

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at large. Dominic Conti, Michael Faulkner and Jerry Kernion are three very funny, highly talented guys. They are the reduced faculty at a high school. They review all the great books, or near great books, of western literature in a 90 minute remedial class. The audience members become the students. The pedagogy of this madcap trio utilizes very broad, obvious, predictable farce, audience participation included.

The humor comes from a number of scatological jokes. Local gags about Pungo and Tidewater Community College are also thrown in along with lots of slap stick, prat falls, guys in drag, numerous puns, suggestive uses of props, reality TV shows and similar devices. The show reminded me of the kind of productions medical students often put on at the end of their studies, or the parodies that are done in some college drama departments.

Before I say more, I should point out that these "Reduced Productions" of Shakespeare, America, and the Bible have been hugely successful all over the world. The one about the Bible ran for ten years in London.

In this production I feel the excellent cast of three deserve better material. The writing simply doesn't sustain the evening. I kept thinking of A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM or even NUNSENSE as I viewed this performance. While each of these three farces is vastly different, they all combine elements of the Roman playwright Plautus. What makes FORUM one of the greatest farcical works ever written is that there are hooks, or anchors of reality infused in the zany revels. And, there is subtlety, style and structure which ALL THE GREAT BOOKS doesn't have. In fact, it's just plain messy, by design, to its detriment much of the time. The humor comes from a series of loosely put together gags some of which are quite clever. Others one feels have been seen or heard many times before. Granted it seems to entertain on a level, but never reaches the falling-in-the-aisle hilarity of great farce..

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.