

'Smokey Joe's' is flashback to golden days of rock 'n' roll

Musical gives insight into the songwriting partnership of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, who wrote many tunes for Elvis Presley, the Drifters, the Coasters, and many other greats.

By **Jeanne Lerner**
For the Star-Progress

Smokey Joe's Café," is a rollicking festival of some of the best music to come out of the '50s and '60s.

Songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller created lyrics for the biggest names of that era including Elvis, The Drifters and The Coasters. This review of their songs recreates the atmosphere of that era, bringing the audience a pleasure fest of nostalgia.

The Curtis Theatre's production of this show is a delight to behold. It is a shining example of what community theater can

be when it draws from talented people.

Beginning with the work of Director and Choreographer Allison Bibicoff, the production showcases her creativity and vision of the production.

In a large number of the individual songs, she has created a little story in movement that is entertaining and poignant.

Bibicoff has pulled together a diverse cast that includes both amateur and semi professional performers.

It is her use of dance and movement to tell a story that really enhances the entire production. For "Smokey Joe's," is a revue with no story line, one

"Smokey Joe's Café," runs through May 23 at the Curtis Theatre, 1 Civic Center Circle, Brea. A Grammy Award-winning musical. Tickets are \$17 general admission, \$15 for seniors and \$10 for children. For information and tickets call (714) 990-7722 or e-mail curtis-theatre@ci.brea.ca.us.

wonderful song after another. Musical Director Ed Martel also deserves kudos.

It's hard to decide which to praise first, the melodic solos or the harmonizing group numbers.

This show is truly ensemble performing at its best. Performers move from solos, to trios, to duets, to full group singing and dancing with ease. That is the highest tribute to this cast - that they could star in their individual numbers and blend in their group num-

bers is really exciting.

Rich DeGuzman is certainly a shining example of that kind of performing. Whether roller skating in a trio effort or chasing the girl, he evokes the essence of the song to his very best.

When Ann-Marie Scott, who has been performing since the age of 3, belts out the revival type song "Saved," at the end of the first act, the entire theater rocks.

Kai Chubb has some duets with Rich and she more than holds her own in those and in her solo numbers.

Jim Rixie is a cast member who really stands out in his contribution to the comedic moments of the show.

He uses facial expressions and movement to show the audience the fun he's having and what fun they should be having too. In his final solo of "I, Who

Have Nothing," he also demonstrates his ability to tear up the audience's emotions with just his voice.

Terri Lynn Wright and Jeanine Zabo team up for one of the hottest numbers in the show, "Trouble." In their sexy red dresses, they prance, dance and demonstrate their talents in this really strong number.

One more time Kevin Clowes has demonstrated his creativity and attention to detail in the creation of the set for the show. It is both an artistic and functional masterpiece.

Veltria Johns-Richardson and Shannon Solano are Curtis Theatre staff members who can be proud of their roles in the creation of this production.

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