

'Dames at Sea' at Sonoma Arts Live

By Beulah F. Vega

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In a run-down Broadway theater, 12-times unlucky theater producer Harriet Hennessy (a cartoonish Lauren DePass) and a group of actors helmed by diva Mona Kent (Serena Elize Flores) are trying to open their new musical, *Dames at Sea*. Fresh off the bus, starlet Ruby (Melissa Momboisse) wanders in and immediately gets cast in the chorus, thanks to the good-hearted Joan (Brandy Noveh).

Meanwhile, valiant seaman Dick (Joey Favalora) has brought Ruby's missing suitcase to the theater, where they immediately fall in love. But Dick has a secret; he's a songwriter! Mona recognizes his talent and sets her mind on seduction. Then Dick's best friend, Lucky (Jonathen Blue), arrives looking for Dick, only to discover his long-time sweetheart, Joan!

Shenanigans ensue aboard the U.S.S. Michael Ross (a sweet call out to a recently-passed member of our local theater community), where Captain Kewpie (an even more cartoonish DePass again) is revealed to be an old lover of Mona back when Mona was Consuela in

Williams did a good job of casting and managed to direct the flat script into a cohesive production. The show is fine, but two hours is a long time to sit through a parody that never quite hits the mark. The audience at the performance I attended seemed receptive (if not ecstatic), so there is something to be said about SAL having a grasp on what their subscribers want and delivering it.

Fans of splashy tap dancing musicals won't regret attending. But there are so many better, funnier parodies about the world of musical theater that one has to wonder what prompted SAL to pick one that is just fine.

Sonoma Arts Live presents 'Dames at Sea' through Sept. 24 on the Rotary Stage at Andrews Hall in the Sonoma Community Center, 276 E. Napa St., Sonoma. Thurs-Sat, 7:30pm; Sun, 2pm. \$25 - \$42. 707-484-4874. sonomaartslive.org.