

# Spoofing around

South Valley Civic Theatre presents two one-act comedies for the whole family

By JULIE MORRIS  
Staff writer

Prince Charming gets serious about finding Cinderella in "The Girl Who Lost the Slipper": In the adaptation of the classic fairy tale, written by Beth Brawn Hamnett of Morgan Hill, the starry-eyed prince hires a private detective.

One of two one-act plays to be presented by the South Valley Civic Theatre this month, "The Girl Who Lost the Slipper" was written by 25-year-old Hamnett, who is earning a master's degree of Fine Arts, specializing in theater for young adults, at Arizona State University.

"This story is familiar, so the children don't have to learn too much," said Penny Lockhart, one of the producers.

"I think teenagers and adults will enjoy it too. A lot of times, adults don't have a chance to laugh at silly things. This is fun. There's no sex and no violence."

Hamnett wrote the spoof about a year ago and has been revising it to make it better ever since. The play was even performed for a class of Phoenix fifth graders in a trial run, where it generated lots of laughs, Hamnett said.

"It sort of happened by accident," Hamnett said of her interest in children's theater. "An adviser suggested taking a class on children's theater and the next thing I know, I'm writing a play and people liked it."

This production of the play is the first time Hamnett's work has been performed outside of Arizona and she is excited about it. Her father, Russ Brawn is directing the play and her mother, Grace Brawn, designed the set and costumes. Hamnett, who credits her father for exposing her to Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons as a child,

says she is grateful for her parents' support.

"I think it's great that my dad is directing it, because a lot of my work was influenced by his warped sense of humor," Hamnett laughed.

The slapstick comedy is performed by adult actors and is filled with jokes that children and parents will enjoy, according to Lockhart.

"The one thing that I think is a benefit is that they are short plays," Lockhart said. "In each, you can take fairly young children but you don't have to worry about their attention span because it's short. Although it is short, the play does not talk down to children, Hamnett said.

"I want to treat them like adults," she said. "Too many authors for young children talk down to them and underestimate their savvy — that's something you should never do."

The play runs about 45 minutes and is followed by "The Three Sillies," a folk tale adapted by Marcia Gambrell Hovick, the longtime director of Carmel's Children's Experimental Theater and another advocate of respecting young audiences' intelligence.

"I don't believe in patronizing children," Hovick said. "One of the primary things I'm concerned about dealing with is exposing children to more of the classics."

The 30-minute play is about a Norwegian farmer, Pers Olafsson, and his search for three people sillier than his fiancée and her two parents. The play follows Olafsson in his trek around the world to find three "sillies" so he can return home to marry his neighbor's beautiful daughter assured that she is not the silliest person in the world. In his travels, he comes across a man who jumps into his pants



### ► ONE-ACT PLAYS AT SVCT

WHAT: "The Girl Who Lost the Slipper" and "The Three Sillies"

WHEN: Fridays, Jan. 13 and 20 at 7 p.m. and Saturdays, Jan. 14 and 21 at 2 p.m.

WHERE: South Valley Civic Theatre, located at 235 Tennant Station in Morgan Hill

PRICE: Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students and seniors and can be purchased by calling 842-SHOW.

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PENNY LOCKHART, CO-PRODUCER

every morning to get dressed and a woman who raises cows on her roof.

Sounds silly? That's because it is — but full of laughs, Hovick said.

"The play is about the general idiocy of the human race," Hovick said.

The play is directed by 19-year-old Taniesia Detrick of Gilroy.

"I had a good experience

directing in high school and I like working with younger kids," Detrick said.

"I think the great thing about directing is to let the kids explore another character and to be a little silly," she said.

Detrick, who was involved in theater at Gilroy High School, said she has been working with the young cast for weeks. The players range in age from 12 to 18 years old.

"I love to see them open their minds, it's really great," Detrick said of her young cast.

"It's a cute play and it is targeted toward young children. I think the audiences will get a big kick out of it. This is one of the most responsible and dedicated casts I've ever worked with."

The dedication of the casts is part of these two plays appeal, Lockhart agreed.

"I think the enthusiasm of the performers is one of the best things about the plays, they are performed in front of a simple drop, there is not a lot of scenery and props," she said.

"The audience has to use its imagination. They're just funny plays, you're not being served any messages, you just get to be entertained."

Terry Pierson

Let's Go! photographer

South Valley Civic Theatre is currently presenting two one-act comedies that star both local children and adults. In "Slipper," the prince hires a private detective to help him find his princess. In "The Three Sillies," a man travels around the world, trying to find someone sillier than his fiance and her parents.

