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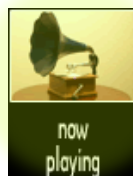
June 16, 2014:

The Fantasticks reviewed by Rob Stevens



all photos by Sherry Barnett

The allegorical musical *The Fantasticks* opened off Broadway in October, 1960 and ran for 42 years, making it the longest running musical in the world. It's a simple story, based on Edmund Rostand's *The Romancers*, simply told. Two neighboring fathers pretend to feud and build a wall to separate their children in the hopes they will fall in love and marry. There are pirates, Indians, a dashing bandit, an abduction, a swordfight and all ends well under a lover's moon in Act One. But in the heat of the sun, the following days don't go so smoothly and boredom sets in. Recriminations and disillusionment fester when the fathers admit to the deception. The boy travels a hard road to discover the joys of home while the girl suffers heartbreak and loss at home at the hands of her bandit.



Audrey Curd and Christopher Karbo

The book by Tom Jones is unpretentious in style and execution. He contributed lyrics to the music of Harvey Schmidt and together they fashioned some memorable songs that have become standards in the

nearly 55 years since they were originally heard. "Try to Remember," "Soon It's Gonna Rain," "I Can See It," and "They Were You" are all lovely plaintive ballads. Good People Theater Company is presenting a pristine revival as part of the Hollywood Fringe Festival. Janet Miller has artfully directed and the mood is beautifully developed and maintained throughout the piece. Musical Director Corey Hirsch on keyboards and Jillian Risigari-Gai on harp provide lyrical musical accompaniment.





Matt Stevens and Michael Wallot

Audrey Curd makes a lovely Luisa and her soprano is golden. Christopher Karbo is a dashing El Gallo and his deep, resonant voice sells his numbers. Matt Stevens and Michael P. Wallot as the feuding but friendly fathers really deliver the goods in their duets of "Never Say No" and "Plant a Radish." Great comic relief is provided by Joey D'Auria as Henry, the Old Shakespearean Actor who mixes up his cues but he has clippings to show you. Corky Loupe aids the comedy as Mortimer who has had 40 years to perfect the art of dying. Alix Rikki Ogawa as The Mute ably provides the cast with their props without ever intruding. Matt Franta as The Boy is the show's one weak link. His singing voice is weak and he is easily overwhelmed in his duets while his personality comes off quite bland. It's not a major flaw that ruins the show because the rest of the production is very well executed.



Joey D'Auria and Corky Loupe

Lillian Theatre, 1076 Lillian Way in Hollywood. Ends June 29. 323-455-4585 or www.hollywoodfringe.org

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