

***“Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson”***

Review by Jane Zussman

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Wow! Peppermint Creek's BLOODY BLOODY ANDREW JACKSON is a 100-proof shot of history - and also hilarious - and then you feel guilty for laughing. This is a highly entertaining "emo rock" musical ("a style of rock music characterized by melodic musicianship and expressive, often confessional lyrics." Wikipedia) that chops up real history and tosses it with modern language and sensibilities to wake up your brain to the ironies of history, particularly the hero/villain career of Andrew Jackson. (adult language)

This show doesn't require that you be a history buff -- but pre-reading the plot summary was helpful orientation for me.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloody\\_Bloody\\_Andrew\\_Jackson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloody_Bloody_Andrew_Jackson)) Topics covered include populism, the westward expansion of America's territory, and our treatment of the Indians -- all presented in a frenetic way that blows all the dust off the history book as characters transform, pop in and out, dance around the stage, and fraternize with the band (excellent: Music director/keyboard/singer Seth Burk, with Ethan Lucas, Yoshihiro Fukagawa, and Louis Rudner.)

As Andrew Jackson, Michal Kolaczowski leads a talented, energetic cast with rock-star abandon, yet lets us in to moments of pain and doubt. Ten other cast members transform into everyone from period politicians to cheerleaders. I particularly liked Matt Eldred's sonorous voice as James Monroe, and Matt Land's childlike portrayal of Jackson's adopted Indian son, and Mandy Fuller's indescribable storyteller. The transformations and pace are quick and all the other players are very good, too. (Chad William Baker, Mary Maurer, Alec Nagy, Michael Banghart, Adair Whalen Rebecca Mueller, Sammy Le) Congrats to director Chad Badgero for managing this manic mob and mix of historic fact and fiction. (Note Matthew Swan's program insert of historic facts from Jackson's improbable career.)

"A.J." continues through 10/13 - this weekend 8pm Fri/Sat and 2pm Sun -- next week Thur/Fri/Sat at 8 at the NEW VENUE, the Miller Performing Arts Center, located at 6025 Curry Lane, just two blocks west of the Miller/Cedar Street intersection in South Lansing. Get there early for the best seats.

Tickets 517-372-0945 or [www.peppermintcreek.org](http://www.peppermintcreek.org).