



Quality Hill continues Broadway & Jazz series



Quality Hill Playhouse

What a challenge J. Kent Barnhart undertook when he announced this season's focus on Broadway's decades and American Jazz histrionics.

The current production meant lots of choices from a lot of big name shows. Just think of the shows included in this show... "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever," "Cabaret," "Funny Girl," "Hello, Dolly!" "The Wiz," "Jesus Christ Superstar," "Godspell." Barnhart had a plethora of songs to select from and then the Broadway shows infiltrated the Jazz recordings at the same era, so classic stand alone songs gained more influence with solo jazz artists.

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With a talented cast of LaShea Wright, Katie Karel, Christina Burton and new to QHP, Francisco Javier Villegas, there is not a song or lyric that someone among this cast could not perform. To assist them, the three-piece combo of accompaniment comes from Ken Remmert on percussion, Ben Turvort on bass, and Kent Barnhart on piano. One could not find a more dynamic combo for this show.

Read this song list from Act I and see what selections you will hear from Broadway. "Cabaret," "Don't Rain on My Parade," "Before the Parade Passes By,"



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"What Did I Have that I Don't Have Now," "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever," "Day by Day," "Gethsemane," "Magic to Do," "Corner of the Sky," "Home," "This Joint Is Jumpin'." And that's just Act I. As one other reviewer said, "Hearing Pancho sing 'Gethsemane' was worth the admission price."

Act II featured a cavalcade of popular music from the era. The

act opened with the Henry Mancini film theme "The Pink Panther." That was followed by the Ella Fitzgerald classic, "A-Tisket, A-Tasket." After that the hits keep coming with "The Shadow of Your Smile," "Moon River," "One Note Samba," "The Girl from Ipenema," "Sunny," "Sermonette," "Now's



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the Time," "Java Jive," "That Cat Is High."

Barnhart obviously maintains the theory, "Leave them wanting more," and he did. The show just seems to go by in the blink of an eye. If I were to want more, it would have been a song from "Hair." (Also, as a side note, my very limited piano skills from 50 years ago included two of the songs featured in this show—"The Shadow of Your Smile" and "Sunny." Somehow, when I played them, they just did not sound this good.)



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Shows at Quality Hill Playhouse always please me. This year's

focus on Broadway through the decades allowed me to remember the songs from my childhood. Barnhart generally selects music well known to his audience and throws in some educational notes and history lessons along the way to help his audiences better appreciate the background of several songs or composers.

“Songbook of the 60s and 70s” delights and entertains. The soloists always stand out and are helped with beautiful, classy wardrobe creations by Georgianna Londre Buchanan. For this show, the solo stand-outs were “Before the Parade Passes By,” by Katie Karel; “What Did I Have that I Don’t Have Now,” by



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Christina Burton; “Gethsemane,” by Francisco Javier Villegas; and “Home” by LaShea Wright. All of those highlights come in Act I. Act II changes pace with all the them performing on most of the songs.

This production is one that will appeal to a wide audience. Children as young as 3 and 5 were in the audience the night of this review and remained entertained and quiet throughout. The music was refreshing with a mixture of standard and jazzy arrangements. Band members were featured in parts of several songs and the audience enjoyed the performance.



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“Songbook of the 60s and 70s” continues through May 26. Ticketing, pricing, times, and dates information can be found on the [Quality Hill Playhouse website](#).

Tags: Quality Hill Playhouse, “Songbook of the 60s and 70s” review, Kansas City theater, Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment