

“Falsettos” is standing-ovation-worthy

Review by Jane Zussman

November 2, 2017

Perhaps FALSETTOS at Peppermint Creek is best summed up in the brief “review” emailed to me by Jan Lockwood, “CANCEL ALL YOUR PLANS AND SEE THIS SHOW. PERIOD.”

It is indeed standing-ovation-worthy: a “sung through” musical with wall-to-wall super voices and powerful acting, singing and dancing circles around the complexities of life and love and family. It is the story of a Jewish family at the dawn of the 80s when AIDS was a mystery death-sentence and gay marriage was a pipe dream — so it's a bit of a “period piece” — extra moving to those of us who lived through that era — and the universal themes still apply today. It is profound and moving, but also funny and entertaining.

We enjoyed the expected excellence of local musical stars Joe Quick and Josh Martin and especially Matt Eldred’s angelic falsetto. NYC pro Leah Gerstel was back (last seen here in Peppermint’s 2011 “Ordinary Days”) — with another powerful performance. Maggie Smith and Sarah Lynn were wonderful as “the lesbians next door.” But we were most impressed with Phineas Reed. This sixth grade amazement leaped into this very difficult music and delivered songs and soulfulness with a clear, adorable soprano voice. AND he mastered Karyn Perry’s tricky, fun choreography — “keeping up with the big boys and girls” (thanks, in part, to his experience with Riverwalk’s Young Artisan Workshop and All-of-us-Express Children’s Theatre.)



Kudos to Ben Cassidy, who directed these talents, with the cast deftly assembling and reassembling the versatile cube-set designed by Ben and Jeff Boerger. John Dale Smith music-directed this complex score, also playing keyboard with Bonnie Brown on woodwinds and Tim Thelen on percussion. This small combo was well suited to a show where we must understand all the words because the songs ARE the script.

Learn more about Falsettos in this State Journal article:

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/story/entertainment/arts/2017/11/01/musical-theater-cult-favorite-falsettos-comes-peppermint-creek/107241070/>

And follow Jan’s (and my) advice and SEE THIS SHOW.

It continues 8pm tonight; 2pm Sunday

Next weekend 8pm Thur/Fri/Sat and 2pm BOTH Saturday and Sunday.

<http://www.peppermintcreek.org>