

THEATER

Face the musicals

Forever Plaid shows its stripes;
Rocky Horror shows its legs

Forever Plaid

This show's not called *Forever Plaid* for nothing. Like its characters, this conball contraption is revived over and over again, most recently at Sylvia's Class Act Dinner Theatre. And there's a reason: It's simple, fool-proof fun.

A 1950s quartet of young lads—killed in a car crash on the way to their first big break—miraculously returns from the hereafter to endearingly bumble their way through the dream concert they never got the chance to perform in life. As you might expect, the plot is tangential to the music, itself a wiped-clean tribute to our mid-century adolescence when everyone seemingly got along, or at least sang, in perfect harmony.

As such, it hums along with its own bit of spirited sentiment, from "Catch a Falling Star" and "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing" to "Perfidia" and oh-won't-they-ban-it-outright "Heart and Soul." Somewhere in the middle, the boys render a nearly masculine interpolation of "Chain Gang" linked with the heavy bass of "Sixteen Tons." And, yes, the squeaky-clean goof-nuts pull out all the stops for the requisite plunger-pop-pin' of "Crazy 'Bout Ya Baby" and the revue's seemingly signature song that always feels plaid, "Three Coins in the Fountain."

As Jinx, Ammon Morris (*Sordid Lives*, *Pageant*, *Debbie Does Dallas*) brings a breakout voice. Brian "Sparky" Bartley (*Monkey Business*) has musical comedy written all over him. Like their characters, fellow crooners Jason Ogan (Frankie) and SunSHINE (Smudge) hint at untapped potential, and all four, in their checkered-dinner-jacket way, keep the blue hair laughin' and feet a-tappin'.

But that's about as close to heaven as we get, because even when director Edward James' production hits all the right notes, it doesn't really find its voice. And therein lies the double-edged sword of the foolproof musical: It may be hard to mess up, but it's doubly hard to make it your own.

Forever Plaid continues Thursday to Satur-

day through Aug. 20 at Sylvia's Restaurant & Class Act Dinner Theatre, 5115 N.E. Sandy Blvd. For information and reservations, call 503-288-6828 or visit www.sylvias.net.

—Timothy Krause

The Rocky Horror Show

The prospect of experiencing *The Rocky Horror Show* for the first time seemed terrifying. For years I'd heard stories about "virgins" being pulled out of the audience and brought onstage for some sort of ritualistic humiliation.

Thank goodness Triangle Productions is presenting a kinder, gentler *Horror Show*, the 1973 stage musical that inspired the 1975 cult hit film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, which 30 years later still draws crowds of prop-clutching freaks to Clinton Street Theater at midnight every Saturday. Unlike the celluloid version, there's no need to bring toast, and producer Don Horn is begging audience members to leave their hot dogs and rice at home. Squirt guns, however, are welcome, and confetti is provided by the house along with a program that doubles as a newspaper to cover your head during the thunderstorm scene.

The simple story involves a newly engaged couple, Janet (Jami Chatalas Blanchard) and Brad (Kelsey Tyler), stuck in the middle of nowhere with a flat tire, until they stumble upon a remote castle inhabited by "sweet transvestite" Frank-n-Furter. Wade McCollum (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) makes a grand entrance as the mad scientist and proceeds to steal the show with his hearty lungs and twisted contortion.

Horn, who normally stays behind the scenes, makes a rare onstage appearance as the Narrator. Although it's great to see him poking fun at himself (particularly his overtanned hide), his lines are more distracting than helpful. But at least he's going out with a bang, as this is Triangle's final production after 15 years. Shows have been selling out consistently, so make your reservations now.

The Rocky Horror Show has been extended through Aug. 20 at Theater Theatre, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. Tickets are \$35 at the door and \$30 in advance from 503-239-5919 or TicketsWest.

—Jim Radosta



The plot is tangential to the music in *Forever Plaid*.



Wade McCollum steals *The Rocky Horror Show*.

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