

Fine performances in 'Beehive: The '60s Musical'

By Rick Copper - Shaw Media Correspondent

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If you enjoy the girl groups of the early 1960s as well as the individual performances of this decade's latter part when women were gaining empowerment, "Beehive: The '60s Musical," is the show for you. It's currently playing at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre in Arlington Heights and is definitely worth the price of admission.

In order for "Beehive: The '60s Musical" to work, the show must have knockout voices both solo and harmony. This production of the musical does not disappoint for all the women are outstanding as each obviously worked to understand what singers they were emulating then took their own road to the songs.

This made the show far more of a delight for mimicry only invites criticism. There was nothing to criticize the fine performances of (in alphabetical order) Anastasia Arnold, Halle Bins, Christie Burgess, Caitlin Dobbins, Bre Jacobs and Jayla Williams-Craig.

The choice made by Director/Choreographer Dina DiCostanzo to have the women remain themselves rather than the typical characters (Anastasia played Anastasia, etc) was a great decision. There is no story per se which renders any character names useless. This show is a trip through the turbulent '60s via song from the first nod to Chubby Checker's "The Twist" all the way through to superior renditions of Tina Turner and Janis Joplin.

The set is designed with a beehive motif put into bright neon-hot colors so endemic of '60s shows like Laugh-In. Without a classic pit in which to bury the sound coming from a really

good band (good work by Musical Director Kenneth McMullen), there was a few moments in part one where the singers were fighting a bit with the horn section.

Putting the band in the upper cells of the beehive is a sweet concept, but sound travels. The soundboard operator must have recognized the need to pump it up a bit for the performers in the second half, for it was not as noticeable.

Projections of the original artists added a sense of being there to the production. However, I do wish said projections were a tad closer to the stage so the audience wasn't forced to divert their eyes too much off the women. There was a question as to why the projections of the original artists were not labeled, but as DiCostanzo stated, "I purposely chose not to include the names of the original artists because I wanted the main focus to be on the stage, on the actors. The photos are meant to spark a memory, not necessarily be a history lesson."

Costume change can prove to be difficult with this show and create lag time, but this production did it seamlessly. Costuming by Rachel Parent was really well done, including the surprise near the end.

Call it a twist finale if you desire, but it was handled so well. If you carefully watch, you can see it coming, but there was an audible gasp from the audience at the show I attended. It's a very pleasant surprise and I smiled when the 'reveal' came. No, I won't tell you what it is, but I will say it is not something you would ordinarily see in any production of *Beehive: The '60s Musical*.

This reviewer was abuzz after this *Beehive: The '60s Musical* performance. For you Crystal Lakers, the Metropolis is less than an hour away. Arlington Heights has done an amazing job in their downtown reclamation, including the creation of a well-designed parking structure with free parking. You can take the Metra as well, but let me repeat... free covered parking.

• *Rick Copper is a writer, photographer, storyteller, part-time actor and comedian with a framed master's degree from the Northwestern Medill School of Journalism and a loose Certificate of Completion sheet of paper from Second City's Improv program. Published works include "Crystal Lake: incorporation of a city 1914-2014."*

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