

Theatre Aurora's Fun Home: A Review

Theatre Aurora's first play of 2023 is the musical 'Fun Home', which tells the story of lesbian cartoonist Alison as she looks back over her life, with a focus on her discovering her sexuality, and her relationship with her closeted gay father.

It's an unusual subject for a musical, and is easily the best show the Theatre has put on in the past few years.

The story, based on Alison Bechdel's memoir, is told in a series of unconnected vignettes, bouncing between the present, her years as a child, and as a teenager starting school out of town. In many scenes with the younger Alisons, the adult Alison plays silent observer with us to the events unfolding on stage.

The production moves along quickly with frequent and impressively efficient changes on the seemingly simple but effective set.

The book and lyrics by Lisa Kron are excellent, and fully brought to life by an impressively talented cast, who are also top-notch singers.

Mary Bowden (adult Alison), Sydney Nicholson (teenage Alison) and Mikayla Sandler (young Alison), are all standouts, with Nicholson especially doing a stellar job in her role as a young woman discovering and coming to terms with her sexuality and her relationship with her parents.

Brian Hargan as Alison's father, Bruce, commands the stage in all of his scenes.

Jody Geddes as mother Helen, Jacob Cluff and Ashley Underwood as brothers Christian and John, Ellen Cotton as Joan and Avi Petliar playing a number of roles, have smaller parts, but all have moments to shine.

A great deal of credit has to go to the behind-the-scenes skills of those supporting the work onstage: Director Sergio Calderon, Music Director Lisa Kyriakides, Stage Manager Amanda Cook, Producer Barb Jones, and Choreographer Baiba Senecal.

This play tackles a serious subject in a very entertaining way.

Based on the story, sets, pacing, acting, singing, choreography and other factors, this is by far the most professional play Theatre Aurora has staged in some time, and is well worth seeing.

Evening performances of 'Fun Home' continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, January 26, 27, 28, and February 2, 3 and 4, with a matinee on January 29. Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.

By Scott Johnston