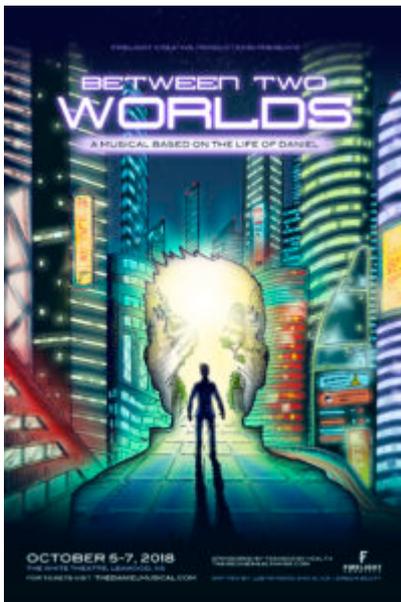


Biblical story offers modern perspectives

By Bob Evans



Between Two Worlds/The White Theatre of The J

Like most Biblical stories, “Between Two Worlds” teaches that honor and serving God provides strength and answers to life’s dilemmas. Of course, the miracles told in the Book of Daniel, cannot be recreated in live form, but believers know the majesty of those stories, God’s interaction, His miracles, and can fill in the details.

Rizzo does take poetic license with the story line, but the end result leaves the audience wanting more. Rizzo’s dialogs evoke humor at times, but also show the extreme cruelty of

those in power. What the story does not show is the scope of the torment and pain suffered by the powerless. As the saying goes, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."



Johnny Hyatt "Between Two Worlds"/The White Theatre

Michael Maher (Daniel), Korrie Murphy (Lydia), Juel Perry (Nebuchadnezzar), Brandon Lautzenheiser (Asher), and Jon Rizzo (Dagan) gave strong performances and commanded the stage with the personifications and vocal prowess. They stood out among a cast of strong actors, but on the final song, Maher let loose his big, powerful voice and brought the crescendo to the finale.



Johnny Hyatt "Between Two Worlds"/The White Theatre

The only problem on opening night was sound balance. The opening number and dialog suffered echoes and unbalanced microphones. As the show progressed, the individual lines were distinguishable and lyrics clear. Technical issues like this can occur in live productions and remedies found. Other than

that, opening night was a huge success. The box office said that walk-up sales were stronger than expected and the house appeared to be about 90 percent full.



Between Two Worlds/The White

Theatre of The J

As for audience approval, laughs, cheers, and applause all signaled a strong opening night for "Between Two Worlds." With a short run of only five performances, sales should increase as word of mouth and social media get

behind this show.

As this show develops, much will change. The story only tells a few of the stories contained in the original history of Daniel and his people. The scope is broad, and possible too broad to be infused with music and dance. Some editing would probably help and thereby provide an expansion of several characters to tell the story through their perception.



Johnny Hyatt "Between Two Worlds"/The White Theatre

Costumes, makeup, wigs and choreography—all stand out with this production that puts a large cast in motion. The sets are minimal but very functional. The changes between scenes are quick and well planned, but still a bit awkward a couple of times. Some re-blocking and light changes could help direct the audience attention to a full stage view to a tighter limited area while the following scene could be set without the audience being aware of the change.



Between Two Worlds/The White

Theatre of The J

The show was conceived by Justin Rizzo who co-wrote and produced “Between Two Worlds” with Alice Larson Scott. Rizzo founded Firelight Creative Productions who produces the show with Scott serving as director. From the resulting performance, Scott and Rizzo work well together and the piece is strong, relevant, and well conceived.

“‘Between Two Worlds’ highlights the relevance of the life of Daniel today with its message of forgiveness and hope in the midst of devastation,” Rizzo said. “Daniel’s story illustrates the longings of the human heart as he wrestles with discovering the purpose of his life and navigates the struggles and tensions that touch every generation.



Johnny Hyatt "Between Two Worlds"/The White Theatre

The cast is: Michael Maher (Daniel), Korrie Murphy (Lydia), Juel Perry (Nebuchadnezzar), David Forlu (Sirius), Brandon Lautzenheiser (Asher), Elrinda Du Toit (Madam Habib), Jeremy (J-Rob) Robinson (Abednego), Josaphat D. Chambers (Shadrach), Ella McClung (Meshach), Nathan Middleton (Michael), Amy Loux (Beth), Jon Rizzo (Dagan), Joshua Lloyd Parker (Bale), Elisa Grace Davis (Davke), Borin Doulos (Rog), Madeline Clem (Anne). Ensemble: Luren Daniel, Levi De Valle, Nicole M. Dominguez, Ashley Doulos, Erin Hudson, Christa James, Raelle Roberson, Jana Samuel, Leah Slavens, Anna Wiley, Natalie Joy York.



Johnny Hyatt "Between Two Worlds"/The White Theatre

The Production team for "Between Two worlds" is: Music Director, Kelsie Massey; Lead Choreographer, Nick Perry; Music Composer/Arranger, Judah Earl; Assistant Choreographer, Briana Wheeler; Set Design, Benjamin Kramer; Technical Director/Set Builder, Anthony Putzier; Lighting Designer, Justin Dudzik; Stage Manager, Katy Keane; Assistant Stage Manager, Danielle Rizzo, Jenn Sarver; House Manager, Lacey Baldwin; Notation,

Erica Ketchum; Hand Properties, Rebekah Youmans; Costumes, Faith Wiles, Christa Norman; Flyman, Adam Beattie; Makeup, Jes Weiner; Hair, Chelsea Renee Glissman; Graphic Designer, Phillip Ortiz;



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The J hosts the world premiere of "Between Two Worlds" that the playwright said he had worked on an outline for the show for several years before sharing it with Scott at which they joined forces and co-wrote and sharpened the show together in the past year.

"Our hope is that each person who sees the show will be able to relate to Daniel and the trials he was faced with," Rizzo said. "We want audiences to walk away impacted by the way Daniel's story is relevant to their own lives."



Johnny Hyatt "Between Two Worlds"/The White Theatre

"Between Two Worlds" is not the first production that Rizzo

and Firelight Creative Production has mounted for the stage and will not be the last, he said. "Firelight Creative will continue to bring both live stage and film to the local Kansas City area in the coming years and several new scripts are already in the

works."

"Between Two Worlds:" is presented by Firelight Creative Productions. The production plays at The White Theatre of the Jewish Community Center of Kansas City. The show runs Friday 7p.m., Saturday, and Sunday 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$27, \$25, and \$22 and can be purchased online at www.thedanielmusical.com or at the door. More information can be found at Firelight Creative site.



Johnny Hyatt "Between Two

Worlds"/The White Theatre

www.firelightcreativeproductions.com

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