



BWW Review: THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR at TRT is Inventive and Fascinating



by Marina Kennedy

Two River Theater (TRT), under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, is continuing their successful season with *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by William Shakespeare now through March 26th. The play has been cleverly adapted and directed by Eric Tucker. It is a 90-minute inventive version of one of The Bard's most ridiculous comedies. The production includes fascinating modern touches like a motel setting, witty dialogue, and distinctive depictions of classic characters.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, John Falstaff, a foolish and vain man, attempts to seduce two married, well-respected women of Windsor, Mistress Page and Mistress Ford. But when the women discover that they have received identical love letters from Falstaff, they plan a hilarious, revengeful plot that makes him look especially silly. Romance and deception take center stage in this celebrated comedy.

Nicole Lewis, Jason O'Connell, and Zuzanna Szadkowski are the three immensely talented actors who collectively assume nearly 20 roles in the play. Their portrayal of the show's colorful characters is lively and exciting. Each of the cast members slips seamlessly from one part to

another without a pause. Among the many roles, Lewis portrays Mistress Ford and Abraham Slender; O'Connell portrays John Falstaff and Parson Evans; and Szadkowski portrays Mistress Page and Master Brook.

The creative team for The Merry Wives of Windsor has done a great job of bringing the show to the Red Bank stage. They include scenic design by Lee Savage; costume design by Jessica Pabst; lighting design by Eric Southern and sound design by Karin Graybash. The casting is by Heidi Griffiths & Kate Murray, and the production stage manager is Brett Anders.

Shakespeare aficionados and many more will enjoy the Two River Theater production of The Merry Wives of Windsor. Its unique staging brings a whole new perspective to this beloved romantic comedy.

The Merry Wives of Windsor is being performed in Two River's Marion Huber Theater through Sunday, March 26th. The theater is located at 21 Bridge Street in Red Bank. Ticket prices range from \$50 to \$70, with discounts available for groups, seniors, and U.S. military personnel, their families, and veterans. A limited number of \$20 tickets are available for every performance; \$20 tickets may be partial view. Tickets for patrons under 30 are \$20 and include the best available seats at every performance. Tickets are available from www.tworivertheater.org or by calling 732.345.1400.

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