

Questions/Answers

Questions and answers on Daily Breeze stories from readers like you. Submit your own question. inserted iconic scenes and lines from other Brooks works.

"(Norris) intensified it with additional Mel Brooks-like innovations to make it even more over-the-top," said Minnichelli.

It all adds up to a lot of work for the cast and crew.

The players typically rehearse three to four evenings a week for three months prior to opening night. Every

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Saturday for those 12 weeks, the group builds and paints sets, sews costumes and does other materials-based work for the production.

This is all on top of their 9-to-5 jobs as employees for some of the largest aerospace companies in the world.

"Everything has to come together in a highly coordinated fashion, and practicing together and getting the most out of those rehearsals is key to making it effective," said Minnichelli.

Though Minnichelli said that a successful performance and a live, laughing audience is well worth the lack of free time, he emphasized social aspects that make the process leading up to opening night valuable.

"I think what most of us get out of producing these shows is wrapped up less in the final product and more in the mutually supportive, always collaborative ... experiences along the way," he said.

And what does this bunch do when they're not working at the office or rehearsing?

They party. A lot

"We used to have a rule that we had to have a two-to-one ratio of parties to performances," said Minnichelli, who said cast parties are as elemental as performances for bringing in new talent and keeping people involved for years.

The Aerospace Players also has provided an environment for romance. Minnichelli met his future wife through The Aerospace Players and said there have been at least seven marriages that were byproducts of these shows.

Minnichelli began in the group's first year as a sound board operator and has since directed, operated spotlights and designed sets, in addition to acting. Likewise, the orchestra conductor and the prop mistress dabbled in onstage roles in previous years, said Minnichelli.

"The group seems to place a high priority on encouraging people to get involved in new aspects of (the productions) and try elements that they wouldn't normally try," he said. "It was a lot of fun for me. I had never gotten involved in theater at all before then."

The organization began in 1988 and produced its first show, "Grease," in the TRW cafeteria. Since then, the group has upgraded to the Armstrong Theatre at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center. The Players now have an 18-person orchestra and produce two plays a year.

"We feel like the audience expects a certain level, so there's no going back," Borich said. "We have to get better and better for our audience's sake."

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The Producers

your post)

When: Opens July 23 and plays at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday through July 31, with additional shows at 2 p.m. July 25 and 8 p.m. July 29.

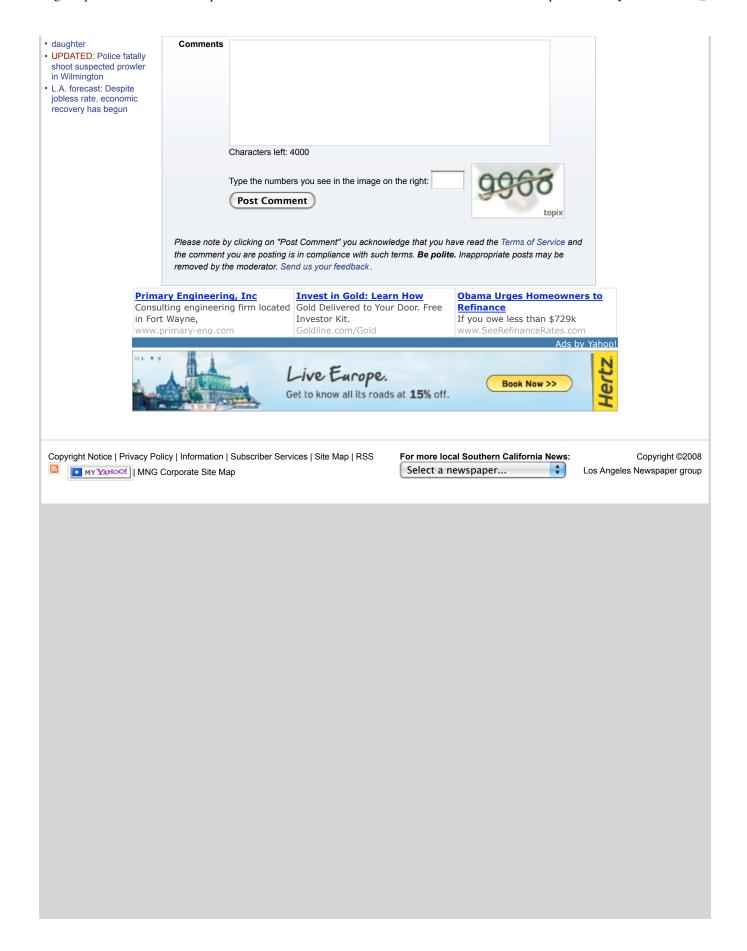
Where: James Armstrong Theatre, Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Drive

Tickets: \$22, \$18 for seniors, students and children through the Armstrong box office, 310-781-7171.

Information: www.aeaclubs.org/theater.

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