

Theatre Aurora's 'If/Then': A Review



By Scott Johnston

We all make a thousand decisions a day; what we wear, what we eat, in which direction we proceed, what we say, and when we do things, to name a few. How would our lives change if when given even a simple choice we went one way instead of the other? That's the premise facing the main character in Theatre Aurora's production of 'If/Then', now playing.

The musical by Brian Yorkey with music from Tom Kitt, tells the story, actually two stories, of Elizabeth, a city planner who has recently moved back to New York City.

Meeting with friends shortly after her return, she is presented with two options of how to spend the rest of her day. From there, we see her life unfolding in dramatically different ways, as we follow each of the two parallel storylines over the subsequent several years.

As can be imagined, this is a fairly complicated play to put on, with a large cast, frequent costume changes, and a very flexible set that depicts locations as varied as a park, a subway car, a bedroom, an airplane, and a rooftop.

This may make it sound like the story may be confusing to follow, but under the direction of Theatre Aurora veteran Sergio Calderon, the scenes and characters shift seamlessly between the two parallel storylines.

A large part of the success goes to the terrific cast, headed by Jody Butler, as Elizabeth. Appearing in almost every scene, she carries the story, and flawlessly and believably segues from one version of her character to the other.

Providing terrific support are Patricia Dambrosio Mongeon as Kate, Jeff McAlister as Lucas and Brian Hargan as Josh. Elizabeth's initial decision effects each of their characters, whose lives similarly move in different directions in each story. All three actors were well chosen for their roles.

There are several additional supporting players and ensemble actors in this large cast, and each brings life to their character or characters.

The musical numbers are catchy, and propel the plot along, and everyone has an opportunity to showcase their singing talents.

This play will keep you entertained until the final curtain, and will do doubt make you think a bit about your own choices in life.

Evening performances of 'If/Then' continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, January 25, 26, 27, and February 1, 2 and 3, with a matinee January 28, Promotional ticket prices for groups of four or more are in place for the two Thursday performances.

Details and tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.