughter, Molly, are tasked with bringing a trunk of precious cargo to the Kingdom of Rundoon aboard the Wasp. An identical trunk is served as a decoy and is scheduled to board the Neverland and

take a safer route to Rundoon. The Neverland is captained by the sinister Bill Slank, who bought three orphans to help aboard the ship and are to work as helpers to the king of Rundoon. The trunks are switched and the mysterious Queen's cargo turns out to be more than just shiny treasure. The play takes you right to the beginning of Peter Pan, and all the dots are pleasantly connected.

The play was overall the funniest the theatre has produced since my time in Cottage Grove (perhaps to be rivaled with the