

OST SHOWCASES MEGA TALENT, FUNNY LYRICS AND MUCH MORE

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Staff Writer

“Pump Boys and Dinettes” has it all. The set is awesome, the talent in the five-person cast is over the top and the music’s lyrics bring joy and laughter along with some poignant moments. We, the audience are visiting a little gas station and diner on Highway 57 somewhere between Frog Level and Smyrna. Set designer AJ Hansen did a spectacular job as we were immediately taken back to the ‘50s in rural America.

Adding to our enjoyment was the band. All four musicians were right there, center stage for the entire show. They blended in so well with the story the singers/actors were trying to tell. Tom Andes is the musical director and

piano man. He was in his element at last night’s opening. He hammed it up and sang along with much enthusiasm. I believe I remember the cast calling him Bill during the show but — Bill or Tom — he was fun to watch.

Joining him in the band were Greg Forney on drums, Tim Schumacher on guitar and Dalton Peterson on bass. They are all fine local musicians and did a great job.

Directing an OST production for the first time, Pennsylvania native Alison Morooney had five people to work with who could sing and dance magnificently. She took their talents and blended them together, giving us a really fun musical experience.

The three “mechanics” who only like to work on cars after a few beers, were so fun to watch. They all three sing extremely well. Tyler

Breeding played Jackson. It is obvious he has spent time working out and was easy on our female eyes. L.M. was played by Hunter Semrau. He has all the dance moves anyone could imagine, plays a mean piano and brings out many chuckles all night long. It was really fun to watch him tap dancing on the counter in the diner. Zeke Bocklage has the role of Jim. His voice is sweetly strong, and he is such fun to watch. Both Bocklage and Breeding play the guitar during the show too.

Now, across the street at the Double Cupp Diner, we find the Cupp sisters. Prudie (Reagan Grisolano) and Rhetta (Betty Kay Merkle) are waitresses. They sing and dance delightfully and harmonize their awesome voices well. They may be third-year students at Stephens College, but they held their own with the interns and pros on that stage. You could not tell who were pros and who were students or interns.

You must be sure to listen to the lyrics of these songs. Each tells a story. All the anglers in the Lakes Region will be amused at “Fisherman’s Prayer.” The song “Tips” reminded us, thanks to the Cupp sisters, how impor-

tant it is to leave a tip when you have finished dining. “The Night Dolly Parton Was Almost Mine” was done by Semrau. It was hilarious.

Being a former farmer, I loved the song “Farmer Tan.” So did a farmer friend of mine sitting two rows ahead of me. Right B.T.? I promised him I would not tell anyone about his farmer tan. My lips are sealed.

When the cast began singing “Closing Time,” and the sign in the window was flipped from OPEN to CLOSED, we in our seats were far from ready for the show to be over. “Pump Boys and Dinettes” is fun from the first song to the last and there are 20 of them. Thanks to the cast and crew for a most enjoyable evening. The oldest person in the audience was 97-year-old Aubrey LaFoy, and some of the youngest were in their teens. No matter what age, they all clapped, smiled and laughed all night long.

I also would like to send a thank you out to the utility people who got our power back on so we could see the show and arrive safely, thanks to working traffic lights.

The musical runs through Sunday evening. I highly recommend this one.

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