



HILLARY HUMPHREYS AS JACKIE

CATASTROPHICALLY FUNNY

Actors Cabaret of Eugene's *Disaster!* is anything but

I was born in 1995. I was 6 when the Twin Towers fell, and only 10 when Hurricane Katrina hit. This last presidential election was the first I could legally vote in — yeah, I know, what a great memory, right?

So, when I sat down in Actors Cabaret of Eugene to review its newest musical, *Disaster!* — a parody of 1970s disaster movies such as *The Earthquake* and *The Poseidon Adventure* (neither of which I had ever even heard of), chock-full of entirely '70s tunes — I had no idea of what I was getting into.

Luckily, ACE's *Disaster!* is the type of production that would appeal to anyone with even a sliver of a sense of humor.

Disaster!, which originally ran off-Broadway in 2012 and on-Broadway in 2016, takes place in 1979 on "The Barracuda," New York's first-ever floating casino and discotèque, tethered to a pier on the Hudson River. On the casino's opening night, a multitude of eclectic characters come aboard, including, but not limited to, a pair of cater-waiter best friends Chad and Scott (actors Chad Lowe and Anthony Krall), a former disco star and her beloved pooch (Chelyce Chambers), a young journalist looking for a scoop (Ashlee Winkler) and a nun on a mission to save some sinning souls (India Potter).

Soon after boarding, Professor Ted Scheider (Cody Mendonca), a disaster expert, arrives to warn everyone — against the will of the corrupt, money-hungry casino-owner (Donovan Seitzinger) — that the pier was built on an active fault line and that The Barracuda runs the risk of causing an enormous earthquake and consequential tidal wave that could kill everyone onboard.

If you didn't get the gist from this partial plot recap, there is an immense amount of chaos that ensues from here — including, but not limited to: hordes of rats, man-eating piranhas, sharks, heartbreak, a gambling addiction and (spoiler alert) a multitude of deaths (come on, the production is named *Disaster!*, so it was bound to happen).

The two-act production is carried by almost 30 songs, including hits like Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" and "You're My Best Friend" by Queen. Most songs are used hilariously as plot devices, such as Donna Summer's "Hot Stuff," the opening number that kicks in as Prof. Scheider is searching for hot sediment in the water under the pier and Chad, one of the cater-waiters, is gearing up to meet hot ladies on The Barracuda.

Disaster! is the sort of foolproof production that includes so much ridiculousness that it would keep anyone engaged through its run-time, though that doesn't mean that Actors Cabaret's specific adaptation was lacking.

The campy nature of *Disaster!* fits the community-forward, tight-knit feel of Actors Cabaret perfectly. ACE's small, simple stage goes through impressively versatile transformations throughout the performance — adapting to the fires, floods and earthquakes the characters undergo.

The cast has great chemistry and meshes together well, which aids the show's fast-paced interweaving of characters. Relationships come across as genuine, and friendships clearly exist on-and-off stage.

As far as the musical aspect of the production goes, the all-volunteer cast is full of very talented singers, especially for the small space and lack of traditional theater acoustics.

And even though I was short on knowledge of the references, and knew only about half of the songs that were performed, *Disaster!* does not require that you lived through the '70s to enjoy it. It doesn't boast exclusive inside jokes that leave half the audience laughing and the other half in the dark.

Disaster! was a hell of a ride but, fortunately, its production in no way lived up to its namesake. ■

Disaster! runs through July 22 at Actors Cabaret of Eugene; \$16-\$47.95, tickets at 541-683-4368.

100%
ADDITIVE-FREE
NATURAL
TOBACCO



TRY 1 PACK FOR \$3.00*

VISIT AMERICANSPIRIT.COM OR CALL 1-800-435-5515
PROMO CODE 96726

CIGARETTES ©2017 SFNTC (2) *Plus applicable sales tax

Offer for one "1 for \$3" Gift Certificate good for any Natural American Spirit cigarette product (excludes RYO pouches and 150g tins). Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offer and website restricted to U.S. smokers 21 years of age and older. Limit one offer per person per 12 month period. Offer void in MA and where prohibited. Other restrictions may apply. Offer expires 12/31/17.

No additives in our tobacco
does **NOT** mean a safer cigarette.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking
By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal
Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.