



# 'Spring Awakening' brings teenage Angst to Arts Asylum

*By Dennis Maddux-Phillips, guest reviewer*



Faust Theatre/Arts Asylum

Traditional teenage sexual longing on Broadway used to sound like "We love you Conrad, on yes we do", but say bye bye to that birdie with Faust Theatre's scintillating production of "Spring Awakening" playing at the Arts Asylum through next Thursday.

Based upon a 1891 German play, the story explores the society's generation gap and suppressed teenagers discovery, or awakening, of their inner and outer tumultuous sexual discovery. Debuting in 2006 on Broadway, it received 11 Tony nominations, winning 8 and a Grammy for Best Cast album. The score by Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater, is a brilliant mixture of alternative, folk-infused rock music and invokes memories of "Rent", but more mellow and melodic.

## Faust Theatre/Arts Asylum



Director Zach Faust, wisely fills his cast with talented young actors that excell as they fill the intimate black box space with their energetic choreography and interpretation of the complicated score. Moving throughout the space, they draw the audience physically and emotionally into the production. Each character has a chance to share the spotlight, and succeeds in making us feel their anxieties and pain. Oustandingly leading the troupe are Alec Bridges and Madison Dodd. Both of them confidently conquer the vocal and acting ranges of their roles, and evoked tears from several audience members throughout the second act.

Confidently and creatively supporting them are Phil Newman as the troubled Moritz, and outstanding performers Leah Swank-Miller and Martin Buchanan who disappear in a wide range of sympathetic and villainous adult roles. Accompanied by a tight trio of musicians, the evening sails from one meaningful musical moment to another.

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This is the perfect space to experience this ground -breaking

musical, but you should leave the kids at home because of brief nudity, and adult themes of masturbation, suicide, sexual intercourse, rape, and abortion. This production definitively makes the century old tale important for everyone fortunate enough to experience it.

Directed by Zach Faust, Artistic Director of Faust Theatre, the production features Alec Bridges, Madison Dodd, Phillip Newman, Catera Combs, Sheridan Mirador, Guadalupe Valdes, Randall Jackson, Josephine Pellow, Haley Knudsen, Austin Skibbie, Emma Mathieson, Dalton DeVoe, Bridget Casad, with Leah Swank-Miller, and Martin Buchanan.

Faust Theatre



The production team includes Musical Direction by Delano Mendoza, Assistant Direction by Timothy Michael Houston, Choreography by Mandy Morris-Newman, Stage Management by Grace Urquhart, Assistant Stage Management by Jessica Michael, Intimacy Direction by Lauren Douglas, Lighting Design by Ian Vandusen, Set Design by Zach Faust, and Technical Direction & Costume Design by Ophelia Rose Lee.

**Please note:**

**“Spring Awakening” performs in the lower level of the Arts Asylum. The older facility is not ADA approved and has no elevator. Persons with a wheelchair or walker will experience difficulty accessing the lower level performance space.**

**The space seats only 80 persons so it falls within the category of small crowds. “Spring Awakening” generally attracts a younger audience who are not in as much danger as older theatre patrons. Some larger theatre venues has suggested that persons 60 and over not attend if they have health issues or concerns. The Arts Assylum announced that they are taking additional cleaning and disinfectant precautions for parton safety concerns.**

**As of noon, Sat. March 14, all performances continue. But that staff of both Faust Theatre and The Arts Asylum are monitoring the situation and COVID-19 recommendations. Please check with both before leaving the the theatre. Updates will be posted if the situation changes.**

**Tags: Arts Asylum, Faust Theatre, “Spring Awakening” review, Kansas City Theatre, Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment**