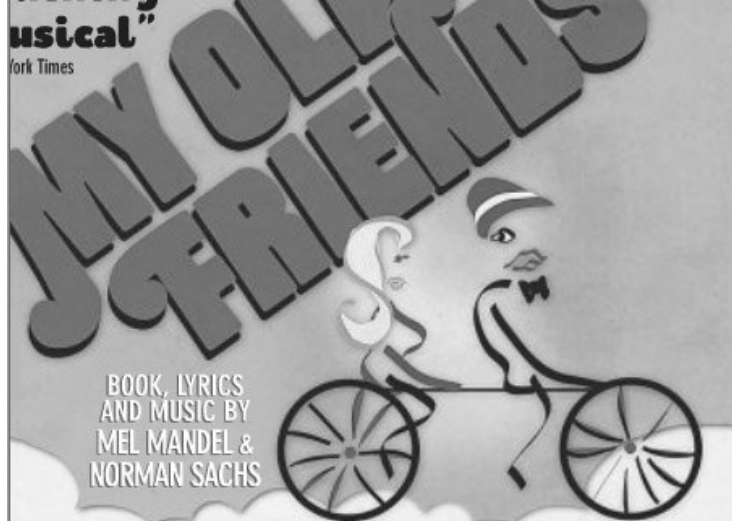


musical"  
York Times



BOOK, LYRICS  
AND MUSIC BY  
MEL MANDEL &  
NORMAN SACHS

BOOK BY MARIA GOBETTI MUSICAL DIRECTION SCOTT HARLAN CHOREOGRAPHY BY CATE CAPLIN  
PRODUCED BY SUSAN ALSCHULER, GEORGANNE HELLER, DEMOS BIZAR ENTERTAINMENT, MARIA GOBETTI  
CASTING BY MARC ELLIOT, DOMINICK MORRA, MALACHI THRONE, RUBEN RABASA, ANNIE ABBOTT,  
DEBORAH SHARPE-TAYLOR, BETSY RANDLE, TOM ORMENY, HERB HALL, BOBBI STAMM

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## THEATER

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A jazzy jolt of adrenaline surges through this extraordinary bio-musical about the postwar lounge duo that consisted of the jittery dervish Louis Prima (Jake Broder) and his deadpan-wielding wife Keely Smith (Vanessa Claire Smith). The two primary actors wrote the show for themselves, but it gallops past the limitations of most showcases and star bios to become an exquisite evocation of the joys and the sorrows of a performance-obsessed life, staged by Jeremy Aldridge. The stars and Dennis Kaye's onstage, seven-man band bring breathless revelations to 16 oft-heard standards.

—Don Shirley

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### MACBETH

Theatricum Botanicum offers a vigorous, sprawling Shakespearean spectacle at its rustic outdoor venue, co-directed by Ellen Geer and Chad Jason Scheppner. I counted ten witches, stirring up bubbles and troubles as night descends on Topanga. The Birnam Woods look right at home on the hillside, and the trees approach Dunsinane from all directions, including the rear of the house. Jim LeFave's Macbeth is a blustery bantam cock, and his wife (Susan Angelo, alternating with Melora Marshall) a convincing shrew. Theatricum Botanicum, Topanga. (310) 455-3723. theatricum.com.

### MACBETH<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, adapter/director Lisa Wolpe goes in the opposite direction: a one-hour, three-actor meditation on *Macbeth*, in a tiny indoor space. Yet she's no minimalist in the gimmick department. Besides cross-gender casting, it's supposedly set in the future, in Iraq, and a new character has been added – could it be ... SATAN? Although the performances are well-toned, this grab-bag's concepts fall all over themselves. Ruby Theater @ the Complex, Hollywood. (310) 943-9221. lawsc.net.

### SHAME

Once it moves beyond the first ten awkward minutes, Mark Governor's rock opera adaptation of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* achieves unexpected power. Katrina Lenk's Hester Prynne and her lover, Mark Luna's Dimmesdale, remain close in spirit to the originals, although a sea change has overcome Danny Shorago's young-tough take on the cuckolded Chillingworth. Janet Roston's Wednesdays-only staging could use a real theater and a live band. King King, Hollywood. (323) 960-5775. plays411.com/shame.

### THE HIDING PLACE

Jeff Whitty (*Avenue Q*, *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler*) was in a more realistic frame of mind when he wrote this look at how life and art overlap, set among New York's mid-'90s literati. Directed by Kevin Fabian, and featuring veteran monologist Jan Munroe as a monologist, it's moderately intriguing but remains too much in hiding. Attic Theatre, mid-city L.A. (323) 525-0600. attictheatre.org.

—Don Shirley

FOR MORE OF DON SHIRLEY'S REVIEWS,  
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