



Quality Hill delivers fantastic performances



Quality Hill Playhouse

Just before the COVID-19 spread impacted the nation, Quality Hill Playhouse opened a beautiful production of their Broadway series "Broadway Through the Decades," only to have the fears of the nation take tolls on attendance and force the postponement of that particular show.

On a personal note, as I sat in my car outside the venue, the Big 12 Tournament began, and by the time I left the theatre performance, the entire Big 12 Tournament had been cancelled as well as the NCAA Tournament, the NBA season, and Major League Baseball announced a postponement of the start of their season. All that happened in two hours. The Entertainment and Sports industry faced their most significant and drastic shutdowns in history. The fast-moving stories affected our local theatre season drastically, almost immediately.



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I attend the first Wed. performances of Quality Hill's productions, and before I had time to begin my review, future performances were on hold. By Friday, cancellations of other theatres flooded in, and I spend the entire weekend posting updated postponements and then cancellations as the Kansas City Theatre industry shuttered to protect audiences, performers, technicians, and personnel. What a sad situation for those affected.

As for Quality Hill, the show, "Broadway through the Decades" was my favorite of the current season. Three amazing vocalists, Val Fagan, Sarah LaBarr, and Robert Erik Sobbe delivered Broadway gems. They were accompanied by Ken Remmert on percussion, Brian Padacic on bass, and J. Kent Barnhart, pianist/producer/artistic director. What a tremendous show to be interrupted by the COVID-19 situation.



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"Broadway through the Decades" originally ends on April 6, but with the national epidemic situation, Quality Hill may remount the show at a later date in order for audiences to appreciate

and attend. Watch for QHP announcements on that.

Attendance on March 11 displayed the impact on theatres with 80 percent of the seats vacant. How disheartening for the cast and crew who dedicated hours to this production. Even with low attendance, performers made the appreciative audience feel like they performed to a standing-room-only crowd.

Some of the gems from the show included: "Makin' Whoopee!," "My Man," "Lady Be Good," "Someone to Watch over Me," "I've Got a Crush on You," "Manhattan (I'll Take Manhattan)," "Begin the Begine," "My Romance," "You'll Never Walk Alone,"—all in Act I. Act II brought gems from more recent Broadway successes that included selections from "Kiss Me, Kate," "Gypsy," "Man of La Mancha," "West Side Story," "Company," "Follies," "Into the Woods," "Les Miserables," "Sunset Boulevard," "Phantom of the Opera," "Wicked," "A Chorus Line," and "Come from Away."



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Not a single weakness exists in this show. Sobbe gets the chance to demonstrate his comedic persona with some funny takes on "Makin' Whoopee!" and "I Could Drive a Person Crazy." Sarah LaBarr bests Sarah Brightman's "All I Ask of You," with her soft, clear soprano voice. Her range amazes the audience. As for Fagan, maybe Fanny Brice's most famous song, "My Man" established her as a singer, but it's Barbra Streisand's versions that is the most famous. Fagan delivers the song with confidence and emotion and astounds the QHP audience. Later, she makes a strong statement that she should play Rose in the

next local mount of “Gypsy.” Her version of “Some People” is strong and emotionally packed.

As always, Barnhart selects the perfect voices and personalities for musical selections. Further, he finds the perfect orchestrations for each song. And, finally, he surrounds himself with the best percussion and bass to add to his productions.

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Sadly, this production remains on hold while the COVID-19 infections continue to rise, nationally and globally.

Quality Hill Playhouse has made the decision to close its, production of “Broadway Through the Decades” as of March 12. Ticket holders will be contacted and the production is being rescheduled. For questions see the Quality Hill Playhouse website.

The health and safety of our patrons, staff, and performers have been and will always be our top priority. In light of recent events and growing concerns over the spread of COVID – 19, by consideration of KCMO Health Department’s recommendations regarding attendance at events, especially by those persons 60 years of age and older, Quality Hill Playhouse has made the difficult decision to postpone our production of BROADWAY THROUGH THE DECADES as of March 12.

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COVID-19 official statement from QHP:

We are disappointed that this fabulous show is being put on hold, but we are working to schedule new performance dates which we will announce soon. If you currently have tickets for an upcoming performance, please hold onto them for now. You will receive advisement as we move forward.

We will be communicating all further information via emails, website, and social media outlets. Please, stay connected as we do our best to navigate our current social climate.

We appreciate your patience and continued support; and, we look forward to seeing you soon.

Tags; Quality Hill Playhouse, Kansas City Theatre, Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment, "Broadway through the Decades" review