

Mac-Haydn Theatre, Chatham, NY

*A Call to Places*, A Gabe Belyeu Cabaret. Directed by John Saunders.

Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman.

*“Hitching Across America”*

After twenty years, twenty summer seasons, at the Mac-Haydn where he has been in the chorus, been in the company, played historic lead roles in their productions, Artistic Director John Saunders has given Gabe Belyeu an opportunity to perform a personal, nearly one-man show about his life and career. “A Call to Places” is what an actor hears in his dressing room when its time to start the show, but here the actor is calling out the many places he has worked and traveled to during his lifetime, a double entendre if ever there was one.



Rachel Pantazis, Gabe Belyeu, Andrew Burton Kelley; Photo: Ann Kielbasa

The show, just over an hour in length lets us in on the realities of a lifetime, a man born and raised in Alabama who has made a world of his own through his work, including living in New York City, touring the country in shows like Rodgers & Hammerstein’s CINDERELLA, and SHOW BOAT, doing his work while searching for a life-partner at home and abroad. His unending trip takes him as far as Israel and Hawaii and keeps him singing about it all. His excellent voice carries the tunes, most of them non-theatrical, and he is backed by Andrew Burton Kelley and Rachel Pantazis, each of whom gets a chance to sing duets with Belyeu.

The show is beautifully lit by designer Kevin Gleason. Musical director Eric Shorey leads a four-person ensemble in his own, superb arrangements of the songs Belyeu and Sanders have chosen. One thing that makes this cabaret special is the confessional aspects of Belyeu’s story as he recreates himself as the central character in the auto-biographical script he has conceived and

written. He is his own main character and although we don't learn everything possible about him we do learn more than we've ever known before. Songs and revelations work hand-in-hand here and leave us very satisfied. We have enjoyed the man, the performer and the wonderful combination of the two.

Belyeu is inside his many songs: "I've Been Everywhere" (the UPS theme song), "Sweet Home Alabama," "All at Sea," "Walking to Memphis" and many more carry his personal tales and anecdotes. If you don't know him, this is your opportunity. If you're a fan then this will secure your acts of following him through the years. Whatever brings you to the Mac-Haydn for his final two performances of "A Call to Places" you will be satisfied that he gives you his all and more. This will remain one of my most satisfying hours in the theater this summer.



+ 08/25/2022 +

**A Call to Places** plays September 3 and September 16 at the Mac-Haydn Theatre, 1925 NY Route 203, Chatham, NY. For information and tickets call 518-392-9292 or go to their website at [www.machaydntheatre.org](http://www.machaydntheatre.org).