

SCKBSTD

Music and Lyrics by Bruce Hornsby

Book by Clay McCleod Chapman

Presented by Virginia Stage Company

Jan.16 – Feb.6

For tickets call: (757) 627-1234

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

I've just finished reading Stephen Sondheim's new book FINISHING THE HAT. He points out three principles that underlie everything he has written. In no particular order, but to be written in stone, they are: god is in the details, less is more, content dictates form. Each is in the service of clarity without which nothing else matters. The principles kept coming to mind at I watched [this show](#). It seemed to me there were too many songs and too much talking about too little.

I should point out in all fairness that some of the problems stemmed quite simply from the fact that the sound system renders a vast portion of the lyrics unintelligible. Hornsby's music is most pleasant except it, too, is garbled audio wise.

The strange title, which you have, is a vanity license plate abbreviation for SICKBSTARD. It is attached to an old Dodge automobile seen being driven around the small town in Virginia where the action of the play takes place. Rumors fly, people peek out of windows and whisper that a pedophile is on the loose or maybe terrorists. We also learn that this idyllic little town has dark corners. But, so do all little towns, including Thornton Wilder's Grover's Corners in Our Town, if the director chooses to look for them. At any event, the aroused citizens are ready for action.

At present the show seems more like a juke box musical than a traditional book show where most of the music and story are woven simultaneously for a specific work. The events and the characters in this effort are too predictable. One feels that often a song has been taken from the composer's trunk and put in to what may or may not be an appropriate spot. The result is a lack of dramatic tension.

The company of Broadway awarding winning actors is superb as are Narelle Sisson's sets, Darrel Maloney's projections, and Robert Wierzel's lighting. Time dictates a short list of the fine performers which includes Robert Cuccioli in the title roll, William Parry, Jill Paice and Marcus Lovett. There are 14 other Equity Performers who rightfully should be listed as well.

I really like Choreographer Scott Wise's very natural, spontaneous, spirited movement that never looks like dance. John Rando's point of view is not clear to me at this point. Maybe he should look deeper into those dark corners. It's probably the book's problem more than his. Isn't that usually the case? [OR](#), maybe content dictates form?

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.