Dan's Papers
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A Rollicking *Young Frankenstein* Ignites at Theatre Three

by Barbara Anne Kirshner 5/19/2026

Theatre Three caps their 55th season of bringing top-notch entertainment to Long Island audiences with the madcap ***Young Frankenstein***.

This musical with book by brilliant filmmaker, comedian and playwright Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan, and music and lyrics by Brooks, is based on his wildly funny 1974 classic comedy of the same name starring Gene Wilder, Peter Boyle, Cloris Leachman, Marty Feldman and Madeline Kahn. What's hysterical about this musical adaptation is that it revisits many of the funniest jokes from the original film. Who can ever forget the recurring horse baying every time the housekeeper Frau Blucher's name is mentioned, or Dr. Frankenstein telling Igor he can help him with his hump, to which Igor innocently says, "What hump?" Or when the monster stumbles into the cabin of a lonely, blind hermit who offers a cigar that accidentally lights the monster's thumb on fire?

The musical opened at the Hilton Theatre on Broadway on November 8, 2007, winning the Outer Critics Circle Award and receiving multiple Tony Award nominations.

Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein* is a hysterical take on Mary Shelley's classic monster tale *Frankenstein* (*The Modern Prometheus*). Victor Frankenstein, the mad scientist of legend, has died and left everything to his grandson, Frederick, a brilliant American brain surgeon who wants nothing to do with the family's notorious legacy. He travels to his grandfather's castle in Transylvania to settle his inheritance. There he meets the grandson of Victor's loyal henchman, the bug-eyed hunchbacked assistant named Igor; the beautiful yodeling lab assistant, Inga, and the mysterious housekeeper, Frau Blücher. Frederick soon continues his grandfather's experiments and creates human life, but when Igor mistakenly gives Frederick an abnormal criminal brain for the monster, chaos ensues.

The creative vision of director Jeffrey Sanzel delivers on this gem of a comedic musical. The actors are perfectly cast for their roles. Bobby Peterson as Frederick captures us from the start with his feverish patter on the lively and humorous song "The Brain" that he sings with his medical students. Peterson emits high energy dancing, singing and acting making for a two-hour, quick-paced delight. Julianne Greaves dazzles as Elizabeth the high-maintenance fiancée to Frederick. The duet of Greaves and Peterson on "Please Don't Touch Me" is a hoot and so is her seduction scene with the monster.

Keith Jones would make Marty Feldman smile with his portrayal of the hunchback, bug-eyed Igor. He has so many funny bits with Peterson's Frederick, but a standout is when Frankenstein sends him to retrieve a brilliant brain and he returns with one labeled "Abby Normal." As Igor, Jones has numerous sight gags that are hysterical. Veronica Fox's Inga is a feast of sight and sound with her stunning soprano that often turns into a yodel. When she teams up with Frederick on "Roll in the Hay," we are left hoping that she becomes more than his lab assistant. Bryan Bowie as the monster is a giant presence with sky-high platform shoes leaving us to marvel at how lithe he is in dance routines. Bowie's monster sends chills and intimidates at first, but becomes warm and endearing, even classy. When he teams up with Frederick for a tour de force "Puttin' on the Ritz," we want to tap along.

Linda May's first entrance as Frau Blucher is met with applause. Regular audiences at Theatre Three are familiar with Linda May's stellar performances, so by now they are conditioned to applaud in anticipation of yet another priceless performance which is exactly what she serves up here. Swathed in Gothic black gown with black hair streaked with gray lightning bolts piled high on her head, her every movement, take and her exaggerated German/Transylvanian accent are a riot.

Bob Kaplan as the blind hermit is laugh out loud funny in his scene with the monster who happens upon his cabin. His efforts to host the monster and make friends with him is classic slapstick. Steven Uihlein with his over-the-top accent and movements as the hobbling head of the Transylvania police, Inspector Kemp, adds dark comedy. In "Hang Him 'Til He's Dead," we get a maniacal and animated Kemp. The ensemble which goes from lab students to Transylvanian villagers adds spirited dancing and full, rich vocals throughout this show.

The band under the direction of Jeffrey Hoffman enhances the comedic timing with a lush, lively tempos. Josie McSwane's choreography is vibrant, sometimes vaudevillian and with impressive athleticism which adds to the campiness of the show. Costumes and wig design by Ronald Greene III adds comedic and gothic touches. The monster's high platform shoes are a marvel as are the piled-high wigs for Frau Blucher and Elizabeth's finale headdress. Elizabeth's red, clingy gown is a knockout as is her sparking finale gown. Gothic blacks mixed in with Bavarian fluffy garb add to the overall German/Transylvanian flavor.

The projection design by Jack Eisenman injects spoof-like aesthetics, as does the electrifying and sparking lighting design by Steve Barile, Jr. Scenic design by Randall Parsons adds to the quick pace of the show with pieces that easily roll into place and out again. The high castle walls and muted tones give that Gothic feel and the revolving bookcase makes for some funny sight gags.

Theatre Three has hit the jackpot with a rollicking *Young Frankenstein* so head over for a laugh fest playing now through June 21.

Theatre Three is located at 412 Main Street, Port Jefferson. Call 631-928-9100 or visit ***theatrethree.com***

Barbara Anne Kirshner is a freelance journalist and photographer whose celebrity interviews, theatre reviews, features and human interest stories appear in major publications. She is author of the children's chapter book, Madison Weatherbee The Different Dachshund, Madison Weatherbee The Musical and a host of one-act plays that have been produced across Long Island.