

News

- World
- National News
- State News
- Politics
- Business (US)
- Technology
- Industry
- Science
- Medicine
- Sports
- Education
- Entertainment

Opinion

- Latest Articles
- View Topics
- View Authors

Features

- Latest Articles
- View Topics
- View Authors

Community

- Join Our List

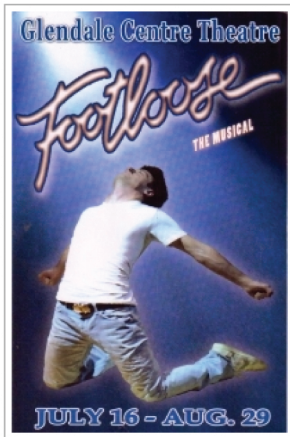
Other Sections

- Affiliates
- Advertise
- Video

"Footloose" dances across the GCT stage!

July 27, 2009

Jackie Houchin



--- Theatre review

"Footloose," the newest show to premier at the Glendale Centre Theatre is an energetic, crowd-pleasing musical that combines the best of "Grease," "American Graffiti," "Dirty Dancing" and even "42nd Street." It's about dancing, teens testing the rules, young love, and doing the right thing. And did I mention dancing?

From the moment the lights go up and the first bar of music sounds, GCT's theater-in-the-round stage bursts with exuberance as a score of youthful dancers fly down the aisles and out of the tunnels, dancing and singing, grinning, and having a heck of a good time. The audience, caught up in the excitement, responds with head nods and tapping feet.

From its energetic opening the show quickly segues to the heart of the story. The small farming town of Bomont is under lockdown by the town counsel and the local minister. Dancing, rock 'n roll music, movies, drinking and smoking are all prohibited. Church attendance is required even for the local hoodlums.

Reverend Moore, played by veteran singer/actor George Champion (Gerard in GCT's Phantom), is "the law" behind these restrictions, but an inner struggle is evident from his words in the nicely staged church number, "On Any Sunday." As the choir and the congregation join him, the song seems to echo his thoughts, "Am I doing the right thing?"

His daughter Ariel (Jayme Lake) doesn't think so and does everything she can to spite her father and break the town's rules, including dating Chuck (Shaun Sumaro), a school dropout and biker bully. "The Girl Gets Around" paints a sad picture of the unhappy girl.

But a newcomer to Bomont is destined to turn the town, the high school and especially the preacher's daughter upside down. Ren McCormack (played by Harley Jay) is a dancing wonder as he demonstrates in "I Can't Stand Still," a number that showcases modern dance, jazz, disco, and hip-hop, with a huge nod to Michael Jackson's style and his famous Moonwalk. This dance alone is worth the price of admission.

Ren soon butts heads with his inflexible teachers and with the stern Reverend Moore. But with encouragement from his new best bud Willard (Joey Elrose, who pulls off the country bumpkin to perfection), and a welcome "insider tip" from Ariel, he's willing to face the mighty town counsel and campaign for change.

When the tragic truth behind Bomont's rigid rules is revealed, compassion and compromise are required to make things right.

Kudos go to choreographer Simone Burch for his incredibly creative numbers, and to the company of talented dancers who performs them! The sets, as always at GCT, are impressive for their authenticity and a design that allows them to be changed so quickly.

The original 1982 "Footloose" screenplay has been adapted for stage (so don't expect drag racing and tractors playing "chicken"), but Tom Robinson's capable direction has further fine-tuned the show to fit GCT's stage and audience. A feel good wholesomeness replaces the film's darker, more violent scenes, and makes this a true family-friendly production.

"Footloose" plays Thursdays - Saturdays at 8:00 pm, with Saturday & Sunday matinees at 3:00 pm through August 29. Tickets range from \$21.00-\$26.00. For reservations call (818) 244-8481 or visit www.glendalecentretheatre.com