

INDOOR/OUTDOOR

A funny romantic comedy by Kenny Finkle

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Presented by Virginia Stage Company 757-627-1234

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large. For INDOOR/OUTDOOR set designer Beowulf Boritt has created a fairy tale type house made out of yellow carpet. Furniture of the same material floats above, coming down as needed. A. Nelson Ruger IV lights it all with charming story book Colors.

In the house lives a man called Schuman, who is vividly and sensitively portrayed by Michael Kroeker as a most likable but lonely chap with only his computer for company. Since his house is one big scratching post, a cat seems to be in order. He visits the local animal shelter and on the spot falls in love with a spry young feline neatly acted by Erika Kreutz. Shuman decides to call her Samantha. His house is now a home, an indoor world of happiness, for a while at least,

But, one night Samantha kills a mouse. Her outdoor instincts are suddenly awakened. What's more, shortly after this bloody spree, she meets a vigorous athletic alley cat named Oscar, played in high stud style by Jeffrey Woodard. She is now fired up and aroused. Samantha senses there is more to life than using the same old litter box by the bathroom toilet day in and day out. She suddenly wants freedom, a little space of her own, to explore and be herself.

Shuman doesn't understand any of this. Problems that occur in all relationships from time to time come into being. Suddenly there is no communication between pet and owner. Having a loving relationship is not easy. In comes a looney tune therapist, who as played by Megan Byrne is quite funny, when she leaves one or two stops unpulled. The zany antics of therapy between man and animal form the core of this somewhat contrived and forced, but nonetheless mostly amusing, very light comedy.

Playwright Kenny Finkle resorts to campy movie gags, obvious jokes like the beach is one big litter box, toilet humor and anything else one might think of to produce a laugh. Even so, it's all nice and quite harmless and the audience loved it. In the first act I found Kevin Moriarty's direction also contrived and forced with too many exaggerated contortions and everybody clawing that carpet like gang busters working for laughs.

The second act is an entirely different matter. Mr. Moriarty makes clear how therapy has changed everyone. In short they discover love and what the home means. The ending brings more than a few tears, especially if you have ever owned a pet.

I'm in the minority, I know, but I found that musical about cats thin and tiresome with all those actors running around with arched backs and clawed hands. While

this play has perhaps too many predictable moments, it entertains. The word I heard most from the audience as we were leaving the theatre was "cute". Well, I concur. this is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.