Musical at Theater Inc.

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Theatre, Inc., Houston’s non-professional home of musical comedy, has scored another success—this time with Frank Loesser’s “Most Happy Fella.”

Some Claim Opera

The vehicle, different from the run-of-the-mill musical, has not infrequently been referred to as an opera, as a majority of the dramatic lines are sung to a sometimes rather sketchy line of melody. Instead of detracting from the effect, however, it tends to contribute much to the desired feeling.

The play begins in a greasy spoon restaurant in California, with a rather surprised waitress who has been left an amethyst tie-pin as a tip, together with a broken-English love letter. After a chain of letters and deceptive photographs, the love affair between waitress and Italian immigrant farmer develops into a genuine old-country wedding in the very heart of the Nappa Valley.

Surprise, Surprise

The love is not easy, for the Waitress, Rosabella, had expected a somewhat younger person than her husband, Tony, the farmer; and he, in turn, is constantly plagued by an over-jealous sister who delights in throwing up obstacles. Despite these complications, together with a few of a more serious nature, the couple get back together amidst a joyous finale on the part of the entire settlement.

The most happy fella is played by Cliff Thompson, and Rosabella is performed by Pauline Stark, a prominent Rice grad. They handle their roles skillfully and with voices of operatic quality, which in that intimate theater, is almost overwhelming.

“Big D”

Through the efforts of Georgia Creighton and Pinky Hull the production is perfectly seasoned with their renditions of “Big D” and “Standing on the Corner.” The ranks of the comedians are further enlarged and improved by the presence of Edward Wetzel, John Burke, and Jack Simpson in the roles of Italian cooks. These three, when you can hear them above laughter and applause are impressive with their operatic voices also.

All in all, “Most Happy Fella” is an entirely delightful mixture of humor, pathos, and music, and is guaranteed to produce a thoroughly enjoyable evening.