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A Midsummer Saturday Night's Fever Dream

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Photo by Chelsea Sutton

The Troupadour Theater Company - affectionately referred to by their fans as "The Troubies" - are a rascally and very talented band of performers who wreak hilarious havoc with some of the greatest masterpieces of the stage. From shows like "Fleetwood Macbeth" and "It's a Stevie Wonderful Life" to its current production of "A Midsummer Saturday Night's Fever Dream," the Troubies offer an high-energy, eclectic mix of twisted classics, pop music, commedia del'arte and Ringling Brothers.

Matt Walker, the troupe's founder, is a protégée of Bill Irwin, who freed clowning from the circus tent and brought it to the Broadway stage. Walker's impressive resume also includes the Second City Improv Company, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Ringling Brothers Clown College. But his resume only suggests his talents, which are monumental and extensive. Walker is not only a top-notch actor and improv comedian, but also a gifted writer and director.

Over the years, Walker and the Troubies have attracted top-notch talent, who have together produced a stunning array of lively, entertaining and memorable productions. The latest is a fantasy on Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, set to the music and costumes of '70's and '80's disco music. While the Bard's plot hardly matters here, the Troubies manage to capture the essence of Shakespeare's comedy amidst the whirl of physical gags, upbeat music and improvisational one-

liners.

There are outstanding performances all around, beginning with Walker's Puck, who is the ringmaster in every sense. Beth Kennedy is a fabulous Helena, combining physicality with comedic grace, and Rick Batalla as Bottom is solid and engaging with a series of show-stopping one-liners. Suzanne Jolie Narbonne is wonderful as Hippolyta - at once athletic and enticing, as is Rob Nagle in an uproarious turn as Flute. Joseph Leo Bwarie - just off a three-year tour as the lead in Jersey Boys - is dynamite as Demetrius, bringing down the house with his dazzling vocals. The rest of the ensemble is terrific and finely tuned to Walker's unique vision. Be sure to catch this show. After you've seen one Troubie show, you'll be going back for more, again and again!

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