

Mac-Haydn Theatre, Chatham, NY
The Marvelous Wonderettes, by Roger Bean.
Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman.

“Down, up, Swish! Swish!”

Four high school friends sing together as the Wonderettes but now, as it’s senior prom night and they have been recruited to replace the boys group they are the Marvelous Wonderettes instead. It is 1958. The four girls dominate the gymnasium. They sing all the popular hits from “Mr. Sandman” to “Secret Love” to “Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me” before the night is over. They have time to talk about their loves, their dreams, their rivalries and resentments and still have time to crown someone Queen. It’s a very full night - and that’s just act one.



Rachel Pantazis as Missy, Cydney Gleckner as Suzy, Stephanie Prestage as Cindy Lou,
Adeline Trivers as Betty Jean; Photo: Ann Kielbasa

The show is a showcase for two of the season’s most popular members of the company’s corps, Rachel Pantazis who plays the organizer, Missy, and Stephanie Prestage who plays bitchy Cindy Lou. The other two girls get equal time: Cydney Gleckner as Suzy and Adeline Trivers as Betty Jean. Both actresses are new and welcome additions to the Mac-Haydn family.

Whether singing in unison or in four-part harmony the music is very memorable. Descant singing figures into the show's music and plot and that plot is both simple and realistic. Jealousies impair friendship but never music, which is just as it should be. An audience member is drafted into the storyline and enjoys it as much as the audience does. Ashley Delane Burger, director/choreographer for the show keeps the four women moving and working their songs brightly and beautifully. Even wearing spectacles, Pantazis pulls off the attractive aspects of Missy and being a little bit overweight works wonders for Gleckner, especially in the second half..



Rachel Pantazis; Photo: Ann Kielbasa

The ten-year class reunion in Act Two gives the girls a chance to catch up on what life has brought each of them and a chance to sing music of the 1960s, including "It's My Party," "Wedding Bell Blues," "Son of a Preacher Man," and "Leader of the Pack." If, like me, you remember these songs this will be a treat for you as the plot unravels and ties itself in delicious knots before your eyes.



Stephanie Prestage, Cydney Gleckner; Photo: Ann Kielbasa

Annie Watson's costumes are divine and the wigs designed by Emily Allen cement the period realities of both acts. As usual, Andrew Gmoser's lighting enhances the show's drama and its music. Stephanie Prestage proves that she can act the rotten side of humanity and still be sympathetic throughout. She and the other girls make this a fun experience to be enjoyed and cherished.

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The Marvelous Wonderettes plays at the Mac-Haydn Theatre, 1925 State Route 203, Chatham,

NY through September 17. For information and tickets go to machaydntheater.org or call 518-392-9292.