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“The 39 Steps” at Limelight Actors Theater



(l. to r.) Kevin Heath as Richard Hannay, Jason Harris as Man #1, Bruce Pember as Man #2 and Roberta Vinkhuyzen as Annabella Schmidt in the Limelight actor Theater production of “The 39 Steps” running through May 2, 2015 at Gilroy’s Center for the Arts.

A 1930s Alfred Hitchcock thriller is turned into comic, madcap mayhem in Limelight’s production of *The 39 Steps*. It’s a spoof, a sendup that uses four actors to play dozens of roles and even inanimate objects, sometimes for the blink of an eye. It is a concept that requires split second timing, quick changes and enormous amounts of energy and the Limelight production gets it mostly right.

The plot, a romantic melodrama, concerns Richard Hannay (**Kevin Heath** sporting black hair and a pencil mustache), a Canadian living in London who gets involved in a nefarious spy plot when a mysterious, exotic woman with a Mittel-European accent (svelte, sexy **Roberta Vinkhuyzen**, who also plays two

other romantic interests) shows up at his apartment with a story of stolen information that could threaten the safety of the nation and benefit an old enemy rising in the East.

Suddenly, there is a murder and Hannay is fleeing for his life and eluding the police while trying to track down plotters and save the country. With the clues he has, Hannay heads for Scotland by rail, by car and finally on foot encountering a myriad of off-beat characters played by what the program calls Man #1 (**Jason Harris**, the man with a thousand expressions) and Man #2 (dynamic **Bruce Pember**, an actor who has no fear of going too far).

he show is a crowd pleaser that has the audience giggling and guffawing nearly non-stop for the two-hour run of the show. The only hitch in the giddy-up of this production are some scene changes that impede the flow action, which, ideally, should be nonstop. There is no fault here; the limitations of the space dictate. Limelight did everything they could to speed things up with rolling props and furniture and a disciplined

backstage crew consisting of the father/son team of **Michael** and **Brennan Perry** abetted by technical director/stage manager **Rachel Perry**. I especially appreciate the durably constructed door and window units and the choreography that went along with them.



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