



Everything New Orleans

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Satirical 'Shuffle' amuses in the park

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By David Cuthbert
Theater writer

"The Green, Gold and Purple Shuffle" is the Cripple Creek Theatre Company's revival of good old-fashioned, rabble-rousing, satirical street theater. The premise is that the Parkways and Parks Commission has been divided into two separate entities and a couple of familiar politicians are debating for the job of park commissioner, facing off in Washington Square Park in the Faubourg Marigny.

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They are former Gov. "Edwin Edwards," released from federal prison on a "probationary basis" and wearing a dark coat over an orange jumpsuit, and nattily-attired white supremacist "David Duke," Edwards' opponent in the 1992 gubernatorial election. This "lesser of two evils" race produced an only-in-Louisiana bumper sticker: "Vote for the crook; it's important."

Edwards sports a prison pallor and looks much younger than his 80 years. Duke looks older; Edwards says that's because the collagen is leaking from his face. A handicap last Sunday was that their mikes worked erratically, finally conking out altogether. Duke said, "The generator we're using is from FEMA."

Why run for such a minor office?

"There is no office that would be beneath me!" Duke crows. He wants to use the city's parks for "Duke Youth" programs, bringing back "separate but equal" drinking fountains and "light industry" -- the making of armaments.

Edwards says he has come out of "forced retirement" and is promoting "prison reform from within" and the creation of "The Louisiana Corps of Engineers," because "some guy in Wisconsin, he don't care if the levees break."

Meanwhile, Duke and Edwards supporters circulate noisily among the crowd, trying to sway votes, arguing with each other and sometimes making it difficult to hear the mike-less candidates.

The end comes when two sodden "homeless" guys -- who think they are Huey and Earl Long -- storm the platform, telling us in essence that we have only ourselves to blame for electing thieves and mountebanks to office for far too long and the only thing to do is dismantle the system and start anew, as they symbolically run off Duke and Edwards and tear down their podiums and platform.

It's funny, agit-prop theater that attracted an intrigued crowd.

Geoff Munsterman plays the boyish Edwards to Charles Vaught's aging Duke (why not switch roles?) with Andrew Vaught and Andrew Kingsley improvising Earl and Huey, and so believable as street people that when they started drunkenly interacting in a corner of the park, they appeared to be the real deal.

The adventurous Cripple Creek Theatre Company scores again!

THE GREEN, GOLD

AND PURPLE SHUFFLE

What: Cripple Creek Theatre presents a mock outdoor debate between 'Edwin Edwards' and 'David Duke.'

Where: Washington Square, 2100 Royal St. (Dauphine St. side.)

When: Sundays at 1:30 p.m. through March 25.

Tickets: Pay-what-you-will.

Call: (504) 891-6815.

Debating for the post of parks commissioner are Geoff Munsterman, left, as 'Edwin Edwards' and Charles Vaught as 'David Duke' in the Cripple Creek Theatre Company's production, playing Sundays in Washington Square.