

OCT

16

8:30 pm

Downeast Soul Coalition

Downeast Soul Coalition has been serving up a tasty and original blend of R&B, soul, funk, and blues since 2012. The band's high-energy performances are ...

OCT

09

5:00 pm

Locals Day Cruise

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OCT

03

7:00 pm

Stan Davis

Wayne, Maine based singer/songwriter Stan Davis returns to Caf? @ 130 Main for a night of great songs and storytelling. Featuring both his own songs ...

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Posted: August 11, 2015

'LA CAGE' AT ARUNDEL BARN IS A CROWD-PLEASER

Written by: Steve Feeney



Courtesy photo

Times have changed since “La Cage Aux Folles” premiered on Broadway in 1983. The musical’s comedic take on some of the challenges facing gay couples may now seem a little retro. But the show, currently on stage in a production at the Arundel Barn Playhouse, still offers a positive message to go along with its lively song and dance.

The story may be familiar to those who saw the 1996 film version called “The Birdcage.” Georges manages and MC’s a cabaret-style nightclub featuring a transvestite review starring his partner Albin. Georges has a 24 year-old son, the product of a previous indiscretion, who he and Albin have raised. When the child, Jean-Michel, announces that he wishes to marry the daughter of a very conservative politician and his wife, the problem becomes how to deceive the prospective in-laws into thinking all is “normal” in the home which, incidentally, is located just above the nightclub.

David Dennison, as Georges, was a standout. He allowed just the right degree of emotion to seep through his character’s rather stolid demeanor, particularly on such show-stopping vocal numbers as “Song of the Sand” and “Look Over There.” The London-educated performer also played, in comic moments, the perfect foil to the flamboyant characters around him.



Courtesy photo

Speaking of flamboyance, Billy Goldstein, as Albin, won over the crowd on song and dance numbers like the title piece, where he was joined by a rambunctious, singing and dancing ensemble of “Cagelles.” A scene-stealing “The Best of Times” also scored. Goldstein’s managed well on heels, especially during the show’s best comedic moment, as he tried to achieve a John Wayne-style “Masculinity.” He also conveyed Albin’s vulnerability as he was asked to conceal his true self for the sake of being presentable to the bride-to-be’s parents

Eric Berry-Sandelin and Allison Sandler play the engaged couple with John Bergeron and Emily Davis in the roles of her parents. Each has a moment or two in the spotlight and all made the most of it. Outstanding in secondary roles were Ben Ciordia, as the over-the-top butler/maid, Stephen G. Tabor, as a smitten stage manager, and Brigette E. Estola, as the restaurant owner who helps save the day.

Some of the dancing still seemed a bit tentative in this early performance, with performers appearing a little too obviously worried about getting it right. But director/choreographer Joseph Cullinane and staff have

effectively created the world of the Fierstein-Herman show with quick-changing sets, colorful costumes, good lighting and flavorful musical accompaniment.

It will be hard for audiences to escape the pleasures of this “La Cage.”

THEATER REVIEW

What: “La Cage Aux Folles”

Where: Arundel Barn Playhouse, 53 Old Post Road

Date Reviewed: August 5 (matinee); continues through August 15

Tickets: \$35-\$40

Contact: 207-985-5552; arundelbarnplayhouse.com

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