

Burglars' zany ode to partying

By DAVID C. NICHOLS
Special to The Times

The Burglars of Hamm get hammered in "The Party Show" at the Actors Lab in Hollywood. This existentialist dissection of party mentality, playing in rep with past nutbar exercises "Resa Fantastiskt Mystisk" and "Easy Targets" as part of "Burglar-Palooza," is hysterical post-modern lunacy.

"Resa" upends intellectual theater pretensions by pitting a so-called forgotten classic against its ludicrous headphone translation. "Targets" skewers solo performance, giving the audience rolled-up socks to throw at hapless monologists. However, "Party" goes even further, exploiting the Burglars' own party animal underbellies.

The mayhem begins in the lobby, where boom-box blares accompany the cast's infiltration of the audience, videotaping reactions. This shrieking footage opens the show, with the Burglars watching it projected upstage.

Turning their chairs to face the house, they proceed to upbraid our impotent revelry. On the orders of supreme party deity Sammy Hagar, the Burglars embark on a quest for Kegger Nir-

vana, which spirals into pitch-black comic depths.

Under Matt Almos' and Albert Dayan's direction, the goofy designs support the sly concept, especially Teresa Shea's set and Jonathan Klein's lighting.

The faux-hip ensemble is certifiable, with many surprises. Almos, Carolyn Almos, Jon Beauregard, Todd Merrill, Victor Ortado and Selina Woolery Smith walk, stagger and boogie across a higher tightrope sans net than ever.

The tension between savagery and sophomoric occasionally sags from a shade too many in-jokes diluting the punch. Yet, mainly, this insidious "Party" displays a needle-sharp subversive attitude; if there are lapses in the Burglars' synapses, only Sammy should mind.

'The Party Show'

Where: Actors Lab, 1514 N. Gardner St., Hollywood

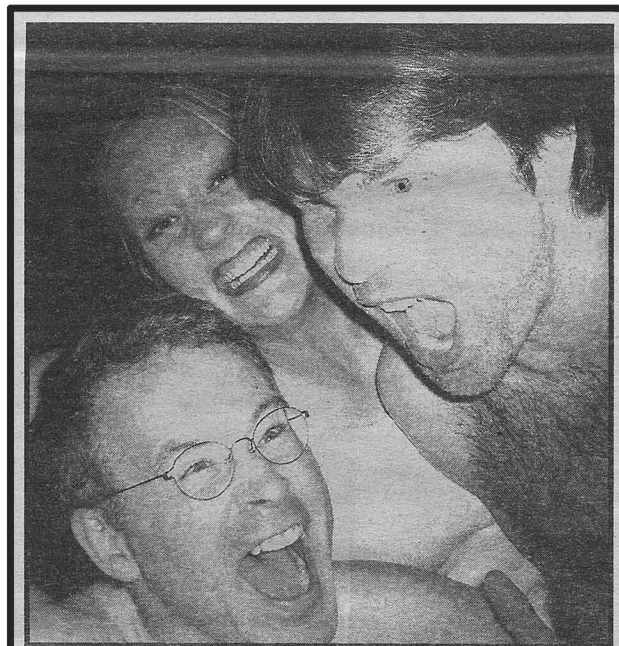
When: Fridays-Saturdays, 8 p.m.

Ends: May 11

Price: \$15

Info: (323) 769-6334

Running time: 1 hour, 25 minutes



MATT ALMOS

'THE PARTY SHOW': Burglars of Hamm's Todd Merrill, left, Carolyn Almos and Jon Beauregard.

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