

the world through Night-Tinted Glasses

The Toxic Avenger Musical! (review)

GOOD PEOPLE THEATER COMPANY
& ALEJANDRO PATIÑO PRESENT

A NEW SMELL IN TOWN...

THE
TOXIC
AVENGER
MUSICAL

Book &
Lyrics by
Joe DiPietro



Music &
Lyrics by
David Bryan

Spoilers ahoy!

The title kinda tells it all. *The Toxic Avenger Musical* playing at this year's Hollywood Fringe Festival springs from the Good People Theater company, and (obviously) derives from the cult movie of (almost) the same name.

For those who haven't seen the flick, it tells the story of a nerd named Melvin living in Tromaville New Jersey, thrown into a vat of toxic waste dumped there by evil-doers. Said waste transforms him into a hideously deformed mutant with more-than-human strength and endurance as well as amping up his rage. He sets out as a vigilante to clean up Tromaville, along the way earning the love of a blind girl.

Yeah, that old chestnut.

And it plays out pretty much as you might expect, with lots of silliness and campy humor along with lots of catchy/funny show tunes. A specific villain in the person of a corrupt Mayor (*Shirley Hatton*) becomes a clear-cut antagonist. Melvin (*Jared Reed*) had already met the blind librarian Sarah (*Kim Dalton*), falling totally for her as Peter Parker did Mary Jane. She naturally only notices him once he has superpowers. All well and good, fun to be had, but with shows like this once you have a competent script and score, execution is what matters.

Here the show really does shine. Apart from the fact everyone can sing and act at the same time, all sell their characters 100% even at their most ridiculous. "Toxie" (as our hero becomes known) and Sarah's first date for example. Apart from anything else the timing of every single beat was spot on!

Likewise nearly all the supporting cast consist of the White Dude (*Wesley Tunison*) and the Black Dude (*Danny Fetter*) who play an almost bewildering array of bullies, police officers, doctors, hair dressers, best girlfriends, random citizens, etc. More, they did it full bore and kept getting more laughs pretty much every time they re-appeared in a new set of costumes.

I haven't even mentioned Hatton's one woman duo as the Mayer and Melvin's mother, the almost deadpan stagehand who keeps holding up place cards to tell you where each scene takes place, the way Dalton sells the seemingly endless jokes about her blindness (when she whipped out a gun the audience guffawed at what we knew was coming), etc. It all came together in the zany way this particular kind of show begs for--with superlative skill and energy in the service of making us smile and laugh. Really what more can (or should) you ask for in a musical based on a superhero cleaning up a town in New Jersey?



The Toxic Avenger Musical plays at the Sacred Fools Theatre main stage, 1076 Lillian Way (west of Vine), Wednesday June 15 2016, 11:00 PM, Thursday June 16 2016, 7:00 PM, Saturday June 18 2016, 6:00 PM and Wednesday June 22 2016, 10:00 P. The runtime is two hours with one intermission.