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# Steve Martin strikes again... as playwright



By **Mursal Rahman** on March 10th, 2017.

The East Side Players' have been turning back the clock in their latest production at the Papermill Theatre on Pottery Road in East York.

But if you want to take a ride in their time machine, you'd better hurry: this Friday (March 10) and Saturday are the final performances of "Picasso at the Lapin Agile," a play written by the comedian Steve Martin almost a quarter-century ago.

Martin and the Players transport their audience to Paris in 1904 — and the bar called Au Lapin Agile. And who do we find there? None other than Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso.

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Steve Martin's voice and comedic genius shine through as the audience is treated to Picasso and Einstein arguing about the most beautiful works of art — and scientific formulas. This is the essence of the men before they become renowned.

Directed by Ken Stern, the show features a cast who share a love of the stage and evident pleasure in acting out Martin's words.

Dakota Arsenault plays Albert Einstein and told an interviewer that he prepared by having discussions with Stern about his father and grandfather — because he is German and Jewish, just like Einstein. It helped him see what kind of person Einstein would be like in 1904.

“The play is riddled with facts. All the art references, the science references, philosophy references.... If you went and fact-checked them, all of its true,” Arsenault said.

According to Arsenault, Martin's style of comedy is especially evident in the character Schmendiman — the one who tries to hog the spotlight and who's always cracking jokes. (If Steve Martin was younger he would probably play the role.)

An audience-member is left in the end with a sense that Martin and the East Side Players accomplished what they set out to do: somehow make real a fantasy of two geniuses in drunk discussion in a Paris bar.

Picasso at the Lapin Agile plays again tonight and it closes tomorrow, March 11. Both performances are at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$24 for adults and \$17 for students and are available at the door, through the telephone box office at 416-425-0917 or online at [eastsideplayers.ca](http://eastsideplayers.ca)

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