

Hip-hop Shakespeare: It's da bomb

By **BOB ROSE**
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GLENS FALLS ♦ When I first put Adirondack Theatre Festival's "Bomb-itty of Errors" on my schedule, I sighed, not really wanting to go. Shakespeare rap style? Kind of like approaching an appointment for a root canal. You know you have to do it but you really don't want to.

REVIEW

In short, I thought that ATF had finally lost it.

Well, even as soon as artistic director Martha Banta began her usual welcoming speech, rap style, I began to lighten up. Then the show started. Wow! In less than five minutes, I felt hooked, not rooked.

The colorful set featuring city buildings bedecked with graffiti soon was ablaze with four amazingly talented fellows in constantly changing roles and always amusing costumes, masterfully portraying two sets of lost identical twins in a plot based on mistaken identities.

In addition to Jake Mosser, Benton Greene, Omar Evans and Jason Babinsky appearing as Antipholus of Syracuse, Antipholus of Ephesus, Dromio of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus, the



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Benton Greene, left, and Jason Babinsky star in 'Bomb-itty of Errors.'

four fellows also come on as a wife, her sister, a nun, a prostitute, a Whoopi Goldberg look-alike herbal doctor, a jeweler and a gay cop.

No matter the role, they are absolutely great entertainers, amusing rappers and expert physical comedians. Their effect on the audience, representing more than one generation, is amazing. When asked to clap in rhythm, raise and wave their hands and scream, the audience was quick to respond with increasing enthusiasm.

There is an easy flow throughout the show, perfectly timed, with offstage costume changes so rapid you wonder how the actors can do it. Brief set changes occur as part of the overall action. Everything works for 90 minutes of

riotous laughter, ending, on opening night, with a well-earned standing ovation.

If you're not into hip-hop, this will convert you. If you're not into Shakespeare, you will sit in awe at how his work can so easily succeed in modern style. Could Shakespeare have been a rapper ahead of his time?

Jordan Connors, as the DJ, is perched high above the main action but his talent is apparent throughout this wild and zany production so cleverly directed by Nick Corley.

"Bomb-itty of Errors" has to be the most surprising production of the year. Forget the root-canal phobia and reserve early. Once word spreads, seats are going to be scarce, and justifiably so.



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Jason Babinsky, left, and Omar Evans perform a scene from 'Bomb-itty of Errors' at the Charles R. Wood Theater in Glens Falls recently.