



Pictures and review from the workshop production at the Dolores Winningstad Theatre in the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, in Portland, Oregon.

## Spooky 'The Pirate Show!' has its share of yo-ho-hos

The Really Big Dance Company always can be counted on for chuckles and chortles, mostly from an absurdist orientation, and its original "The Pirate Show!" is no exception. Whipped together over five months under the creative direction of Michael Menger, it's a melange of song and dance dedicated to spoofing pirates and pirate movies as well as the whole entertainment enterprise.

Fortunately, Menger has himself playing a starring role. Loose jointed, naturally a bit removed from the action (to considerable comic effect) and used to carrying a load on stage - both with the Really Big Dance Company and as an actor in town - Menger has an easy welcoming presence on stage that invites the audience to go along with the joke.



In this case the joke has to do with the two or three ridiculous intertwining plots that converge in the lair of the Sea Hag.

She happens to possess the Heart of Gold that Menger and his crew are trying to seize at the same time a cross-dressing pirate is fighting for independence of her island against a foe that includes her ex-lover.

To supply the narrative, even though she is dressed in a parrot suit, is Kellie Johnson. She has a strong, pleasing voice, just great for belting out Broadway tunes. And Michael Collins has winning moments as Samuel, whose coming of age is a central part of the show.



The rest of the cast throw themselves into the physical aspects of the show - the comic sword fighting, the general high jinks and the dance bits. The most comic of these is performed by a group of women cannibals all named Peg who have, you guessed it, one good leg each. The Xena-like Amazon warrior bit, another funny segment, suggests another spoof possibility.

The words also serve to extend the show past the tight, bright 90-minute barrier (and "The Pirate Show!" is mostly good clean fun). It has a casual, unpredictable and mesmerizing quality that managed to keep the children in the audience involved. ---Barry Johnson, The Oregonian

