

Sly Fox a Vaudeville Romp at Town Hall Theatre

By Sophie Braccini

Town Hall Theatre Company is opening its 2012/2013 season with a big laugh: *Sly Fox* – a very funny human comedy set in 19th century San Francisco and reminiscent of Comedia dell'Arte, with somewhat archetypal characters. The miser, the smart servant, the ingénue, the brave and virtuous soldier— all dance the ballet of the human comedy, with humor and lightness, yet still show how the obsessive pursuit of wealth can lead individuals to compromise their values and families.

Sly Fox is the farcical adaptation by Larry Gelbart of Ben Jonson's satiric play *Volpone* set in Renaissance Venice. The comedy is served by an appropriate cast, directed with precision by Soren Oliver.

"I wanted to find a play that would address the issue of greed, but with some humor," says THT Artistic Director Clive Worsley. "When I read the script I loved it, and decided it would be a great fit, and very timely. If nothing else, it will make people laugh; we don't want to hit our audience over the head with politics."

"This type of comedy is very

delicate to stage, more so than a drama," says director Oliver. "A change in tone, a miss-step, a drop in rhythm and the jokes fall flat." During a run-through of the play a few days ago, the cast was already up to the fast rhythm of the very physical performance. The actors have worked separate 'fight-calls' rehearsing the falls and special moves.

Oliver is known as a meticulous director who makes sure that every moment is earned. What the THT team presents is Vaudeville in the style of the Gold Rush era. The music incorporates banjo tunes and sea shanties. "We want to create a feel of old San Francisco," says Oliver.

There is not a minute of rest in the play. Five different sets designed by Mark Flynn are changed at lightning speed by the efficient crew. There are plans for a curtain to complete the stage, with short vignettes presented between the scenes by THT students, in the style of the period's performances.

Worsley plays the old miser Foxwell J. Sly, the central character of the play. Pretending to die, he leads the equally greedy characters



Clockwise from bottom left, Foxwell J. Sly (Clive Worsley), Simon Able (Dennis Markam), Lawyer Craven (Randy Anger), Jethro Crouch (Remi Barron), Abner Truckle (Justin DuPuis), and Simplicity Truckle (Molly Benson)

to believe they will be his sole heir. As he extracts what he wants from them, he exposes their lowness, but will he go one trick too far and will justice triumph?

Worsley's trademark slapstick is at its best. He seems to enjoy himself enormously, jumping from half dead to boisterous, changing roles; he is at the top of his game as Sly. Dennis Markam as his servant, Simon Able, is totally up to the part. More bon vivant and naive than his master, he will try his luck at trickery, too.

The cast incorporates three young graduates from Town Hall Theatre Company's teen program

who are very solid. A special mention goes to gifted and expressive comedian Justin DuPuis as Abner Truckle, the husband ready to sacrifice his wife to inherit riches.

Sly Fox will run from September 29 through October 20 with previews September 27 and 28, and a special Q&A with the cast and director on October 5. For more information and tickets go to www.TownHallTheatre.com.

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Lynn's Top Five

The New Health Care Act

Five positive benefits for your consideration

By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

Ask anyone how they feel about the new health care act (The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) often referred to as "Obamacare," and you are pretty much guaranteed a passionate response! Love or hate it, there are a few especially key benefits that Certified Financial Planners are very happy to see on behalf of their clients. Let's focus on these in this column, and in December, we'll discuss some of the tax changes that we'll be facing to help pay for them!

1) Better summaries of coverage: Hooray! As valued colleague Colleen Callahan, president of Callahan Insurance in Lafayette and an expert on health care insurance points out, beginning September 23, employers will be responsible for providing a very much improved "Summary of Benefits and Coverages" to all their employees. She explains, "The insurance company will provide a uniform document (no more than 4 pages, double sided, 12 point font), explaining the benefits and coverages. It is important that the employer provide this to their employees." I'm looking forward to that!

2) Plans no longer have most lifetime maximum limitations: As a financial advisor I really embrace the benefit of this for clients. No longer need we worry that an expensive course of treatment will completely exhaust a client's entire medical coverage for life.

3) Coverage to age 26 under parent's plans: Especially in this economy as our young adults launch facing a scarcity of jobs, let alone ones with benefits, this has been an important financial lifeline for many families.

4) Pre-existing conditions: This benefit doesn't come on line until 2014 but I can tell you in my practice alone how important this feature will be. Many clients or their loved ones are under-insured and/or pay egregious rates for their coverages now due to prior illnesses and medical challenges, even if these are no longer a fac-

tor in their health. **5) Preventive care without deductibles and co-pays:** We are fortunate to live in an affluent community where that cost rarely is more than an annoyance. However for the majority of Americans, this can mean the difference between seeking out care before something becomes a crisis or having to cope with more complicated medical problems later. Colleen shares with us that going forward "preventive care is covered in network before any deductible and without any co-pays." This benefit can lead to a more productive and healthy workforce which helps us all.

The new health care act is incredibly involved and there is, of course, no way in a short column to do justice to this very complex and broad reaching legislation. However, despite the frustrations and costs that we all share, there are some excellent benefits that will be of significant and positive assistance to us personally and as members of our complicated and intertwined society. With many health care plans coming up for renewal in the fall, I hope this column helps set the stage for a thoughtful review with your advisor.



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