



A + E
TCC comedy,
'The Curious
Savage,' is a
little crazy.

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TCC PRODUCTION | 'THE CURIOUS SAVAGE'

Comedy set in asylum compares to 'Cuckoo's Nest'

By Eric Feber
The Virginian-Pilot

GREAT BRIDGE

It's enough to drive anyone crazy.

TCC Theatre's spring production, John Patrick's 1950s comedy "The Curious Savage," opens Wednesday at the Cedar Road's Studio Theater for a weekend run before it moves the following weekend to the Jeanne & George Roper Performing Arts Center in Downtown Norfolk.

The work, which made its debut in New York City on Oct. 24, 1950, is considered a precursor to "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" with its examination of who's crazy: the inmates or the public?

And getting this comedy ready is driving director Jack Hollinger slightly cuckoo.

"It used to be you could rely on students to work every night on rehearsals," said Hollinger, who was asked to direct by TCC-Chesapeake's Ed Jacob. "Now, with students having to take care of studies, families and jobs, we can't assume those levels of commitment nowadays. Just getting here and rehearsing around everyone's life is a challenge. It can make you a little crazy."

Hollinger, a drama teacher at TCC-Virginia Beach, is making a return to directing after the death of his wife last year. He said immersing himself in this project is helping sooth his personal loss.

"This is a way of getting back into things," he said. "Getting back to something I love. I am enjoying it, everyday there is a challenge. And having Ed as producer is great. I'm glad Ed is here, he's helped connect me to the now."

That "now" is molding his 11-student cast into a deft comedic ensemble to bring off Patrick's play.

"The energy it takes to



COURTESY OF TCC-CHESAPEAKE DRAMA DEPARTMENT

Tagan Hutchenson, left, as Florence, Antoine Mansen as Jeff and Wesley Miller as Hannibal rehearse this scene from TCC-Chesapeake's production of "The Curious Savage."

do comedy is amazing," he said. "Part of this adventure is to sustain the play's energy. The fun is in the discipline, in the rhythms of comedy. I'm really enjoying the coaching aspect."

Hollinger said he chose this particular comedy because of its timeliness, its rich roster of characters, and it was the play that got him on the stage when he was a ninth-grader in New Holland, Pa.

"It was the first play I did where I knew I wanted to be in theater," he recalled. "It's still very relevant and topical in dealing with greed, politics, financial problems, and the notion of who's crazy, who's normal."

The story is about upper-crust family matriarch Ethel P. Savage, who inherits \$10 million when her husband suddenly dies. She wants to give it all to charity, but her three stepchildren – a U.S. senator, a judge and a socialite – are circling that money like buzzards around carrion.

They attempt to have her committed to an asylum.

Inside the Cloisters, the eccentric Mrs. Savage ingratiates herself with a group of "guests" who all bear emotional scars. The comedy is

going?

What/who TCC Theatre presents John Patrick's comedy "The Curious Savage," directed by Jack Hollinger.

Where/when TCC Chesapeake campus' Studio Theater, 1428 Cedar Road, at 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday; and 8 p.m. April 1-3 at the Jeanne & George Roper Performing Arts Center, 340 Granby St., Norfolk.

Tickets \$8 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors.

Call 822-5219 to make ticket reservations.

in the interaction of the patients and Mrs. Savage's stepchildren, who only want that money.

"These two groups clash in unique and funny ways," Hollinger said. "Throughout, the three children feverishly search for the wealth while their stepmother begins to see the goodness of these inmates."

Hollinger is confident it will all come together to entertain an audience with an asylum full of laughs.

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