

The Life and Times of Rikki Lee Travolta

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RIKKILEETRAVOLTA

‘Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story’ Brings Iconic Music to Life at Metropolis

The 1978 film *The Buddy Holly Story* featuring a career defining performance by Gary Busey brought the music and the artist’s story of his meteoric rise to fame into the limelight for a new generation of fans. The Alan Janes script for *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, now on stage through August 31 at the beautiful Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, lacks the same charm as the movie predecessor, but the uber talented cast and nuanced direction by Joe Keefe creates a plethora of magical moments.

Buddy Holly was a groundbreaking musician charting hits from 1957 until his untimely death in 1959 at the age of 22. His hits included “That’ll Be the Day”, “Peggy Sue”, “Oh Boy”, “Everyday”, and “Not Fade Away.” He is ranked alongside Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Bill Haley as one of the early innovators of rock n’ roll.

In the stage musical *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, we follow Holly and his band from their early days in Texas to their life as rock n’ roll stars touring the world – and the many bumps along the way. Travis Shanahan tackles the task of bringing the title character to life with gusto. He captures the dialect, singing voice, and guitar style of the late rock n’ roll pioneer perfectly. One only wishes the sound mix at the theater would put Shanahan’s singing and guitar playing more prominently.

As Holly’s band The Crickets, Roy Brown, Jack Morsovillo, and Kelan M. Smith are entertaining as both actors and musicians. In particular, Morsovillo as drummer Jerry Allison looks like he is having a blast on stage, and that infectious attitude translates to the audience. His performance is one of the best in the show.

Another true standout in the talented cast is Jessica Miret Garcia as Holly’s wife Maria Elena Santiago. As that Holly married only shortly before his death, and their preceding courtship was uncommonly short, Garcia doesn’t have the same amount of stage time as some of the other characters, but what she does with the time she has is mesmerizing.

As great as the actors are in their capture of the music of Buddy Holly and the Crickets, it is the number *Shout* (originally recorded in 1959 by The Isley Brothers and performed here by Austin Nelson Jr., Bre Jacobs, Jasmine Lacy Young, and Jordan Burns) that is hands down the best in the production and worthy of a standing ovation all on its own.

Rounding out the cast are Ross Creighton Childs as The Big Bopper, Luis David Cortes as Richie Valens, Gabriel Fries as radio DJ Hipockets Duncan, David Gordon-Johnson as record producer Norman Petty, Nicole Frydman, Sara Haverty, Brian Kulaga, Rachel Livingston, Lauren Romano, Josh Pablo Szabo, and Matt Tatone.

Metropolis routinely puts on some of the best theatrical productions in the area, and *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* adds to that growing list of home run entertainment.

The musical features music direction by Kenneth McMullen and choreography by Allyssa O'Donnell. Keefe's stellar direction is complemented by associate director Robin M. Hughes.

Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story plays Thursday – Sunday. Evening performances are at 7:30 PM Thursday – Saturday, matinees are at 3:00 PM on Saturdays and Sundays. Metropolis Performing Arts Centre is located in the heart of Chicago's northwest suburbs in downtown Arlington Heights (111 West Campbell Street). Street and garage parking are available. For tickets and a complete performance schedule visit www.MetropolisArts.com (<http://www.MetropolisArts.com>) or call the box office at (847) 577-2121.

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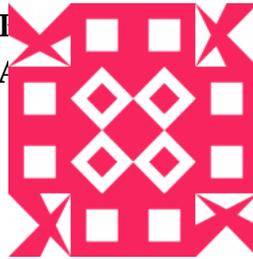
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