

## St. Mike's opens with a rollicking good time

by Jim Lowe - Staff Writer

COLCHESTER — Saint Michael's Playhouse opened its summer season Wednesday with what it is most famous for: a delightful production of a silly, frothy musical comedy that kept its audience in stitches.

"The Drowsy Chaperone," which hit Broadway in 2006, is a fun-loving spoof of the jazz era musicals of the 1920s. While the music and lyrics, by Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison, and book, by Bob Martin and Don McKellar, are hardly memorable, in St. Mike's effervescent opening performance at Saint Michael's College, hardly a moment went by that wasn't thoroughly entertaining.

The "Man in Chair," as he is called in the program, is a Broadway musical queen who longs for the days of the great romantic and splashy productions. In his drab apartment, he manages to conjure up a humdinger. Explaining the plot would be difficult and pointless, but it overdoes virtually every Broadway cliché in the history of the form. This confection is served up with sly contemporary double entendres and innuendo of a sexual nature. It's certainly fun.

The St. Mike's production, directed and choreographed by Keith Andrews, was fast-paced, beautifully overacted and lavishly produced. Craig Wells certainly milked the "Man's" innuendo for all it was worth.

Kathryn Markey, a St. Mike's veteran, hilariously vamped her way through the title role. David Rossetti and Elizabeth Pawlowski as the love interests, Robert and Janet, sang beautifully and were oh so earnest.

Perhaps the most charming couple was the sleazy producer Feldzieg and his ding-a-ling girlfriend, Kitty, played deliciously by John D. Alexander and Lilly Tobin. Reminiscent of George Burns and Gracie Allen were Bill Carmichael as the servant Underling and Agnes Cummings as the demented Mrs. Tottendale.

The singing and dancing were particularly good, with excellent musical direction by Tom Cleary. The imaginative and lavish setting was by Anne Mundell and the beautiful costumes by Anna Lacivita, all with imaginative and dramatic lighting by Jeffrey Salzberg.

St. Mike's "The Drowsy Chaperone" was a rollicking good time.



From left, Brance Cornelius, Craig Wells, David Rossetti and Elizabeth Pawlowski star in "The Drowsy Chaperone." Photo by Buff Lindau