

# The spirit of man

## The lunatic, the fat guy and the hooker arrive at the Capital Playhouse.

Steve Dunkelberger for The Weekly Volcano  
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The last time Man of La Mancha was playing in the South Sound, Michael O'Hara was rocking out the title role at Lakewood Playhouse. It was the show of the season.

Such is apparently the case when Capital Playhouse stages its version of the musical about the windmill battling knight.

This time, the show is starring Capital Playhouse's Artistic Director Jeff Kingsbury as the 16th-century Don Miguel de Cervantes.



Photo: Glenn Raiha

Not only were shows selling out before the production took to the stage for the first time last weekend, but audiences were on their feet wanting more once the show did open. Rare is the case that expectations meet reality in the theater. This show had a lot of hype behind it, but it has proven to deliver as promised. Kingsbury is that good, dispatches from the front report.

Now I could draw some real-life parallels between Kingsbury playing the role of a knight who is fighting

against an imaginary foe and his debates on the Olympia City Council, but that comparison would be cheap and hackish.

For anyone not in the know, the show follows the tale of Cervantes, who finds himself in prison during a time when folks didn't want to find themselves behind bars — the Spanish Inquisition. Facing less-than-kind treatment at the hands of the court's prosecutors, Cervantes presents his defense against the nebulous charges of presenting entertainment offensive to the Spanish Inquisition by taking on the role of Don Quixote. While in prison awaiting his trial, he portrays the legendary tale of valiant fights and battles for idealistic justice against all odds or hope of success.

Along with the tale of high adventure and damsels in distress is one of the best scores available in the canon of American musical theater. The original 1965 Broadway production ran for 2,329 performances and won five Tony Awards, and the musical has

been revived four times since it first hit Broadway in 1964, becoming one of the most enduring works of musical theater. The “Impossible Dream” song in this show is enough to make audiences cheer for the underdog and take up a lance against injustice that is embodied by the wind-powered monsters.

Rounding out the cast is a deep well of talent the likes of which few South Sound theaters could boast. There is the übertalented Jerod Nace as Cervantes’ sidekick Sancho Panza and the well-piped Deanna Barrett as Aldonza. Erica Penn, Matthew Posner, Bruce Haasl, and Adam Randolph round out the supporting roles. The little nudge that puts this show over the top is the orchestra, which is not only top-shelf all of the time, but it built an upper shelf for this show just to reach higher.

While the limited space of the theater’s stage might seem like an obstacle, a few friends of mine agreed that the intimate nature of the theater added to the sense that the prisoners were in the dungeon as they acted out this grand adventure. Capital Playhouse has generally excelled at making every detail count when it comes to props and scenes. So this show follows a tradition of that school of theater or, dare I say, master class.