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## Calendar

## Registered Companies

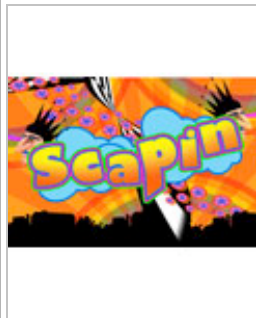
## Now Playing

- The Big Bang/Manhattan Comedy Collective
- Character Dogville
- Gauguin/Savage Light
- Growing Up 70s
- Harvest
- Littlest Light on the Christmas Tree
- The Past Is Still Ahead
- Santaland Diaries
- Scapin

## Coming Soon

- All Aboard the Marriage Course
- The Boys from Syracuse
- Brains & Puppets
- C.E.O. and Cinderella
- Cat's Cradle
- Claymont
- Hiroshima, crucible of light
- Into the Woods
- La Bohème
- The Lifeblood by Glyn Maxwell
- Mill Fire
- The Play About the Naked Guy
- Sherlock Solo
- Sisters Dance
- A (Tooth) Fairy Tale

## 2007 Archive



## New translation of Moliere's Scapin

December 5th, 2007 - December 22nd, 2007  
The Turtle Shell Theater  
300 West 43rd Street (btw 8th & 9th Aves,)

**TURTLE SHELL PRODUCTIONS**

**World Premiere!**

[SYNOPSIS](#) [TIX INFO](#) [UP TO THE MINUTE](#)

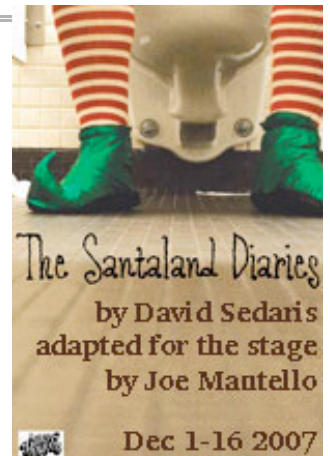


If Turtle Shell Production's 70s-inspired, hour-and-forty-minute riff on Molière's *Scapin* could somehow this season be bottled as a perfume and atomized across the wiped-out legions of exhausted department store shoppers, I'd wager there'd be a lot more jingle bells jingling, as well as groove thangs shaking. The scent would be called "Have you heard the one about...?" and it would touch even the hardest-core holiday Grinches through the magic of laughter and story telling. The Italians invented this perfume already and called it Commedia dell'Arte; Molière added brilliant top notes to the mix; and Turtle Shell re-formulated it with the help of a sharp and witty new *Scapin* translation by Scott McCrea. So...?



*A piazza porter (Jay Painter) plays the soundtrack to Leander's (Nico Evers-Swindell) life*

Have you heard the one about that tiny town square in "Itty Bitty Italy" that is watched over by San Piccolo, the patron saint of itty bitty town squares? The one where two handsome and impulsive young men, while their dads are out of town, go crazy and marry the first beautiful young women that they



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"Thrilling!...Gripping!...  
Dazzling!...  
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- NEW YORK TIMES

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2007 Archive

2006 Archive

2005 Archive

2004 Archive

each fall in love with, and only then realize that their vengeful fathers will disinherit them for ignoring the arranged marriages they'd already lined up? Panicking, the boys entreat the cleverest liar they know, the social-climbing servant Scapin, to insure their marital futures by tricking their papas out of small fortunes. The fathers arrive back in town, rascally Scapin sets upon them and by story's end, all's well that ends with mysterious identities revealed and phony head wounds recovered from. Okay, maybe it's more in the telling...

As one enters the Turtle Shell Theater seating areas, a happy-go-lucky actor, musician and tour guide, Jay Painter, engages in a bit of crowd warm up, chatting with the audience, improvising songs on his guitar and taking requests for balloon animals that all somehow end up as French poodles. (Generally speaking you'll find a hip, friendly crowd at smaller-venue shows. People are there to have fun. Such a jovial, animal-balloon loving crowd was in attendance at last Friday evening's show—as well as a brave modern dancer with Celtic calligraphy adorning her cheekbones who, through the encouragement of Mr. Painter and crowd, shared a brief interpretive dance before, alas, re-injuring a wound she'd received in dance class, as she reported it, only weeks before.) Commedia dell'Arte, done right, has the improvisational feeling of child's play. So often for modern audiences, translations of Commedia classics feel heavy going, as if every stage direction included the command, "More slapstick!" Here, as smartly directed by Shawn Rozsa and executed by the right rum ensemble, Molière's comedy brims over with comic invention, joy, wit and lightness.



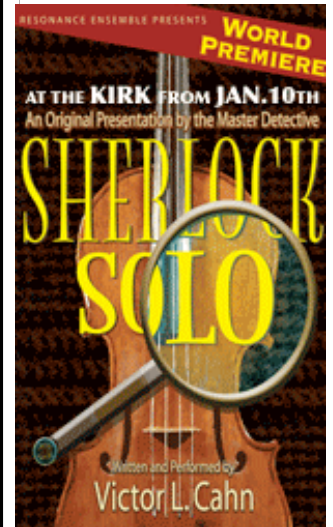
*Scapin (Spencer Aste) pulls a fast one on miserly Geronte (John Freimann) with the help of a porter (Emile Nebbia)*

And the design work for this production makes you giggle and gawk. Turtle Shell's creative team, and set designer Keven Lock, have built within their forty-seat black box what looks for all the world like a Quizno's sandwich shop inside a Faberge egg as imaged by Peter Max. And I mean that in a good way. Beautifully detailed 70s-inspired costumes by A. Christina Giannini are also eye popping.

Actors Matt Luceno and Nico Evers-Swindell as Octave and Leandre make a swell team of vain and neurotic fops (Leandre takes out knitting when anxious). Radiantly beautiful Maya Rosewood as Hyacinte lights up an already bright stage. Disarmingly wry Catherine Wronowski, as Zerbinette, finds comic gold by measuring out every word as if leading a sensitivity training course. The short and sweet John Freimann, as the miserly Geronte, with vocal cords seemingly fueled by helium, kills with every line. Roger Grunwald, carrying his bum leg with a very odd walking strap, is a



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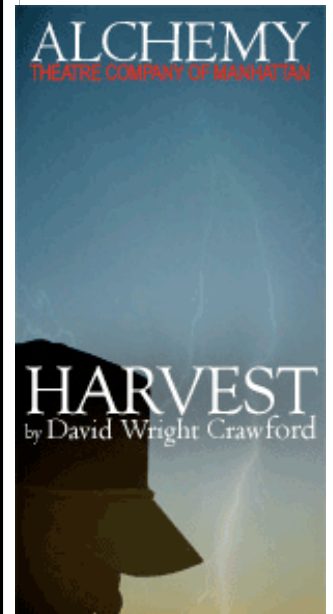
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perfect keystone cop villain as Argante and Spencer Aster's Scapin is part Woody Allen, part Lucky Charms' leprechaun and part Keith Richards, giving us plenty of sympathy for his devil.

If you've never seen a Turtle Shell show this is the one to induct yourself with. Warning though: At least one audience member has shaken old wounds loose with laughter.

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*Written by Jonathan Reuning, United Stages' editor-in-chief.*



