



TEEN TOUR THEATRE

The talented and committed Teen Tour Theatre cast rises to the challenge of performing for preschoolers.

Take a trip to Storyville

Young actors,
younger audiences

KATHRYN GREENAWAY
THE GAZETTE

Young actors keen on getting as much stage experience as possible during their fledgling years often end up playing drafty gymnasturns and cramped classrooms.

Not glamorous by a long shot, these school shows are valuable experience, nonetheless, because the actors must learn how to think on their feet and go with the flow: Glaring fluorescent lights, no back-stage, muffled acoustics, unprompted comments from enthusiastic children — the challenges are many and must be met.

The Teen Tour Theatre has been honing skills on school audiences for eight years. Under the direction of Ariva Wolman, the company is coming to Centaur Theatre tomorrow with a compilation of fables — Lorraine Thompson's *Storyville* — as part of Centaur's Children's Series.

The company recently performed *Storyville* for the toughest audience of all — 3- and 4-year-olds — at Hebrew Foundation Preschool in Dol-

ard des Ormeaux. And what a talented and committed group of youngactors they are.

Vishesh Abeyrajini, Jonathan Bosco, Emma Sawyer, Ellen Shaw, Amanda Shile and Ariessa Stambouli flowed from one story to the next, changing character in the blink of an eye by grabbing onto another delightful stick puppet designed by Melanie Michaud, adjusting body language and appropriating yet another accent.

They told a story about a lion king with bad breath, another about a farmer who thought his house was too small, and the story of Chicken Licken, who was convinced the sky was falling. Each tale ended with a moral, although members of the tiny audience most often ignored the intended moral and made up one of their own when questioned — from the mouths of babes.

It's rare a play comes along that is truly suitable for the 3-year-old attention span. *Storyville*, in the competent hands of the Teen Tour Theatre cast, is one such play.

Because the actors are students, the company does not charge admission for its school shows. The Centaur show is ticketed, but the company returns its proceeds from ticket sales to Centaur to reinvest in its Children's Series.

Storyville is at Centaur Theatre, 453 St. Francois Xavier St., as part of Centaur's Children's Series, tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. Tickets cost \$8 for adults and \$6 for children. For reservations: 514-288-3161. For more information about Teen Tour Theatre: www.teentourtheatre.com.

kgreenaway@
thegazette.canwest.com