

# 'Redneck Tenors' a hoot at the Majestic

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By **MATT WEITZ** / Special Contributor to **The Dallas Morning News**

What do you get when you cross good ol' redneck humor with a classical repertoire?

If you answered with something like a hybrid of *Mama's Family* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, you'd be close. If you replied by pointing to *3 Redneck Tenors*, which visited the Majestic Theatre on Thursday night, you'd be even closer to the mark.

The concept is this: A trio of vocally gifted country boys comes together to benefit a widow after one of their number is consumed in an unfortunate chipper-shredder accident. They then go on to fame and fortune.

Billy Bob (Alex Bumbas), Billy Joe (Matthew Lord) and Billy Billee (John Wilkerson) are trailer-park-dwelling troglodytes with one redeeming feature: They can sing like angels.

When they're discovered by The Colonel (Dinny McGuire), they embark on a fast track of livestock shows, bars and wrestling arenas. At each, they display their bumpkin foolishness and awesome vocal chops, often with unintended results.

The humor is Stooges-broad but family-friendly. It might seem dumb if it weren't for the indisputable talent of the three central characters, all of whom have solid operatic backgrounds.

Which leaves one able to chuckle at "Ave Maria Dixie" – an unlikely blending of the two signature songs – while still marveling at the skill and power of the singers. Likewise full-throated versions of "O Sole Mio" and "YMCA."

The 900-odd folks assembled at the Majestic on Thursday got the first peek at this locally inspired production since it premiered in Grapevine last August.

This will be its only area showing as it hits the national bricks.

Led by their Svengali, Mr. McGuire (showing to good effect his steady real-world gig as circus ringmaster), the three oafs battle their way up the ladder of fame, from in front of their own Christmas-light festooned trailer all the way up to the Masonic Lodge and, finally, Carnegie Hall.

These full-bodied guys in their mullet wigs actually have a skill: The power of the trio's classical training keeps the production on track, providing something beyond the booger eating that this kind of humor too often relies on and lending things a gravity that nicely balances the deliberately clumsy choreography and goofy humor.

Shows like *Greater Tuna* have proved that humor from the sticks can find wider appeal. Given Thursday night's performance, there's no reason to think that *3 Redneck Tenors* doesn't have an equally viable shot at success.

*3 Redneck Tenors repeats at 8 tonight at the Majestic Theatre, 1925 Elm St. \$16 to \$45. 214-373-8000, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).*