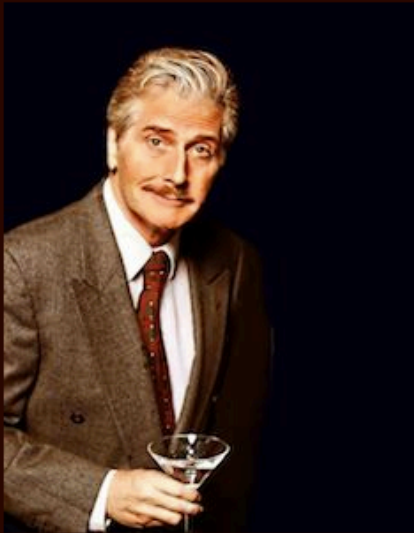


Back to Robert Machray's Reviews

Barrymore



Gordon Goodman proved once and for all what a great actor/singer he was when he performed the lead in *Shenandoah* with Musical Theatre Guild. But that was only for one night. Now he has embarked on a journey that exposes his talent and understanding of human nature through his interpretation of the famous/infamous John Barrymore in William Luce's play *Barrymore*. On Broadway the role was played by Christopher Plummer. With Plummer you expected a star turn, complete with some hammy acting and resonant recitations from Shakespeare. Goodman is known as a musical star and also, to some, a psychologist who specializes in things like stage fright. Well his gorgeous pipes (and also looks I might add) serve him well in this piece. He handles the Shakespeare beautifully and has a wonderful understanding of this larger than life actor who is full of self doubts, is a major boozier, and, though part of a great theatrical family, wasn't even sure that he had wanted to be an actor.

The play deals with Barrymore trying to recapture some of his past with the help of an off-stage prompter (an excellent Matt Franta) so that he can one last time repeat his famous role as Richard III. Barrymore can't remember lines except fleetingly and would rather pass the time telling stories and ribald jokes. But when he does choose to remember, his performance, and Goodman's is riveting. Hopefully this show will bring a spotlight to this marvelous performer. The play itself can be a bit wearing (and was even with Plummer) but Goodman's performance is worth a visit. Only two more weekends with a special Saturday matinee performance to benefit the LA Drama Club, the country's youngest Shakespeare troupe.