

Main St. Theatre's sweet musical comedy conjures up sugar-coated memories with songs of the 50s and

Written by By TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
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Fifty years from now, will today's generation be going to the theater to see revivals of Britney Spears' "Oops I Did It Again," Ludacris' "Word of Mouf" or Lady Gaga's "Fame Monster" when they wax nostalgic about their younger days? I think not.

My generation, however, loves nothing better than to tune into the oldies station and crank up the volume on hits like Doris Day's "Secret Love," the McGuire Sisters' "Sincerely," the Everly Brothers' "All I Have to Do is Dream" and Lesley Gore's "You Don't Own Me."

If the mention of any of those songs stirs up a hankering for those innocent days gone by, then get yourself to Main Street Theatre for the Community Players' production of "The Marvelous Wonderettes," opening tonight and running through March 12.

The award-winning musical, written by Roger Bean, enjoyed a long off-Broadway run. Steve Janway directs this production.

The plot is simple. A boy named Billy Ray Patton was caught smoking and kicked out of school. The problem with Billy Ray's suspension is that he was the lead singer of a group set to entertain at the 1958 Springfield High prom. A girl group called The Marvelous Wonderettes is tapped as last-minute replacements.

In the first act, Pretty Cindy Lou (Madison Rater), over-achiever Missy (Haley Moore), clown Betty Jean (Lauren Cook) and perky Suzy (Megan Salters) perform together and take turns doing solos between snippets of dialogue.

Cindy Lou is used to getting everything she wants and has her eyes set on becoming the dream

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queen of the prom. She steals Betty Jean's solo, "Allegheny Moon," with hilarious results

Missy, who is in charge of the evening, just wants to make sure everything is done the right way. She's got a crush, revealed in her solo, "Secret Love."

Betty Jean is focused on her boyfriend, Johnny, who may or may not be sneaking around with Cindy Lou. Her drama plays out during "Lipstick on Your Collar."

The bubble-gum chewing Suzy floats above it all, pretty much oblivious to drama surrounding her. She does a cute turn with Brenda Lee's "Stupid Cupid."



Fast forward 10 years to the girls' 1968 class reunion. The Marvelous Wonderettes are once again booked as the evening's entertainment.

Cindy Lou (Mia Tallant) pursued her dream of becoming an actress, but ended up back home and experienced more loss than anyone can imagine. Her cover of Dusty Springfield's "Son of a Preacher Man" stops the show.

For five years, Missy's (Leslie Horne) been dating her crush, but he seems to have commitment issues, as examined in "Wedding Bell Blues."

Betty Jean (Tammy McGary) and her husband Johnny are separated while he "thinks about things." When the girls spot him with another woman at the reunion, it's the perfect time for Betty Jean to fire up "It's My Party."

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Suzy (Megan Atkins) is pregnant, but she's not happy. She suspects her husband of being unfaithful and pours her heart out in "Rescue Me."

Both sets of Wonderettes do an admirable job, considering the amount of singing and harmonizing required.

The first act standout is Megan Salters as Suzy, who provides sharp, well-timed comedic relief and just bubbles her way through the script. She's as cute as a button, and her effervescent attitude seeps out into the audience.

Mia Tallant's turn as Cindy Lou brings a lovely depth to act two. Her delivery of "Son of a Preacher Man" and "Maybe" are the evening's highlights.

"The Marvelous Wonderettes" is musical comedy, so we know going in that all the characters' problems are going to be solved and everyone's going home with a smile on their face and humming great tunes.

"The Marvelous Wonderettes" runs March 3, 4 and 5 and again March 10, 11 and 12 at 7:30 p.m. at Main Street Theatre, 227 Main St. in Sulphur Springs.

Seating is limited and reservations are recommended. Tickets are \$12.

Call 903-885-0107 or visit their website, www.mainsttheater.com, for more information.



Note: The play calls for audience participation. If that's not your cup of tea, don't sit on the aisle near the stage.

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