



‘Lefty and Crabbe’ encores at Living Room with added music, scenes



Theatre

Brian Paulette/The Living Room

It's back again: "The Ballad of Lefty and Crabbe" returns to The Living Room for a third time as each revisited writing adds more songs, more laughs, and polishes the plot as the play continues to develop and attract old and new audiences.

Currently playing at The Living Room, "Lefty and Crabbe" contains new material to explain how the dynamic duo met and how their partnership developed. New music and orchestration has been included and new actors have stepped in for the previous ensemble cast. With each revision, the show moves and flows differently. This third version is no exception to the rule.



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The story centers on the performing team, Lefty and Crabbe, as they climb from unknowns to their peak before Vaudeville starts to fade away. With the advent of talking pictures, Vaudeville cannot withstand the onslaught of the new technology; hence, Vaudevillians head west in hopes of ensnaring new fans and big bucks.

Lefty and Crabbe struggle to decide what to do with their fading careers with only a nickle left between them. Just think of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy....that's right Laurel and Hardy, the team of silent movies from the early 20s and you get an inkling of the lead characters. Lefty and Crabbe are comics and singers, and the leap from Vaudeville to silent



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movies is not guaranteed in the new medium. But, desperate people make desperate decisions. And, the tandem heads west.

“The Ballad of Lefty and Crabbe” celebrates this Jazz Age on

Hollywood comedies and delivers a solid story line of the star-making machine. The musical comedy has heart, soul, abundant laughs, crazy characters (gleaned from Hollywood icons of the era), and costumes appropriate for the time period. Think of icons like Jean Harlow, the original platinum blonde; Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Fatty Arbuckle, and Gloria Swanson. That's the kind of images "The Ballad of Lefty and Crabbe" want to kindle in the audience's mind as the story unfolds.



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This witty and gleefully ridiculous musical comedy (from the team that created "Milking Christmas " Brian Huther, Ben Auxier, and Seth Macchi) won a Best of Fringe designation in 2015, packed houses in its 2017 run, and last year won several awards including Best of the Fest at the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival. Ryan McColl took the melodies and crafted them into the 1920 Jazz style to match the story.



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The show is just pure light-hearted fun. It's musical. It's funny. It's got fun characters. It's loaded with talent. And, there is no darkness, deep meaning, or hidden agenda. It's just old-fashioned entertainment from start to finish. The show runs 2 hours with one intermission.

The cast is: Connor Branson as Theodore "Lefty" Childs, Shea Pender as James "Crabbe" Hathaway, R.H. Wilhoit as Gene Sherman, Mike Ott as E.G. Swellington, Nellie Maple as Mr. Rocksfeld, Elise Poehling as Lolo Carmichael, Josh Gleeson as Mac Lloyd, Brianna Woods as Evelyn Rose. Of course, other than Lefty and Crabbe, the others perform



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many assorted roles. Music is performed by Jeremy Watson, a master at the 88s.

The production team is Lacey Pacheco, stage manager; Emma Dodge, assistant stage manager; Regina Weller, production assistant & wardrobe; Ashley Personett, choreographer; Jeremy Watson/Eryen Bates, pianist; Regina Weller, scenic Artist; Rusty Sneary & Kyle Dyck, scenic design; David Kiehl, sound design; Nicole Jaja, lighting design; Nancy Robinson, costume design; Shawna Journagan, properties design; Kyle Dyck, technical director; Ben Auxier/Brian Paulette, poster design.



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“The Ballad of Lefty and Crabbe” runs through May 12 at The Living Room Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri. Tickets can be purchased online.

Tags: “The Ballad of Lefty and Crabbe” review, The Living Room Theatre, Kansas City Theatre, Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment