

Office chair ride genius

Summer theatre production pleases; Canada Day tunes impress; Mariposa Folk Festival more than just music

Posted 19 hours ago

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change is the second summer theatre play at the Opera House. It stars Michael Hogeveen, Kristi Frank, Micheal Querin and Jane Miller.

I sat on the side of the Studio Theatre where the piano was placed, which made it difficult to hear all the lyrics.

I managed to put together the gist of what was going on most of the time during the songs, and there are a lot of them, but judging by the laughter coming from the other side of the house, I missed a fair bit.

I'm sure that is being corrected because the creative team isn't one to sit around when a problem exists.

Even so, there were a number of bits that were very funny. Chief among those is a scene with Mom, Dad and the kids out for a car ride. Using office type chairs on wheels as though in a car, they proceeded to journey around the stage in a genius bit of choreography that has to be seen.

Miller does a bit about a closet full of bridesmaid dresses that even without understanding all the lyrics is funny.

Hogeveen and Frank do a scene in which the kids have finally gone to bed.

The celebration of free time turns into a tango that is also choreographed superbly.

Hogeveen always surprises me. He doesn't look like the type to be a comedic actor, but his rubbery face puts my preconceived notions out of mind when each of the plays I've seen him in unfolds. He's also a terrific dancer, athletic, as well.

There is no storyline. The whole play is a series of vignettes covering all kinds of relationships from dating (that's a funny one, too) to a mixed up marriage proposal celebration.

I Love You has performances through to July 28 with 2 p.m. matinees on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8 p.m. performances on Wednesdays and Thursdays, with additional evening performances July 8, 16 and 22.

Bluegrass and metal for Canada Day

I did something different for Canada Day. In past years I've been away for most of the day and lucky to catch the fireworks each time.

This year, I was here all day, though I still didn't get to Couchiching Beach Park in time to hear Westmount Dismount at 10 a.m. I really tried, I'll catch you another time, Daniel (Bazinet).

Shortly after 11 a.m., I heard a couple of bands and caught the parade for the first time. Even though it was really light on bands, the parade was still fun to watch.

I finally saw The Barley Juice String Band. Four of the six guys in Barley Juice are also the whole complement of Adrenehrome, who also played two hours later. Adrenehrome plays heavy metal rock and I was impressed with the writing of their songs, not typical of the genre by any means.

In contrast is Barley Juice. In this format, they play bluegrass. This is a demanding genre. No playing or singing out of tune allowed, or it just doesn't work. This venture is surely benefiting the rock side of their playing and I enjoyed both aspects of

this group of musicians.

In between their sets was something called Peter Turns Pirate, which is essentially a theatrical production by Neal Reed, who used to be in No Data.

There is continuity to the whole show and Neal only added a drummer and dancer to the act just recently. Usually, he performs by himself, handling any keyboard playing, sound triggering and lighting by himself.

I found the writing and performance to be a combination of Thomas Dolby, Devo, Michael Jackson and Freddy Mercury all rolled into one. This is likely a great club or theatre production where the lighting and effects would contribute more than in the blazing sun.

The last thing I have to mention is the fireworks. In contrast to ones I've seen in past years, this year's display was a big step up.

Mariposa is it

The Mariposa Folk Festival starts Friday. Josh Ritter headlines the main stage Friday night, Emmylou Harris on Saturday and Peter Yarrow closes on Sunday.

Mariposa is one of the best times you can have in Orillia. There are a lot of close seconds for things to do during the summer, or at any other time of the year, but for me this is it.

It's not just about the music, which starts at 5:30 p.m. Friday and at 11 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, it's the whole atmosphere.

There's stuff for kids to do all day and if you've been and not strolled out to the point to watch the kids in action, you're probably missing some of the best entertainment at the festival.

There are workshops all day where you can see your favourite artist in action in situations they haven't rehearsed. Some truly magical things happen on those workshop stages.

There are also workshops, learning opportunities, you can take part in. You also have a pretty good opportunity to meet the performers.

Only a very few confine themselves to the backstage area while they are at Mariposa. Keep your eyes open, you never know who has decided to stop right next to you to enjoy a performance too, or lined up behind you to get a bite to eat.

What really makes the festival great is you, the people who buy tickets. I've met some great people at Mariposa who have come from all kinds of places and compared to other outdoor concert events I've been to, the concert goers at Mariposa are the best.

You can check out the whole schedule at mariposafolk.com.

And do something for your kids, the prices on weekend passes are incredibly cheap. Even if you don't go with them, they're in good hands at the festival.

Rants! Raves! Info? Write John at watchthisproductions@encode.com

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