

Theater: 'The Bonus Room'

MARSDEN EPWORTH

Seeking the Greed Cure, Sort Of

Yes, we've heard lately about the 47 percent of Americans said to pay no federal income taxes (the elderly, the unemployed, the college bound, the afflicted, the impoverished and the very, very wealthy with sharp accountants).

But we have ignored the outliers, that 2 percent of the population that is successful, wealthy and incapable of minding the rules most people follow,

most of the time.

James Sheldon gives us an entertaining look at them in his new play "The Bonus Room," (that something-for-nothing useless space realtors push). He introduces us to three members of this notable corps who, deep in their hearts, are convinced the rules are not for them.

The rules are for the other 98 percent. The chumps.

Of course these men (women can be outliers, too, Sheldon makes clear

are cooling their Gucci loafers in federal prison as the play opens: Sen. Bob Graboczek (Gary Cookson) got nailed for skimming state pension funds; mortgage banker Ben Bancroft (Andrew Joffe) is in the big house for security fraud and insider trading and the disappearance of \$42 million. And baseball pitcher Dale Cannon (Charlie Tirrell), an almost Hall-of-Famer as known for chasing skirts as he was for his awesome fast ball, is serving time for denying he

cooperative behavior. Might it turn outliers into righteous citizens, and terrorists into pussycats? That's what researcher Dr. Connie Stroheim (Diedre Bollinger) wants to prove (thus spinning her into the upper echelons of government research and a nice apartment in Georgetown).

And so it goes for close to two hours, and aside from a discussion of oxytocin that comes off as Wikipedia at its giddiest, this is a neat, if sometimes talky, play about Ameri-

Arts & Entertainment

THE RICHARD B. FISHER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS AT BARD COLLEGE PRESENTS THE
AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conducted by Leon Botstein, Music Director

Carl Maria von Weber Bassoon Concerto in F, Op. 75;
Andante and Rondo *Ungarese*, J.158, Op.35
David Nagy, *bassoon*

Serge Rachmaninoff *Vocalise*, Péter Blága, *tuba*

Menachem Zur *Tuba Concerto*, Péter Blága, *tuba*

Richard Strauss *Eine Alpensinfonie*, Op. 64

SOSNOFF THEATER

The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts
Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Friday, October 12 and Saturday, October 13

7 pm Preconcert talk | 8 pm Performance | \$25, 30, 35, 40

The series continues with concerts on
February 22 and 23, and April 19 and 20, 2013.

THE RICHARD B.
FISHER
CENTER
FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
AT BARD COLLEGE

845-758-7900
fishercenter.bard.edu



PHOTO: GUY AROCH

used performance enhancing drugs and for refusing to rat on others who did as well.

But wait. Bancroft can get back into his Armani suits (cut a bit snugger in the shoulders than Graboczek's \$1,490 Ermenegildo Zegna), and Graboczek can work his way back to the public trough and Cannon can play again or maybe coach, before Christmas. All they have to do is take part in a federal study aimed at subduing psychopathic behavior with a snort of oxytocin.

This is the hormone that speeds childbirth, promotes breast feeding, and engenders, it is said,

can hopes and dreams, particularly the larcenous ones.

It is very funny in spots, but I get the feeling that director Thomas Grunewald played down the humor in this piece. And that is too bad, because this "Bonus Room" lectures us on the dark leanings in our culture. What it really wants is to show how risible, how unserious, our efforts to curb these leanings have been.

"The Bonus Room" plays at the Copake Grange, 628 Empire Empire Road in Copake, NY, through Oct. 7. For tickets, call 518-329-3151.