

Deseret Morning News, Monday, February 16, 2004

## This is one wedding you'll have a good time attending

**By Genelle Pugmire**

Deseret Morning News

*Tony 'N' Tina's Wedding, Grove Theatre, through Feb. 28 (796-8499). Running Time: Approximately 3 hours (no intermission).*

Call it organized chaos, tacky and wacky, or marriage meets mayhem. Whatever you choose, this is "Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding," the current production at the Grove Theatre.

For the sake of definition, "Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding" is an evening of interactive theater or long-form improv. The audience and cast become as one, kind of like "How to Host a Murder" meets "My Big Fat Greek (Italian) Wedding." If you don't get it yet, just go and experience it. While this is a first for Utah County, it is a mainstay production for many larger cities throughout the country.

The play begins days before when the reservations committee sends out "wedding invitations" as your seating confirmation. When the audience arrives, they are greeted by various members of the wedding party. Immediately you become part of that party. As the evening progresses you meet members of the Nunzia and Vitale families. Throughout the play the audience becomes involved in conversations that include dropped hints of improprieties and gossip that are supposed to be spread (it makes a better play). You experience sideline arguments, a bridesmaid in false labor, a soused priest who firmly believes we are all "the church," a slinky pole dancer and a bride and groom who have other things on their minds besides their vows. You don't have to leave your seat to meet these characters.

Because this play is so dependent on its audience for interaction, the show is different every night. While each cast member has certain requirements to fulfill, they have been given carte blanche in how they develop along the way. Many audience members tried to get these folks out of character. It didn't work. Indeed the opposite may be true. Many audience members left the show with a slight Italian accent.

The Grove Theatre is perfect for this type of program, with dinner and dancing included. Some highlights of the evening included *all* the men on stage for the "Tequila" dance, the Conga line around the dining hall and the not-to-be-forgotten bridesmaids' dresses.

Members of this talented improv cast include: Linda Peterson as Tina Vitale (bride); Josh Curtis as Tony Nunzia Jr. (groom); Joyce Gunter as Josephine (bride's mother); Stephen Briggs as Tony Nunzia Sr. (groom's father); Miriam Latour as Madeline (Tony Sr.'s escort); Jane Williams as Grandma Nunzia; Dan Smith as Luigi (Tina's cousin from Italy); Melinda Indo as Connie (maid of honor); and DeShawn Smith as Harry (best man).



Linda Peterson and Josh Curtis

*E-mail: [pugmire@desnews.com](mailto:pugmire@desnews.com)*

---

© 2004 Deseret News Publishing Company