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# Theater review: Broad comedy in Theatre Three's 'Bedroom Farce' brings mixed results

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By LAWSON TAITTE / The Dallas Morning News

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You expect a bedroom farce to be about sex. *Bedroom Farce* takes place entirely on or near a series of beds. The joke is that sex is almost the only thing that doesn't happen on any of them.

Theatre Three opened a revival of Alan Ayckbourn's comedy on Monday. A lot of funny actors perform the eight roles, though sometimes it seems they're in different plays.

Jeffrey Schmidt's set stacks the three bedrooms as if they were a giant's staircase. In the lowest, Nick (Linus Craig) complains vociferously because he's down in the back and his wife, Jan (Ginger Goldman), insists on going out to a party that her old flame will be attending. Next up, the party-givers, Kate (Tiffany Lonsdale-Hands) and Malcolm (Jason Kennedy), are playing practical jokes on each other as they prepare for their guests. On the tall platform at the corner of the stage, the senior couple, Delia (Connie Nelson) and Ernest (Terry Vandivort), plans a little party of their own as they deck themselves out to go to a restaurant.

Delia and Ernest's son Trevor (B.J. [Cleveland](#)) and his wife Susannah (Jody Rudman), perpetually quarreling, are set to disrupt all those other lives. They arrive at the party separately. Once there, they ruin the evening for all the guests. Then they invade the other bedrooms to spread the bad cheer.

*Bedroom Farce* depends on a lot of physical comedy, so strictly naturalistic acting isn't to be expected. Lonsdale-Hands and Kennedy, though, remain relatively low-key, while Vandivort and Rudman go all out for comic effect. Nelson alone attains the perfect balance of high comedy – reminding us how much we have missed her since she moved to New York 15 years ago. Every toss of an arm or sideways glance has a point to make, but remains a convincing part of the portrait she's creating.

The odd man out is Cleveland. He's one of the funniest actors in town, and he can discipline himself to realism when he wants to. Director Jac Alder, however, has always tended to let broad comics do their thing. Cleveland dithers and blathers, does double-takes and big exits as if he were top banana in a burlesque show. It's particularly unfortunate that some of the shtick reminds you of his hilarious imitations of Liza Minnelli. Still, his childlike heedlessness, all id, emphatically lets you know that part of Trevor's problem is that he's still Delia and Ernest's little boy, even as he approaches middle age.

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Through March 28 at Theatre Three in the Quadrangle, 2800 Routh St. 130 mins. \$10 to \$40. 214-871-3300, [www.theatre3dallas.com](http://www.theatre3dallas.com).

